

THE HOLIDAYS ARE THE BEST TIME TO SEARCH FOR A JOB

To many people, conducting a **job search during the holidays** may seem like a bad idea. After all, employers have other things on their minds during the holidays, right? The last thing they are thinking about is hiring.

I disagree with this rationale. In fact, I believe the best time to look for a job is during the holidays. If you could pick the perfect time to look for a job, I would say the holidays are it. There are numerous reasons for this.

First, most people don't look for **jobs during the holidays**. Accordingly, if you are looking for a job during the holidays, you have immediately narrowed down your competition. Having the advantage of competing with hardly anyone for a job is about as good as it gets in my book. How many times have you heard people say, "I'm going to wait to look for a job until after Christmas"?

Good for those people. Everyone else is saying the same thing. The problem is that **companies and organizations with job openings** are hiring now. The fact is that everyone is sitting around eating, traveling, and shopping; in the meantime, this may actually be a great opportunity for you to get hired.

In fact, if you plan on looking for a job any time within the next four to six months, the recommended time to start looking is now. Once many executives and others receive Christmas bonuses (around late December and into January), a large number of them will start looking for jobs. Once this starts, you might as well forget it. Your competition will be radically increased. Start aggressively looking for a job right now and you will not have to compete with all of these people.

In *Kramer vs. Kramer*, a great film from the mid-1970s, Dustin Hoffman decides to look for a job right before Christmas. He interviews during an office Christmas party. While the job was not the precise one that he wanted, I can tell you that he was hired, and from what I remember it was the only interview he went on. He had no competition for this job and was hired right in the middle of the Christmas party! Let Dustin Hoffman's job search motivate your own search over the holidays.

In any job search, a contrary strategy is always recommended. Let others make their New Year's resolutions to begin their job searches in January. That is, in fact, what scores of others will do. Who knows why they do this. It is a national custom. Avoid making resolutions to **find a new job** some time in the future. Make your resolution to find a job before others start looking.

In many large companies, **human resources coordinators** run a lot of the hiring process. In the fall and up through Thanksgiving, HR coordinators are swamped with thousands of résumés, and are busy scheduling interviews for eager college and professional students for **entry-level positions**. The hiring of soon-to-be graduate students is a national ritual at most large companies in America. At this time of the year, the last thing HR coordinators want is to help you make a speedy transition into their company. They have too much to do.

After the **fall recruiting season**, however, HR coordinators are at their utmost efficiency and can get you interviewed, called back, and hired in less than 48 hours in some cases. I've seen this happen. You now have their full attention. Come January, the situation will change again. These same **HR coordinators** will be swamped again. They will resent you and everyone else applying to work at their company or firm because it is more work for them. Apply between Thanksgiving and Christmas and these HR coordinators will be much more helpful. They may even welcome the activity your application provides.

As a recruiter, I have always noticed that candidates interviewed on Friday have a much, much better shot of being hired and/or called back than those interviewed earlier in the week. There are several reasons for this, in my mind. On Mondays, and early in the week, the person conducting the interviews is likely to be much more "sharp," and therefore more critical. They will see more things wrong with their interview subject. Additionally, the person they interview is likely to be an annoyance because most people tend to have more work on their plates at the beginning of the week. Accordingly, they often resent the person for even showing up for the interview. As the week goes on, the interviewer completes the majority of his or her scheduled tasks, is exhausted mentally, and is therefore less critical of the person he or she is interviewing. Therefore, in my experience, people who interview at the end of the week fare very well.

If you interview between Thanksgiving and Christmas, the interviewer will associate you with the holidays and not their pressing workload. Most companies have much less work between Thanksgiving and Christmas. This is an excellent association to have attached to you. In fact, it is said that people almost always remember others by their first impression. Get associated with the holidays and you are likely to have a fantastic career with your next employer by virtue of this association. Become associated with happy times in your future employer's mind.

Although many interviewers may not celebrate Christmas, many others do. The Christmas season has a lot of meaning for many people. Because people spend their year arguing and being critical of others in their jobs, members of their families, and most everyone they encounter, Christmas is a time when many people remember such tales as *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*. Thankfully, our culture believes it is bad to be a Grinch. Incredibly, if you interview during this time, there is a subtext suggesting that the interviewer should not be "Grinchy", and should give you a break!

Additionally, because Christmas is associated with giving, during the holiday season you will likely encounter interviewers in the process of buying gifts for family and friends. This creates a subtle attitude shift whereby the interviewer will feel more giving. They may feel giving enough to want to give you a job. Even if the people interviewing you do not buy their families presents, they may still not want to be associated with the Grinch. Therefore, they may give you a job.

Christmas is a time of holiday parties. Holiday parties start immediately after Thanksgiving and continue right up until New Year's Eve. As you are no doubt aware, holiday parties can get pretty crazy. Certainly, there are almost always inebriated people at these parties. If you interview with someone the day after a holiday party, they may be so out of it that they do not have the energy to be critical and will simply "rubber stamp" you at the application stage. Moreover, a lot of people may simply feel good overall from the camaraderie of holiday parties. They will think everyone is a big happy family (despite mass firings that may have occurred several months earlier). They may see you as part of that family, too.

Additionally, a lot of people take their annual vacation during the holidays. This is outstanding because the company's customary decision makers may not even be present. Instead, someone without experience aggressively scrutinizing potential hires may be in charge. You could get hired for a position that's perfect for you but above your experience level—by mistake. Do not laugh; I have seen this happen! Let the holidays work for you, no matter who you are!

In sum, the holidays are the best possible time of the year to look for a job. If you really want to get a job within the next month or so, no other time of year will present a better opportunity than the holidays.

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