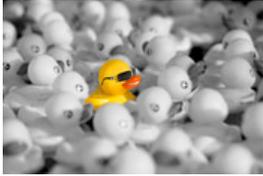


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# How to Get Noticed by Hiring Managers

By Kelly Eggers



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If your resume and cover letter seem to be lost in the black hole of job applications, you're not alone. In a [2009 survey of 10,628 job seekers](#) conducted by New York-based executive recruiter FPC, 42% said not getting a response to their resumes was their biggest frustration.

While not all hiring managers are the same, we gathered a few common suggestions from staffing agents and career coaches on following up with non-responsive recruiters that may help get the feedback you're looking for.

Job seekers need to appease the recruiter on this one. It may seem unfair, but in the end, they're in charge of hiring you and you need to play by their rules.

## Make a Connection

While it isn't by definition "follow up," one thing some experts suggest is making a connection with the hiring manager or another well-connected staffer before or at the same time you submit your application. "I generally recommend that you place a call before you even apply," says David Adams, vice president of learning and development for Adecco Group North America, a global staffing agency.

It's not necessarily easy, but if you do a little sleuthing, you might be able to find someone inside the business. "After you have sent [your application], try to find a warm way in to that organization," says Howard Seidel, Ed.D., J.D., Partner at Essex Partners, a Boston-based executive consulting firm. Try LinkedIn's company search pages, or Google to find a hiring manager or the name of a person within your desired department. Keep in mind that many companies have a standard format for e-mail addresses; if you can find an e-mail for someone within the company, once you track down the name of the hiring manager, you might be able to figure out their e-mail address.

For example, reach out to them and tell them you're interested, or politely let them know you've applied, and would like some additional information about the job. "If

you can make a personal connection before you send an e-mail, you're far more likely to find someone to champion your cause before you're stuck in the resume database with everyone else," says Adams.

### Provide Something Useful

"If you're going to follow up, weekly isn't necessarily bad," says Adams, "but if you're asking the same question every week, you suddenly become more of a pest than someone who is professionally persistent."

Don't send an e-mail each week asking if the recipient is interested in you, or if they need any additional information. Instead, says Adams, send something they'll find useful that shows you're still thinking in terms of the job.

"Information about their competitor, a news article, a sample of your work, or something that aligns with what someone would need to be doing in the position are all professionally persistent," he says.

### Stick to the 30-Second Rule

"Whatever you have to say, if you can't say it, read it, or get the point across in 30 seconds or less, you're awfully optimistic that they'll read it or listen to it," says Adams. "Do not ask about their day, how they are feeling, about the weather, or attempt in any way to make the call personal," adds Randy Merrell, vice president of operations at Elite Network, a San Francisco-based search firm. The same policy goes for emails: "If they have to scroll to read your email, they're not going to," says Adams.

Also, when you're leaving contact information in a message, be sure to make it as simple as possible for the recipient to jot it down. Leave your number slowly and twice -- once at the beginning of a voicemail, and once at the end, Merrell suggests.

### Try Not to Sound Desperate

"Your tone is really important," says Adams. "With each subsequent follow up, if you come across in any way desperate or frustrated, you will lose." Make sure that you always sound optimistic, interested, and excited, he says. "If you start showing a little bit of attitude because they are taking longer to get back to you than you think is reasonable, that will raise a red flag."

Merrell says that if you must, you can establish some sense of urgency early on -- but this is a place to tread lightly. "If you are nearing a decision in your job search, suggest that a meeting be scheduled as soon as possible to allow the hiring manager a proper shot at meeting with you," he says, "but be careful not to come off as coy, or arrogant. No one likes that."

### Stick to their Timeline

Take a lesson from the [Morgan Stanley](#) applicant who [completely ruined his chances of employment](#) by assuming that not hearing back for two weeks meant he was out of the running: Don't assume you know the timeframe in which a company will make a decision.

"I've seen it often -- it can take a company two or three months to make a hiring decision," says Adams. "There are a lot of things happening within an organization," so don't make any assumptions about when a decision is or isn't being made. If it starts to take a while, sending weekly follow up will become over-the-top. Start spacing it out a bit more.

### Don't Assume the Worst

"Never self-select out," says Donald Asher, author of *Cracking the Hidden Job Market*. You might be a seventh choice, and think you should give up, but keep in mind the number of circumstances that can knock one of those frontrunners out, says Asher.

For every candidate in front of you, hiring managers will check references, run background checks, and do final interviews -- processes which can take days or weeks to complete. And those ahead of you could turn down an offer. You won't do yourself any favors by giving up and taking yourself out of the running.

### But Don't Expect the Best

"Job seekers need to properly set their expectations when applying to jobs on web sites or job boards," says Merrell. If you're considering jobs at big-name companies like [Google](#) and [Apple](#), he cautions, you could be competing with hundreds -- or even thousands -- of applicants. "If you expect to get a call back any time soon, or to even get someone live to answer your application, you are asking for a lot."

Job boarding, as a general rule, isn't an effective way to job-hunt on its own. "It's a percentage of your search you don't want to leave out," says Seidel, "but you don't want to live by a diet of job boards. You really have to work other angles in the search."

If you've tried, tried, and tried again, and don't see any promise in the job, don't continue to invest your time following up. Dedicate it instead to tasks like networking, adapting your application materials to each job listing and following up on new, more promising leads.

Write to [Kelly Eggers](#)

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I would add that using social media like Linked In to find real time connections to recruiters and hiring managers- whether you do research to find connections such as alumni, shared groups, corporate social responsibility- anything you can use to make a personal connection that shows you took the time to do your homework- will help you stand out from the crowd. Writing a well timed and quick "inmail" or email to these connections using this info to start a conversation has gotten me more informational interviews and referrals than using my personal network alone. I made a seemingly difficult career transition by networking this way, and ultimately landed my current job using a referral I gained from Linked In.

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