

From one 29 year old to another:

I've managed to have a bit more success than it sounds like you have, and the best advice I can give you is to abandon your computer. Sending cover letters and resumes to generic HR emails is exactly as useless as you think.

Get off your butt, put on a suit, shine your shoes, and walk into as many offices as you can. Bring your cover letter and resume with you - in a 9" x 12" envelope with a label, please. Hand it to the front desk, and chat as long as you feel you can politely get away with - it does matter, I got my dream job that way. Try and get a business card of someone in the division you're interested in (many smaller firms keep them at the front desk, and if not you lose nothing by asking for a name). CALL them and follow up.

Our whole generation is scared of annoying people by actually talking to them. What's the worst they're going to do, not hire you? Companies seem like big black boxes. The truth is that while warm bodies are plentiful, talented people are very difficult to find, and it's a huge relief to a stressed out manager when one actually calls them up offering to help out, so they don't have to bother sorting out 100 generic emailed resumes.

Good luck!

[Mike McFae](#)

8:50 AM on May 17, 2012

oh ...and tell me upfront about your work ethic and willingness to work extra hours , or not ...had one guy told me he needed to start with 6 weeks holidays because (he said very proudly) his wife had 6 weeks holidays and they were looking forward to enjoying family vacations together.

Guy must have went to university in Quebec (sorry, couldn't resist)

[The Black Queen](#)

8:59 AM on May 17, 2012

Not always feasible depending on the industry. For many, this is a great strategy to attempt. You hit the nail on the head: talking. Communicating to whomever the company or person is makes you more than a piece of paper, it turns you into a polite individual with a face and a voice and a name.

[Ontariocentric](#)

9:00 AM on May 17, 2012

Submitting resumes online doesn't work, but neither does the strategy that you suggest. I work for a large company with our head office on Bay St. We often have job applicants come to reception to drop off a resume wearing a suit. Do you know what happens to those resumes? The HR recruiter takes it in her hand and throws it directly into the garbage without looking at it.

Sometimes the squeaky wheel doesn't get the oil.

It's about who you know, period. If you don't have a connection, you won't get an interview.

[j baskin](#)

9:02 AM on May 17, 2012

I dont know what kind of offices you were walking into but it wasn't big corps, if you're looking at working at a little mom and pop style company than that will work.

Who is going to waste their time coming to the front every time a new grad decided to show up and ask for a job, imagine only 1 person doing that everyday, how annoying that would get, in fact you wont even have an opportunity to talk to anyone because the front secretary will stop you in your track.

ask me how I know

[Grunter Grimm](#)

Excellent advice.

Just dressing yourself up will make you feel good about yourself.

Pick a sunny day to go out and knock on doors, this will make you feel happy and positive.

9:13 AM on May 17, 2012

For larger corproations, online applications work best. Those corporations have deliberately set up their hiring processes to prevent uninvited interaction with applicants. The one exception to this is if you have a guardian angel on the inside through personal connections (aka nepotism, cornyism).

I have gotten all of my jobs through the online method, apart from my very first one, which I got through a personal connection between teh hiring manager and someone at my university.

Score: 9

[AnneC2](#)

9:35 AM on May 17, 2012

And please pay attention to spelling and grammar in your cover letters. As an employer, something else that annoys me to no end is receiving resume applying for a job different than the one that was advertised, not speaking to the actual job advertised at all, generic photocopied cover letters....and applicants that have not done any research into the job/organization they are applying to. I know how hard it is, but sometimes the simple things can get you in the door.

[www-d](#)

9:37 AM on May 17, 2012

This is very industry-specific. In general you should apply the way a job listing suggests you apply. If a company is set up to accept resumes online then those resumes get into the system, and resumes sent via the mail have to be scanned to get into the system. In my building the scanner and the shredder are in the same room, and the shredder is easier to use.

[varun xm](#)

9:51 AM on May 17, 2012

@GW bravo! You have a bright future.

I hired a young lady in much the same way. When I interviewed I actually went with a more experienced person but I remembered her verve. Then I had a small project and I called her. It was a freebie we were doing for a client so I could not pay a lot. It was also outside her skills set. But she took it on. She did the research, asked the right questions and boy! did she make it shine! needless to say her salary is more than double what it was when she came on board before the bonus.

@GW... if you're ever looking for a challenge ping me :-)

[YappaD](#)

10:03 AM on May 17, 2012

In most companies, it would be considered near-harrasment for outsiders to show up wanting to see someone. Even cold-calling on the phone is considered very rude. I would never hire someone who did that.

