Applying for Jobs Online:
7 Ways to Beat the Bot

If you're applying for jobs online, you need to know about Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS). Most companies that receive applications online now use ATS software. Think of ATS as a robot helper that sorts, scores, and filters resumes by scanning for keywords, skills, and formatting that match the job description.

If your application isn't ATS-friendly, your application could be screened out automatically—even if you're a great fit.

But don't worry: with these smart strategies, you can beat the bots and impress the humans.

☐ Customize every resume

Don't spray and pray. Tailor your resume for each job by matching keywords from the job description. Use both hard (e.g., Excel, project management) and soft (e.g., teamwork, communication) skills.

☐ Keep it simple, clean, readable

Skip fancy graphics, columns, or icons. Use simple layouts with clear headings like "Work experience," not "Where I've been." ATS systems prefer .docx or Word files; avoid PDFs unless specifically requested.

☐ Spell it out

Always spell out acronyms the first time, then use the acronym later. Example, use "point of sale system" first, then "POS system".

☐ Avoid header and footer traps

Don't hide important information like your name or contact details in headers or footers—some ATS systems can't read them. Keep this information in the main body.

☐ Include dates and details

List start and end dates for jobs and education. Be specific about what you did, using action verbs like "led," "managed," and "implemented," and include measurable results.

☐ Pair resume and cover letter

Many ATS systems don't read cover letters, but human recruiters do. Write a cover letter that shows your enthusiasm and connects your skills to the company's needs.

☐ Check your digital self

If you use LinkedIn, make sure your profile matches your resume. Some ATS systems check online profiles for consistency.

☐ Don't forget the human touch

Remember that if you get past the ATS, real people will read your application.
- Make sure your resume is easy to skim.
- Proofread carefully. No typos, please!
- Use a professional-looking email address.
  - ✅ JoanneBard@gmail.com
  - 👎 partyqueen99@gmail.com

Bonus tips for email and online forms

- Draft your answers in Word first; paste them in when ready.
- Always fill in optional fields—they're a chance to shine.
- Label attachments like "FirstName_LastName_Resume.docx."
- Include the job title in your email subject line.

The online application world has its quirks, but you don't have to tackle it alone. Reach out to us!

We can help you:
- Optimize your resume
- Decode job postings
- Boost your chances of landing that interview

Want help getting job ready?

Meet with one of our job counsellors at Job Zone d'emploi who works with job seekers—like you! Our goal is to make your job search clear and easy, and we can start with a casual conversation.

Call: (613) 933 - 9675   *Email: info@jobzonedemploi.ca*   *Visit: Cornwall, Morrisburg, Winchester*