

10 Common Questions from Telecommute Jobseekers & the Answers



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WHY AREN'T EMPLOYERS RESPONDING TO MY EMAILS AND APPLICATIONS?

[Unresponsive employers](#) have always been a top complaint of job seekers for both traditional and telecommute positions. Many remote jobs depending on the career field, receive hundreds of responses, which result in employers becoming quickly overwhelmed. If it is a small company you end up applying to, they may not have the manpower to respond to each person.

Consider [these tips](#) to increase your chance of receiving an employer response-

- ◉ Timing is critical, apply quickly! Don't put off sending in your email or application, especially when it comes to telecommute positions. Your response should be one of the first received.
- ◉ Figure out what the employer wants, and be sure to make that the focus of your response, resumé and email subject line.
- ◉ Detail your resumé for the position you are seeking, keeping it free from spelling errors, and 1-2 pages in length maximum.
- ◉ Follow-up with each employer within a few days of applying, so they are aware you are highly interested and available.

IT SEEMS DIFFICULT TO FIND EXECUTIVE-LEVEL TELECOMMUTE POSITIONS, ARE THEY REALLY AVAILABLE?

The answer to this question is a resounding, YES! Virtual Vocations lists hundreds of [professional](#) and [executive level](#) positions that have either full or partial telecommute options available.

In addition to our jobs database, utilize the professional network, LinkedIn, as recruiters use it specifically to fill openings that require a higher level of experience.

If you are having difficulty finding [executive-level openings](#) in your field, consider searching for positions *based on your skills*, rather than your job title. Many times this will open up new job opportunities that you hadn't considered.

I HAVE 10-20 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN MY FIELD, HOW DO I DISPLAY ALL OF IT ON MY RESUMÉ?

The industry standard for displaying experience on your resum  is limiting it to the most recent 10 years. However, in the case of someone with a full career behind them and a wealth of experience in their field, include specific career information that is directly relevant to the position you are currently seeking, and consider these tips to format and [condense it significantly](#). For positions held over 10 years ago, use the following format-

Example:

Senior Sales Manager, *BTW Sales Agency*, 1985-1990

Managed sales team of 10 people, account management for Fortune 500 companies focused on automotive industry

I'M CONCERNED THAT MY AGE MAY BE A FACTOR IN THE LACK OF RESPONSE FROM EMPLOYERS, WHAT CAN I DO TO MAKE SURE THEY STILL CONSIDER ME FOR THE POSITION?

You aren't alone with your concern about age-related issues when it comes to finding remote work. You are not obligated to share your age when interviewing, and I personally think the 'screen' of working remotely helps when it comes to avoiding age bias.

The age range of the average jobseeker using Virtual Vocations is 45+ years old, so you are in good company here with others facing the same issue. I would suggest taking a look at the following posts for guidance-

[6 Tips for Older Career Professionals and Remote Jobs](#)

[7 Ways Older Professionals Can Overcome Job Search Hurdles](#)

DO I NEED TO PURCHASE SPECIFIC COMPUTER SOFTWARE TO TELECOMMUTE?

Most potential employers will require that you have knowledge of basic computer software like Microsoft Office or Google's office suite. Job descriptions will usually specify if the company requires that you have experience with a particular software, but in general, they do not require that you already own the software.

Special cases include legal and medical transcription, when it is necessary that you already have your own equipment, such as a foot pedal or headphones, or in professions like Graphic Design, which requires access to editing software.

Be sure to read the requirements for each position carefully, but the majority will not require that you personally own a certain type of software. If a company starts interviewing you and tells you that you have to spend several hundred dollars on software and **requires that you purchase it through them**, this is a warning sign of a scam, legitimate companies will allow you to purchase needed software and equipment from a place of your own choosing.

WHEN APPLYING FOR A POSITION, HOW SHOULD I ADDRESS THE COVER LETTER?

Each company has a different method of hiring practices. They may be using email, or using use an ATS (Applicant Tracking System). Depending on which, addressing your cover letter can be handled a couple of ways. If the employer is utilizing an ATS, don't worry too much about addressing your cover letter to the right person, as the information is parsed and searched for keywords before it gets to a human reader.

