

Bulletin Board: Step away from the wireless device

by Amy_Winter

Today's workers are obviously attached to their laptops, cell phones, Blackberries and pagers. Thirty-seven percent of employees, according to Yahoo! HotJobs' annual virtual workplace survey that questioned more than 1,465 participants, are more relaxed than stressed when carrying a wireless device to stay in contact with work. And 42 percent of workers feel indifferent toward their gadgets.

Tom Musbach, managing editor of Yahoo! HotJobs, finds it interesting that most employees think it is normal to be connected with work outside the office.

"The gravity of leaving the house without your wireless device has become synonymous with that of leaving your keys at home, if not worse," says Musbach.

Most of the respondents (55 percent) carry more than one wireless device. Twenty-eight percent of workers say the gadgets allow them to work better when they are away from the workplace.

Musbach says that wireless devices can be helpful to work more globally; however, moderation is important to establish. About 25 percent of respondents admit to setting aside their gadgets only when they are sleeping.

"Devices don't come with instructions on how to manage a work/life balance," says Musbach. "It is something everyone needs to do for him- or herself."

Workers may need a lesson in proper device etiquette. Eighteen percent of respondents say they have been warned for displaying bad manners when using gadgets, such as answering a work call or e-mail during non-work hours, talking on the phone in close quarters or taking a personal call while in a meeting.

Musbach gives recommendations to improve gadget manners:

- Put your device on vibrate while you're in the office.
- Step outside for personal phone calls to avoid distracting co-workers.

- Turn the device off or don't bring it into job interviews or meetings.
- Block out some time (an interruption-free zone) for the family where you won't be bothered by work.

"As the wireless device becomes more ubiquitous for personal and professional reasons, many employees develop a psychological need for constant connection," says Musbach.

For more information, visit <http://hotjobs.yahoo.com>.

TIPS FOR GRADS

Due to the competitive market, college graduates need to stand out among the many job-seekers. Recent grads should steer clear of common job-search mistakes and brush up on proper work skills.

"In today's employment environment, there is less room for error when looking for your first career opportunity," says Max Messmer, chairman of Accountemps, a staffing service.

"Employers want assurances that new hires will be able to contribute immediately. They seek applicants who are polished and pay attention to detail - traits that must be evident in one's job-search materials and interactions with hiring managers."

Accountemps provides frequent job-seeker mistakes and how to avoid them:

- Thinking small: Tell family members, friends and professors you are looking for a job. Use professional networking Web sites like LinkedIn to find more contacts. Locate staffing firms that focus on your job field.

- Choosing a general approach: Don't send the same resume and cover letter to every employer. Make changes to fit the particular company, and personalize the cover letter by using the name of the hiring manager.

- Forgetting to proofread: Take the time to make sure your resume and cover letter lack errors. Check grammar and punctuation in other written communication documents such as e-mails and thank-you notes.

- Staying in the dark: Obtain knowledge about the company to better demonstrate ways you can add to the organization's success.

- Posting without careful selection: Don't put anything unprofessional on your online Web page.

- Having a bad first impression: Keep your land line and cell phone voice-mail greetings professional and clear. Don't give out overly cute e-mail addresses.

- Failing to thank others: Be appreciative to those who assist you in your job hunt. And send thank-you notes to the hiring managers.

Because of the tough job market, internships serve as another advantage to college grads. Not only do internships create contacts and workplace experience, but they also may lead to a full-time job opportunity, according to Challenger, Gray & Christmas Inc., an outplacement agency.

"Employers view internships as a valuable hiring tool," says John A. Challenger, chief executive officer. "It gives employers the chance to evaluate a potential employee's performance for an extended period of time in real-world conditions.

"It also lets an employer gauge how the intern fits into the company culture, which is nearly as important as skills and experience."

For more information, visit www.accountemps.com or www.challengergray.com.

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