

Welcome to another edition of the CareerKiller's News Letter !!

June 3, 2003

Here is a VERY interesting Article I received the other day, for your information and reading pleasure !

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HR's Dirty Little Secret: Nobody Is Reading Resumes !!

Many major firms have experienced layoffs or implemented hiring freezes, and unemployment rates have crept higher and higher. Everywhere you go it seems like everyone is looking for a job.

As a direct consequence, many corporate job sites (*and the Job Portals too - note by Hardeep Sodhi !*) are being inundated with resumes. Well-known companies like Microsoft, Intel, and Hewlett-Packard can receive upward of 50,000 resumes per month via their corporate job sites. For many corporate recruiters the days of relying on paper resumes are over, now that nearly everyone has access to computers and the Internet.

A Smooth And Painless Process - On the Surface

The process of submitting resumes to corporate job sites seems, on the surface, like an excellent one. From the applicant's perspective, job postings are easy to find and submitting a resume is cheap and inexpensive. The process is relatively short, and most corporate sites allow applicants to cut and paste their current resume, saving them a lot of data entry time. There is no limit to the number of times a candidate can submit their resume, so some candidates submit multiple versions. Firms with advanced applicant tracking systems send back automatic e-mails or postcard notices acknowledging receipt of the resume and thanking the applicant for their interest.

It's after the resume is submitted that the pain for the candidate begins. For the most part, candidates cannot go to the website to track the progress of their resume through the system. They never get a note saying outright that their resume will not be considered and why. Instead, applicants wait with great hope for a follow-up email or call asking them to come in for an interview. They wait because they assume that the process offers them a reasonable chance to get a job and because they rightfully assumed that recruiters and managers were reading their resumes.

Unfortunately they often wait and wait and wait!

The Dirty Little Secret

The problem with this seemingly "perfect system" occurs when you look more closely and find out that the odds of anyone actually reading a given resume is often little more than zero! As an "insider" I obviously cannot name the names of specific corporations, but I know of several major firms where literally no one is reviewing resumes from the corporate job site at the current time.

Let's start out with a simple fact: Inside most major corporations, no live person actually reads resumes. Instead they are scanned into or entered directly into the candidate database by the ATS (Applicant Tracking System). Most systems do nothing with the resumes until they are specifically asked by a recruiter or manager to sift through them for a particular job opening. Resumes can sit in the database and literally never be read by an actual human being.

Only if a recruiter or manager decides to search the database after the hundreds of thousands of resumes are electronically narrowed down to a manageable number (usually less than hundred) is it possible for someone to actually "read" a candidate's resume.

Why No One Is Reading Resumes

Few corporations will admit to the fact that no one is reading the resumes submitted in good faith by applicants. Even bringing up the topic causes recruiting managers to run the other way. Any admission that resumes go unread would be a PR nightmare. From the corporate perspective, no one promised that they would read all resumes. Candidates "just assume" that there is some reasonable chance of getting a job through the existing corporate job site system.

Unfortunately, the actual odds of getting a job through many corporate web sites approach that of winning the lottery. There is no single cause for these pitiful odds, but some of the major intervening factors include:

Cutbacks

Cutbacks in the corporate recruiting function have been so dramatic that either no one is assigned or no one has time to scan more than a small segment of the resumes received each week. Recruiters who do search the database generally do it only one day per week - and if a candidate's resume didn't come in that day, it will probably be lost in the volume of the thousands of resumes that will arrive before the next search day.

Resume Spamming

Resume spamming by applicants has become so common that many recruiters and managers refuse to search the database, since it contains numerous unqualified candidates applying for jobs they have no skills for. After being burned a few times, many recruiters and managers stick to referrals, niche job boards, and other high

quality tools (including top class Executive Search Consultants with proven performance - Note from Hardeep Sodhi) including Yes this means they actually abandon searching resumes that come into the corporate website.

Keywords

Applicant tracking systems sort resumes primarily based on the number of keywords in the resume. If candidates fail to use the right keywords there is no chance their resume will be read by a human being.

Hiring freezes

Most corporate hiring has been frozen or so dramatically cutback that those who are searching for resumes only look at the very narrow list of skills required by their currently open jobs. This leaves most other resumes unread. Since corporations don't announce hiring freezes on their website, candidates have no way of knowing that when they apply for a job the company has no intention of reading it at that time.

