

CONTACT THE RIGHT PERSON

What I know to be true... If you don't get your resume to the right person, you might as well not send it out at all.

One of the greatest mistakes job seekers make is to only send their resume to individuals who receive hundreds of resumes every week. These individuals are normally listed in classified ads, ads on the internet, or have posted jobs on their websites. These methods put you against the largest numbers of competitors who want the same job. Often you will not even hear back from these companies because, quite frankly, they don't have time to respond to every candidate.

Here is an example to explain my point: Typically search firms send out marketing materials to companies who have run job ads or posted openings on job boards. These letters are printed on company letterhead, and may include a brochure and business card. No resumes are included in these mailings.

These search firms report receiving an average of 10 to 15 response letters per week. The letters thank them for "submitting their resume" (which had not been done), and informed them they hired someone with more experience, but would keep their resume on file. What resume? The companies were sent an envelope filled with the search firms marketing materials, not a resume.

The point I'm trying to make here is that you can't take rejection personally when you are conducting your job search. Half of the time your credentials were not reviewed due to the sheer number of individuals who applied for the same position. The company did not reject you. They rejected your paperwork that they did not even read.

With advanced technology, many companies utilize automated systems to screen resumes. If they do not identify key words in the top portion of the resume, the resume is screened out. Think about that for a minute, you could be screened out by a computer. Would you like to learn a process guaranteed to give you better results? Of course you would.

Get your resume in the hands of people who normally do not receive resumes. So often an executive, manager or department head has someone on their team they would like to replace, but don't want to go through the hassle of interviewing. The Human Resource Department is not aware of this weak link. If your resume landed on the desk of one of these decision makers, do you think they would read your resume and possibly schedule an interview with you? The answer is yes.

If you sent your resume to the Human Resource Department, they may inform you that they do not have any current positions available.

The way to identify the right person is to find the person within one of your targeted companies who would be either your boss or your boss's boss. Let's assume this person's title is Accounting Manager because you are seeking an auditor's position. You can search for contact names and titles on their company website. Many executives have extensive profiles on various social networks. You need to learn how to navigate the internet to find the individuals you are targeting.

If you don't have their name, you should call into the targeted company and ask for the correct spelling of their Accounting Manager's name. When you ask for the correct spelling, the Receptionist may assume you already have the name and you are just clarifying the spelling. The Receptionist will then spell the name for you. You also want to confirm their exact title. If this gatekeeper is being cooperative you might also ask for their direct line, so you have this information for your follow up call.

Often job seekers speak with an uncooperative gatekeeper who will not give out information. Gatekeepers (Receptionists) go to lunch normally between 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. During that time, there is an Administrative Assistant who is covering the front desk and is not happy to be there. They tend to give out the information without asking any questions. I actually have had Receptionists email me their company directory to give me the information they felt I needed. Be nice to the gatekeeper and they will be more receptive to your call.

You may also want to ask to speak to the Accounts Payable Department. The person who has answered the phone assumes their company owes you money and will normally transfer your call without hesitation. Once you are connected, you explain that you were trying to reach the Accounting Manager or whatever title you have targeted as your contact person, and act confused as to why you were transferred to Accounts Payable Department.

People who work in Accounts Payable or Accounting are detail oriented and will often not only give you the name of the person you want to reach, but will provide you with their direct extension in case your call is transferred to the wrong individual. If they don't offer to share this information with you, ask for these details. For example, "If my call gets disconnected is there a direct line I could call back?" Make sure you thank the person for their assistance and then contact the person you have targeted.

It does take work on your part to identify and contact the right person, but in the long run it greatly improves your ability to schedule interviews.

The next challenge is how do you make your contact memorable? The following tips will help:

1. Do your homework, sound informed and share information about their company.
2. Ask questions that allow your target to talk about themselves. When you let someone talk about themselves they like you more and don't realize why.
3. Show a high energy level and excitement about working for them and their company.

4. Send your follow up thank you note in a unique container. For example: A tube vs. an envelope. Research if there is a way to tie in what your targeted company produces with your unique container? Use an odd size envelope. Always handwrite the mailer and put the words "Personal and Confidential" in the lower left hand corner so no one else opens your note.
5. When you call to follow up, offer to provide them with more information or facts that you have uncovered vs. asking the status of your resume.
6. Always maintain a positive attitude during each contact and conversation.

If you follow this advice, you will greatly improve your chances of booking interviews and getting hired, because you're contacting the right person.