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Résumé Follow-Up

Failing to perform Battle Damage Assessment...

When searching for a job is a common mistake

by Shane Christopher

You found a great job opening at a company you'd love to work for. You've spent hours polishing your résumé. Your spouse, former teacher, former department head and your great uncle twice-removed have also blessed your résumé with their worldly wisdom. You've e-mailed your resume to the hiring manager and even had professional copies printed at Kinko's to follow up with a hard copy. Now you sit back and wait for the company to call begging you to join their ranks.

See a problem with this strategy?

When you were in the military, you were taught to attack a target of opportunity and then perform battle damage assessment (BDA) to determine your next action, if any. "Firing off your résumé" is no different. "Fire and forget," especially in today's tight job market, will only result in sleepless nights for you and your family.

I recently encountered a perplexed, young veteran with substantial post-military information technology managerial experience who boasted of "firing" his résumé off to no less than 300 companies...with no call backs. I asked how he had followed up. Of course he hadn't and therein lies the problem. Anybody looking for work in this job market, especially a techie, needs to rise above the noise level!

"First, you must consider your job search a full-time job and commit yourself to quality follow-up on job leads.

Second, ensure your follow-up is viewed as a positive, not a nuisance.

Calls and e-mails containing trite phrases such as "It was a pleasure to speak with you; I think you will find my résumé to be a perfect match for your company's needs; or I am a value-added, results-driven individual" place unnecessary demands on a hiring manager's constrained time.

While no perfect system for follow up exists and of course each situation is different, the key is to differentiate yourself in some way.

Ensure you translate your skills into a company need. Try providing the hiring manager with specific information relative to his or her company or industry. Forward a press clipping of some recent news on the company with some leading thoughts or questions you have. This shows that you have a sincere interest in the company and want the position badly enough to shed some light on a current event affecting the company. Remember, the hiring manager is concerned about filling his open position with a qualified, motivated person. Your need for a paycheck is not their problem.

Another tactic is to use your personal (friends and family) network to reach out to another individual at the company. Call that person and tell them who you are and what job interests you. Offer to buy them lunch or meet in person. In turn, ask them if they would be willing to contact the hiring manager on your behalf. A referral from a current employee goes further than any shining résumé!

Consider that in today's job market, a hiring manager could easily get hundreds of résumés for a single job opening. Out of say 200 résumés, 100 get discarded because they don't meet the basic requirements for the job. Of the remaining 100, only five followed up with some useful information. Of those five, only two had a personal referral from a current employee. If you're one of those two, you've just theoretically improved your odds of landing the interview from one in 200 (0.5%) to one in two (50%).

Do the math. Don't fire and forget!

[If you need any help in your resume follow up please contact us. Thank you!](#)