

The Perfect Resume—Is it Enough? By Julie Godshall Brown

So, you've spent hours and maybe dollars writing the perfect resume and cover letter, you've sent it (tailored, I hope) to the hiring official at the perfect company. Now, you wait, right? And wait, and wait, and wait...

The process for most job seekers ends here—unfortunately for them and for the companies that need their skills. Especially during a tough job market, human resources departments and/or hiring managers receive a huge number of resumes. Even the candidate with the best “pedigree” and the most outstanding resume may not rise to the top of the stack without ample follow through. So, what should be done?

1. First, place a phone call to the hiring manager to make certain that the resume was received. Tell them that you have researched the company (and the position, if applicable) and that you have a genuine interest in finding out if there is a match between your skills and their needs. Ask when YOU should follow up again (not when to expect to “hear something”).
2. Write a letter to thank the hiring manager for taking your call. Let them know that you look forward to talking with them on “X” date. You may possibly include additional information such as a reference letter, copy of a certification, or an updated resume with this letter.
3. Follow up on the date promised. At that point, ask when is convenient for you to meet with them personally. Additionally, ask if they may need further information from you in order to determine their level of interest. Depending on the answer, proceed appropriately.
4. Continue to follow up on a reasonable but regular basis. There is a fine line between proper follow through and harassment. Respect the company representative's time and thank them after each phone call.

Follow through not only shows the hiring manager that you have initiative, it simply puts you in the game. Personally, I would rather hire someone who has a genuine interest in working for my company and has excellent manners and follow through, than the most qualified candidate who is simply putting him or herself “in the market”. I know the president of a large and well-respected local firm who has hired several people who came to him and said the following: “I have decided that I would like to get into your field/industry. I have researched the various companies in the market including yours and your competitors’. I am confident that I will be successful in this field, and I recognize that your firm is the best. I would rather work for you than one of your competitors.” Wow—I would hire them too!

In today's high tech world, it is very easy for a job-seeker to respond to hundreds of internet job postings each week. Many of these folks are simply “putting themselves out there” without any knowledge of the company or position. A personal phone call or hand written letter from someone who shows that they have done their homework certainly stands out from the rest. Isn't this the someone that you want to be?

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