

Creative or Crazy? New CareerBuilder Survey Reveals the Strangest Stunts Job Seekers Have Pulled to Get Hiring Managers' Attention

CHICAGO, July 30, 2015 - Jerry Seinfeld famously said, "Sometimes the road less traveled is less traveled for a reason." When it comes to the job search, that sentiment may be true. For its latest survey, CareerBuilder asked more than 2,000 hiring managers to name the most unusual ways job seekers have succeeded in getting their attention - but not necessarily the job.

The national online survey was conducted on behalf of CareerBuilder by Harris Poll between May 14 and June 3, 2015, and included more than 2,000 full-time, U.S. hiring and human resources managers across industries and company sizes.

File Under #CandidateFail

Hiring managers gave the following examples of off-the-wall tactics job seekers used to stand out, but not always for the right reasons:

1. Candidate found out where the hiring manager was having dinner and picked up the tab.
2. Candidate lit a corner of their resume on fire to show their "burning desire" for the job.
3. Candidate had his daughter call the hiring manager in advance of the interview to thank the hiring manager "for giving her dad a job."
4. Candidate had a cake delivered to the hiring manager with the words "Congratulations! [candidate's name] got the job!"
5. Candidate answered a call during the interview stating that another company was calling to discuss a job offer.
6. Candidate sat on the floor during the interview and asked the hiring manager to take a picture of him with the company mascot.
7. Candidate tried to impress the hiring manager with the history of the business, which was incorrect.
8. Candidate had her resume gift-wrapped.
9. Candidate showed pictures of their relatives working at the company many years prior.
10. Candidate acted like a game show host.
11. Candidate brought a bag of props into the interview and pulled them out as they were relevant in the questions/answers.
12. Candidate sent the hiring manager a coupon for a free meal.

Stand Out from the Crowd - In a Good Way

"Job seekers know they're competing with a lot of other candidates, so they're trying more unusual tactics to stand out from the crowd," says Rosemary Haefner, chief human resources officer at CareerBuilder. "For example, one candidate made a "Top Ten" list of reasons to hire him. But while these tactics may succeed in impressing hiring managers, what ultimately determines if they get the job is having the necessary skills and experience hiring managers are looking for."

Haefner suggests the following DO's and DON'Ts for job seekers hoping to stand out in a good way.

- **Don't confuse pestering with persistence.** Most hiring managers don't mind -and even appreciate - a follow up phone call or email, as it indicates enthusiasm and initiative. Bombarding the hiring manager with phone calls or emails, however, can come across as desperate, annoying or even creepy.
- **Do know your audience.** What charms one hiring manager may turn another one off. You can't always predict what will work for one company and what won't. Just keep in mind, however, that a company that doesn't appreciate your unique line of thinking might not be the company that's right for you.
- **Don't overthink it.** Sometimes the simplest approach to getting a hiring manager's attention can be a powerful one. For several hiring managers, the novelty of receiving a handwritten thank you note was enough to make a candidate stand out.

- **Do keep your eyes on the prize.** Don't let your unusual approach distract from what you're really trying to do: Sell your skills and qualifications. Even when trying an unusual approach, tie it back to your skills and why you are qualified for the job.

Survey Methodology

This survey was conducted online within the U.S. by Harris Poll on behalf of CareerBuilder among 2,532 hiring and human resource managers ages 18 and over (employed full-time, not self-employed) between May 14 and June 3, 2015. With a pure probability sample of 2,532, one could say with a 95 percent probability that the overall results have a sampling error of +/- 1.95 percentage points.

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