Huge databases

The sheer volume of resumes is immense. Major firms receive literally thousands of resumes on some days. Since laws (these are American Laws , NOT Indian !!- note by Hardeep Sodhi) require companies to keep the resumes of "applicants" for as long as two years, the size of a major company's resume database can easily exceed one million resumes. Since hiring managers refuse to look at thousands of resumes, recruiters often scan the database only until they find, say, 100 qualified resumes, and then they stop looking. If resumes are sorted by the level of skills and experience, unless you are a "super qualified" applicant, the odds of getting your resume read are painfully low.

ABCs

If the resume scanning system sorts matches alphabetically, the chances of someone with a name beginning with "T" being found may be minuscule if the recruiter stops after they get their 100 target resumes. Even if they search some other way (other than starting with the "As") the odds of any individuals resume being in that 100 selected for further review in a resume database of one million resumes is probably in the single digits.

Management time

Because the management ranks have also been decimated by layoffs, most managers have little or no time to search the database. As a result they rely on recruiters to do it for them or they hire external search firms to avoid the issue altogether.

Poor training

Some search engines are so complicated that most managers and a large percentage of the recruiters never even learn how to search the database. And since most training has been limited, there is little chance that will change in the immediate future.

Passive candidates

Because corporate recruiters are becoming more educated, they often only limit their search to passive candidates. Since by definition, if a candidate goes to a corporate job site and posts their resume, they are automatically an "active" candidate, odds are that the resume is automatically being labeled as having a lower value.

Executive jobs

If candidates are applying for a higher-level executive or technical job, the odds of the resume being read on a corporate website actually are zero. This is because most of those jobs are outsourced to executive search firms that have their own databases and sources. Most executive recruiters do not even have permission to search the corporate database.

EEOC regulations (American Law)

The current definition of "applicant" is unclear, but most corporations are afraid that if they "read" a resume then the person must automatically be considered as an applicant for EEOC purposes. As a result, recruiters and managers are reluctant to turn too many resumes into "applicants."

While I am not proposing that corporations disclose all of their little secrets to the general public, providing insight into your actual process will help alleviate the anger and maintain your desirability as an employer.

Article By

Dr. John Sullivan (JohnS@sfsu.edu) is a well-known thought leader in HR. He is a frequent speaker and advisor to Fortune 500 and Silicon Valley firms. Formerly the chief talent officer for Agilent Technologies (the 43,000-employee HP spin-off), he is now professor and head of the HR program at San Francisco State University. He was called the "Michael Jordan of Hiring" by Fast Company magazine. More recruiting articles by Dr. Sullivan can be found in the ER Daily archives. Information about his numerous other articles, books and manuals about recruiting and HR can be found at www.drjohnsullivan.com .

Dr. Sullivan is also the editor of VP of HR, an e-newsletter providing "out of the box" solutions for senior HR managers. Free subscriptions can be obtained on his website

This the situation presently in US, where Employment Rates are MUCH higher than in India and Employment Laws (EEOC, for example) MUCH more stringent than in India.

So, can you imagine the situation in India ??

Solutions ??? Just My Opinion !

Rather than submitting your Resume to various Job Sites/ Corporate Sites, work with some GOOD and PROFESSIONAL Executive Recruitment Consultants with expertise in your field. This will dramatically increase chances your Resume being read, when proposed by such a Consultant !!

Everyone, Have an EXCELLENT Career !

Best Regards

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About Me !



Hardeep manages M M M Incorporated and is an Electrical Engineer (Delhi College of Engineering, 1981) and an MBA (Faculty of Management Studies, 1983) Graduate with strong Corporate experience both in India and abroad in diverse sectors such as Office Automation, Power, Air Conditioning , Environmental Engineering, Automotive Engineering etc.

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M M M Inc. is a Founder Member of National Association of Executive Search Consultants (NAESCON) – an Association of Professional Executive Search Consultants . NAESCON aims to develop Professional Executive Search Practices amongst TPRs across India.

Following very stringent and transparent practices, M M M Inc. has established itself as a Consultancy with exceptional strengths in sectors such as Automotive, Telecom, Construction, Heavy Engineering etc.

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Will be VERY grateful for all your comments !!

VERY NICE QUOTES

*"Use what talent you possess, the woods would be very silent
if no birds sang except those that sang best." - Henry Van Dyke*

*"I am a great believer in Luck and I find
the harder I work, the more I have of it". - Thomas Jefferson*

(sent in by a reader who doesn't wish to be acknowledged !)

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