

What Does Your Email Address Say To Employers?

"Hey, it looks like we've got a great candidate for customer service here," said Joe. "The only problem is, this person's email address makes me wonder about her."

I checked it out. Hmmm... **gothicbikerwitch@hotmail.com**. (*Email addresses have been changed for this article.*) It certainly conjured up an image, but not one I associated with friendly, efficient customer service.

A few weeks later we had a new graduate apply for a management trainee position. "You know," said Joe, "this guy's application looks good except for (you guessed it) his email address."

I took a look at the email listed at the top of the resume. Hmmm ... **cuddlygigglebuns@msn.com**. "It doesn't exactly instill confidence in his business savvy and leadership skills," I admitted.

As I have witnessed first-hand, an "unconventional" email address can definitely be held against you when it comes to applying for a job. It may seem unfair, but it's no more unusual than employers making judgments about applicants based on other superficial criteria.

For example, if you show up for an interview with a dozen facial piercings, you probably won't be hired for a position that involves selling to corporate executives. Likewise, when the employer phones to ask you to come in for an interview, they may not be impressed to hear you impersonating Rodney Dangerfield singing opera on your voice mail message.

"I have to be ME..." you may argue. "If employers can't accept me the way I am I don't want to work with them either." You can weed out employers that way if you want to. In fact, FabJob.com offers great advice if you want to break into an unconventional career away from the corporate rat race.

Still, even in unconventional careers, an oddball email address may raise red flags with people who could help you get to the top. For example, if your dream is to become a celebrity personal assistant, and your email address is **celebstalker@hotmail.com**, you likely will not be as successful as someone whose email address is **organized@assistant.com**.

If you're not sure what kind of message your email address conveys, get feedback from friends and even some employers, if you can. Find out what your email address is communicating.

If your "real" email address is one that employers may judge negatively, consider getting another, more professional sounding, address through a free email service.

Most employers would almost certainly look more favorably on a basic email address using your name, such as **ChrisSmith@yahoo.com**, than an address such as **worksucks@email.com**.

After you've been working for a while, your employer may be more likely to appreciate the real you and your quirky personality or offbeat sense of humor. But until then, consider playing it safe if you want to get the job.

Sue Donnem
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