

DEBUNKING A FEW MYTHS

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There are numerous myths and urban legends circulating among job-hunting clubs, support groups, and even a few bloggers that need to be dispelled. There is no need to make job hunting any harder than it has to be. Let me set the record straight on three of the most prevalent myths.

MYTH #1 – When I send my resume to a company that has an automated resume database, I might as well be sending it into the Bermuda Triangle.

Corporate recruiters are not purposefully ignoring you or your repeated attempts to submit your resume for employment consideration. Hopefully, most of them are at least sending you an email or postcard acknowledgement that your resume has been received. An electronic resume filed in a resume database may actually increase your chances of getting a call about a job opportunity at some future date because of the automated matching capabilities many of these databases have.

To improve your chances of immediate consideration, I would highly recommend you do these three things: 1) apply for a specific, existing job vacancy for which you are completely qualified (meaning you meet all the listed requirements); 2) make the title of the desired position your sole objective on your resume and in your cover letter; and 3) in a brief cover letter, tell how your qualifications meet the four or five key requirements for the position. By doing this, you will have simplified the recruiter's task of qualifying you for further consideration. Without this, you will have to hope the recruiter can read between the lines.

MYTH #2 – When I apply to a company online, I can just sit back and wait for them to match my resume to a current or future job vacancy.

To some extent this is true, particularly for people with skills and experiences that are in very high demand. On the other hand, because resumes do not always portray a person's skills and capabilities in the manner a company may choose to describe them, automated resume matching systems often miss the resume of an individual who might otherwise be a great fit for a given job. Current hiring trends show that nearly 40% of successful job applicants have used more than one means of connecting with their employers of choice. For example, a person may send a resume through the company's website and then attend a job fair to meet company recruiters. If those efforts don't pan out, then the person might contact a friend who works in the company and ask for a personal referral to the responsible hiring manager. If at first you don't succeed, try another approach.

MYTH #3 – When a company says “thanks but no thanks,” you can forget about them.

First and most importantly, please remember that no one has a crystal ball that sees clearly into the future. Companies’ needs change for all kinds of reasons. Acquisitions, mergers, unexpected quits, new product launches, etc. often create needs that no one could have anticipated. So, when a company says “No,” it usually means “Not right now.”

Recruiters can be favorably inclined towards applicants who have done their homework on the company, know what job they are interested in and qualified for, and make sincere efforts over time to make a connection with that company. If you can build a relationship with a recruiter or manager within the organization you hope to work for, they may think of you first when the appropriate opportunity arises.