

Fighting the effects of aging is all the rage these days, with everything from little blue pills for your you-know-what to facial injections that promise freedom of expression (that's expression, singular). If everything else gets softer and flimsier as we age, why does job seeking get harder? It seems unjust. But not to worry; old dogs can indeed learn new tricks, so here are three quick and easy tricks to put that youthful vigor back into your resumes and cover letters.

### 1. Replace Your Fossilized Email Address

You need a professional sounding email name for job hunting, including the part that comes after the "@" sign. For my money, a free Gmail account is the way to go. As Jibber Jobber's Jason Alba recently pointed out: "Gmail makes you look more sophisticated (or up to speed, or whatever) than other providers like AOL (old), Juno (older), Yahoo, etc." Gmail is Google's web-based email service, and it's fast becoming a favorite among the technically savvy, who love it for its excellent spam control, among other things. (I don't have any vested interest in Gmail. I'm just sayin'.)

### 2. Webinar Your Way to the Latest Knowledge

Webinars—web seminars you can "attend" on your computer—are available on just about any work-related topic you can think of. They're great for helping you get up to speed on the latest trends and information in your field. Most webinars are free and typically last 90 minutes or less. To find them, do a web search on your desired topic (e.g., "marketing best practices webinars" or "graphic design webinars") and follow the instructions for signing up. Webinars and other online resources (such as Interview Tips) will not only boost your confidence, they'll also show that you're always learning new things. Keep track of the names, sponsors, and dates of the job-related webinars you attend, and list them on your resume under a heading such as Specialized Training or Professional Development. It might look something like this:

### 3. Be More Intimate with Your Readers

Cover letters and resumes used to be formal and generic. "To Whom It May Concern," your letter might start, "Please accept the enclosed resume as an expression of my keen interest in blah, blah, blah." Can you imagine a hiring manager in this millennium getting inspired to read a whole letter written in that kind of stuffy language, let alone the accompanying resume? Business casual is not just for clothing; career documents are more conversational and authentic these days, too. Here's an example of a cover letter opening with a bit of life in it:

**Dear Mr. Ortiz:**

**ABC Development has been one of the Top 3 places I'd like to work ever since you came out with the successful Widget 3.0 Line in 2005, so I was excited to learn about the Development Director opening. With 14 years of progressive experience as a Development Specialist with companies like XYZ, Acme, and DevCorp, my background seems tailor-made for this position....**

Think about capturing the reader's attention, standing out from the masses, and subtly countering the ageist stereotypes facing middle-aged and older job seekers in the job hunt. Hiring managers have little time and a lot of applicants for every job, so present yourself as a seasoned professional who offers fluency in the latest technologies, web resources, and resume trends, bundled with the wisdom that comes only from experience.

Have you faced age discrimination in your job hunt? Do you think subtle changes like these might help? Please share your thoughts in a comment below.