If you are sending your information directly to an email address and they have not included the person's name that you should address it to, you could do several things-

- 1) Research on LinkedIn for the HR personnel, if you can't find the person who is specifically in charge of hiring, use the highest contact you've found (e.g. HR Department Manager or Lead Recruiter)
- 2) Call the HR dept. if there is an available phone number and find out who the hiring manager is for that position if possible.
- 3) Here are some scenarios for addressing your cover letter-

If you have the name of someone in the department: Use Ms., Mrs., Mr. or Dr. as appropriate. If you aren't sure for a female, use Ms. (e.g. Dear Ms. Kim Stone)

If you do not have a contact name: The company is most likely smaller and prefers to keep their employee names private. In this case, open the letter with a reasonable assumption of the title of someone working in the department, (e.g. Dear Senior Marketing Manager or Dear Financial Analyst Hiring Committee)

Click here for more help with [telecommute cover letters](#).

I'M AN EXPERIENCED PROFESSIONAL IN MY FIELD, BUT THERE DON'T SEEM TO BE MANY REMOTE JOBS FOR ME, WHAT ARE MY OPTIONS?

Some career fields are just getting into the remote workspace, so there may not be an abundance of available positions, yet. If this is the case within your industry, I would suggest the following-

- 1) Approach companies and/or employers yourself, or through contacts in the field you may have and propose a telecommute work plan where you can demonstrate to them how you are able to fulfill their needs and add value to their company while working remotely.
- 2) Set up [job search alerts](#) based on your skill keywords, not on the job titles to bring in a wider variety of possible matches. Your skills may apply to other career fields, so it is always a good idea to branch out when looking for a telecommute job.

WHEN SHOULD I FOLLOW UP WITH POTENTIAL REMOTE EMPLOYERS?

If you've applied for a telecommute position, but haven't heard back, it can be a little frustrating. Don't be afraid to follow up with a polite email to the employer at about the one week mark from the date you first applied. Sending an email like the example below may be just what the employer needs to remember there is a real person on the other end who wants to connect.

Hello (Hiring Contact Name),

I hope you are doing well. I realize you are probably very busy, but I recently applied to the opening (Job Title) and wanted to check in to find out when you might be making your hiring decision. I'm excited for the possibility of becoming a team member at (Company Name). Please let me know if I can send any additional information that might assist you during the hiring process.

I look forward to hearing from you,

(Your Name)

WHY DO SO MANY TELECOMMUTE POSITIONS HAVE A LOCATION REQUIREMENT?

With telecommute jobs on the rise, we get this question more and more from jobseekers wanting to know why a telecommute job requires them to live in a specific location. When most people think of telecommuting, they are envisioning the opportunity to work from anywhere in the world that suits them, this is not the case for many legitimate, work from home jobs.

Here are some of the top reasons employers choose to impose location restrictions when filling a remote position-

- ◉ Having all employees working in the same state makes payroll easier to manage.
- ◉ Some jobs are only partial telecommute, meaning you may need to come to the office for meetings, make client visits or attend company retreats in the area.
- ◉ Some states have stricter laws than others about hiring out-of-state employees and contractors, making it easier to hire in-state when it comes to worker's compensation and unemployment costs.
- ◉ The employer may want you located in the same time zone for communication purposes.

In truth, most telecommute jobs available still have a location requirement, though Virtual Vocations' database does have hundreds of jobs with no state requirements categorized as [100% Virtual/Live Anywhere in the U.S.](#)

Virtual Vocations keeps a [State Telecommute Job Resource Directory](#) to help jobseekers locate companies that are looking for candidates for remote work in their state.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO GET A TELECOMMUTE JOB?

In today's digital age we are used to near instant gratification when it comes to just about everything, from doing a quick Google search to find an answer to a question, or shopping for groceries and having them show up at our door. This mindset plays into other areas of life as well, such as wanting to find the perfect telecommute job within a few days of beginning your search.

Statistically, telecommute jobs are increasing but they are still competitive and in high-demand, resulting in longer periods before receiving job offers than it would take to secure a traditional in-office position. Matching your skills to employer needs, speed in applying and a well-honed resumé, as well as some patience is what will help you land a telecommute job.

Personally, I have seen it take one day, a few weeks and even 6 months for people to find the right remote job, the key is persistence and following best practices and general etiquette when applying for open positions, interviewing and following up with employers.



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