[varun xm](#)

10:08 AM on May 17, 2012

@yappaD... considered near-harassment by whom. most of the barriers to success are what we put on ourselves.

[duderanch18237](#)

10:12 AM on May 17, 2012

I have to politely disagree. I did this for 4 weeks after I got out of uni in 2009. "Beating the feet" does not work. More than 3/4 of the places I went to would not even take my resume and told me to apply online. Of the places that did, you guessed it, none got back to me. I'm not surprised.

I did this a favor to my "executive" dad who thought they still hired this way - he was kind of shocked when he asked his HR girl a few months later and she said they hadn't done that in years.

[Evilbred](#)

12:26 PM on May 17, 2012

Yaaapa,

Then at the end of the day, you've lost nothing. If 9/10 companies are annoyed by that tactic, no big deal, because it's the 1/10 that counts.

You miss 100% of the shots you don't take.

Score: 5

[DirtDawg54](#)

12:55 PM on May 17, 2012

As a senior executive in a large company I can attest to the challenge of finding great talent while recognizing the challenges facing great talent in finding a great company to work for.

But here is what rubs me the wrong way about this article. I read nothing but a sense of entitlement. You want a big high pressure job so you can have all the trappings? from day one? You better be top of class kid. And if you are, don't worry, we will find you. No need to come find us. However, if you are like everyone else - and like I was - you need to start at the bottom and earn your keep. I started 25 years ago, making \$12,000 annually. After five years I was exited from a pretty decent paying job (was making over \$40,000 at the time). It took me months to find the next one, but paying \$28,000.

I rented for the first several years, drove a beater just to get from A to B, clipped coupons, wore my one good suit with alternating shirts and ties and didnt take any kind of fancy vacation until even en years ago. Prior to then vacation was hanging around the house or camping.

Did I have it easy to get that first job or the next ones? No. I started in 1987. Five months prior to the stock market crash. I lost my job at the end of 1990, just as recession was taking hold in

Canada. I was unemployed for several months and burned through whatever savings I had to stay afloat. I know all about how challenging it is to get a job when you are young and no one thinks you can add value.

Today I am now the hirer. I remain cognizant of the challenges facing people. I take calls all the time. I help people network. I've helped countless people land jobs, inside our company and with others I have connections with. The talent pool is as deep as ever and for every person I hire, I see dozens of others I wish I could hire.

But even with all of that, want to know a disturbing statistic? I guest lecture at a local college and prominent business school. I post my direct line, cell phone and email address for all the students to see. I invite them to call me or drop me a line. I have handed this information out to hundreds, if not over a thousand, students over the last five years. Know how many have ever called me? One. She got a job.

I feel for you the writer. But you need to dial down your expectations and put in the work. You need to more effectively network. You need to stand out. Being young and educated doesn't make you special. It makes you one of tens of thousands trying to join millions of others already employed with pretty much exactly what you bring to the table.

Score: 1

[tixxit](#)

1:07 PM on May 17, 2012

I got my current job by sending in my resume/cover letter online, so it certainly isn't useless.

Score: 0

[G.W.](#)

3:35 PM on May 17, 2012

Thanks for the kind words above, much appreciated.

I'll happily admit that emailing your resume works for some, I just think it's a remarkably poor way to market yourself, and places far too much trust in the employer (or its automated screening system) to recognize talent.

Why not do more? One firm got back to me the morning after I dropped off my resume asking for transcripts and references. So I sent them both, along with a couple samples of my university work and a email commending my performance in a previous position. If they look at it, great, if not, as long as it's professionally presented and concise, you really have nothing to lose.

Every week you spend looking for a job costs you hundreds of dollars, and you're just as far from your first raise and first promotion as ever. So why not do everything you can?

By the way, there's some amazing advice floating around this comments section, much

[RuleinHades](#)

4:19 PM on May 17, 2012

There's a reason offices have glass doors and card locked elevators. Walking in off the street may not help, there. BUT, going to trade events, mixers, seminars will gain you access to the people actually doing the work who will one day decide they need to bring on some new grad help. Even figuring out which bar or restaurant they frequent (I'm thinking downtown Calgary here) and being there for game night is a good way to make contacts.

My wife overheard two people behind her at Starbucks a couple of years ago discussing the need to find some new people after a takeover; she handed them my card and I got a call that week.