

HOW TO GET THE ATTENTION OF EMPLOYERS



Are employers ignoring you because you aren't appealing to their mindset?

Here's how to make this necessary adjustment to your job search, with the goal of dramatically improving your odds of landing a job.

The "New Normal"

The biggest change in today's job market is that almost every "open" position is now a "replacement hire." Meaning, unlike boom times when jobs were created due to growth (e.g., "let's add another position because we can't handle all these orders"), the job openings you are looking at today are the result of someone leaving a company. They were fired, transferred, retired, or voluntarily left the company. When the job market gets into this mode, the nature of hiring decisions change dramatically.

What's the biggest difference?

In a "replacement hire" market, employers are focused on hiring impact players. To use a sports analogy, if you lose your star running back in midseason, you don't think about waiting for next spring's college draft. Rather, you head straight to the free agent market to hire the best impact player that's available today. Employers are in the same mindset. Getting approval to hire someone has become extremely difficult for managers, so when they get the green light they want to make sure it's a great "game-changing" hire.

Now for the advice

During times like these, the theme of your job search needs to be that you are an impact player. This feeling and message needs to permeate everything you do, from your resume and cover letter, to your interview responses, to your thank you note; the employer needs to feel that you are an impact player. They want to know that hiring you will lead to an instant improvement in their department. That means you need to convey confidence, self-assurance, and a message that you can step into the job and immediately make a positive impact on their business. Here's what it might sound like in an interview session:

Hiring Manager: *Why do you want this [accounts receivable position](#)?*

You: *I'm confident that I can help you quickly reduce the amount of overdue invoices you have. I have six years of accounts receivable experience, and I would expect that you'd start to see results in the first week after me starting in the job. I'm not someone who is afraid of hard work, and digging into a new challenge is something that I relish.*

Hiring Manager: *How would you go about doing that?*

You: *On my first day I'd start a triage process, where I'd rank the outstanding invoices by size and age. If you're like most companies, 80% of your outstanding collections is attributable to 20% of your customers. Next I would create an action plan for each client, and immediately start making collection calls...*

As you can see, this is a much different interview style than answering questions with cliché's like "I'm a fast learner and a good team player." My suggestion is for you to reread your resume and cover letters, think back to your last interview, and ask yourself whether the employer would think of you as the best free agent on the market, or just another job seeker. If the answer is the latter, you've got some work to do.