

Job-Hunters, Have You Posted Your Résumé on TikTok?

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FULL TEXT

“Calling all recruiters!” Makena Yee, 21, a college student in Seattle, shouted into her camera in a recent TikTok video. “These are the reasons why you should hire me!”

Ms. Yee went on to outline her qualifications. “I’m driven with confidence, I love keeping organized, I’m adaptive and I’m a team player,” she said, as images of companies she had worked for flashed up on a green screen behind her.

The 60-second video quickly racked up over 182,000 views and hundreds of comments. Users tagged potential employers. “Someone hire herrrr!” one commenter implored. Ms. Yee said she had received more than 15 job leads, which she plans to pursue after a summer internship.

In modern job searches, tidy one-page résumés are increasingly going the way of the fax machine. That may be accelerated by an app known for viral lip-syncing and dance videos, which is popularizing the TikTok résumé. As more college students and recent graduates use TikTok to network and find work, the company has introduced a program allowing people to apply directly for jobs. And employers, many facing labor shortages, are interested. Chipotle, Target, Alo Yoga, Sweetgreen and more than three dozen other companies have started hiring people via the app.

The TikTok résumé is central to these efforts. Job applicants submit videos with the hashtag #TikTokResumes and through TikTokresumes.com to show off their skills, something like a personal essay of old. They include their contact information and, if they want, their LinkedIn profile. Employers review the videos, which must be set to public, and schedule interviews with the applicants they find the most compelling.

The résumés are an effort to help young people “get the bag” and get paid, Kayla Dixon, a marketing manager at TikTok who developed the program, said in a statement.

They are also an outgrowth of a part of TikTok called careertok, where people share job-hunting advice, résumé tips and job opportunities. Videos with the hashtag #edutokcareer have amassed over 1.2 billion views since TikTok was introduced in the United States in 2018.

But the video résumés have also raised concerns. The format strips away a level of anonymity, allowing employers to potentially dismiss candidates based on how someone looks or acts. Much of the networking on TikTok also depends on amassing views, which can be hard for those who aren’t adept at creating content or who have struggled to get equal distribution in the app’s feed.

TikTok is not the first social platform that companies have sought to leverage for recruiting. LinkedIn, the professional networking site owned by Microsoft, is heavily used by both job seekers and recruiters. In 2015, Taco Bell advertised internship opportunities on Snapchat, and in 2017, McDonald’s let people apply for jobs through a Snapchat tool known as “Snaplications.” That same year, Facebook began allowing companies to post job openings to their pages and to communicate with applicants through Facebook Messenger.

TikTok is now taking it further with video applications, rather than a swipe up to a more traditional application page. Though TikTok résumés are open to people of all ages, top videos submitted through the hashtag are from Gen Z users, most of whom are in college. The app said over 800 applicants had submitted TikTok résumés in the past week.

"Hiring people or sourcing candidates through video just feels like a natural evolution of where we are in a society," said Karyn Spencer, global chief marketing officer of Whalar, an influencer company that recently hired an employee off TikTok. "We're all communicating more and more through video and photos, yet so many résumés our hiring team receives feel like 1985."

Kalli Roberts, 23, a student at Brigham Young University in Utah, said the 2001 movie "Legally Blonde" had inspired her TikTok résumé. She recreated the famous application video that the main character, Elle Woods, played by Reese Witherspoon, submitted in a bid to attend Harvard Law School.

"Please accept this as my formal Elle Woods style video application," Ms. Roberts wrote in the caption. Her TikTok went viral, and she is now interning in TikTok's global business department.

"I didn't feel like my personality or who I actually am was captured in my paper résumé," Ms. Roberts said. TikTok let her showcase skills, like video editing and public speaking, that might have been line items on a written application, she said, adding, "I had 10 other companies outside of TikTok say, 'If they don't want you, we do.'" Many recruiters are looking beyond standardized applications online or through networking sites like LinkedIn, said Sherveen Mashayekhi, co-founder and chief executive of Free Agency, a start-up focused on hiring in the tech industry.

"Cover letters aren't being read and résumés aren't predictive, so alternative formats are necessary," he said. "Over the next five to 10 years, it won't just be video. There will be these other assessments like games for the early stage of the hiring process."

Some companies said TikTok résumés were a useful way to evaluate candidates for public-facing roles. Chipotle has posted over 100 open positions to the app so far to hire restaurant team members, said Tressie Lieberman, the chain's vice president for digital marketing.

"We do real cooking in our restaurants," she said. "We're excited to see people's cooking skills, whether it's putting chicken on the grill, knife skills or people making guacamole at home and bringing those capabilities into the restaurant."

World Wrestling Entertainment is also using TikTok to recruit, said Paul Levesque, the WWE executive vice president for global talent strategy and development, who is better known as the wrestler Triple H. He said video résumés offered a better sense of an applicant's personality, which is something the company values.

"For us, it's slightly different than a regular office position where you're looking at someone's background," he said. "We're really looking for charisma."

Shopify, an e-commerce platform, said it had started turning to TikTok to find engineers.

"There are smart entrepreneurial technical people everywhere," said Farhan Thawar, Shopify's vice president for engineering. "We have this thing where if you can't explain a technical topic to a 5-year-old, then you probably don't understand the topic. So having a medium like TikTok is perfect."

Other employers raised questions about relying on virality to determine a candidate's worthiness. Adore Me, a lingerie company, began experimenting with recruiting through TikTok in January. Chloé Chanudet, Adore Me's chief marketing officer, said she worried about who got the most distribution in the feed.

"Plus size or women of color are much more likely to not have their videos published or be under review for several days," she said. "We have the same worry that their TikTok résumés may be biased from the algorithm."

TikTok said it "does not moderate content on the basis of shape, size or ability."

Some Gen Z job hunters said they weren't deterred. Christian Medina, 24, an aspiring product manager who graduated from college last year, said he had gotten six job leads since posting a TikTok video last month seeking a product management role.

"Finding a job for a recent grad is almost impossible, and LinkedIn was not the most helpful for me," he said. "I will definitely continue to use TikTok résumés."

DETAILS

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