

Bulletin Board: Job hunting myths debunked

by Maggie_Reed

Don't get caught up in the bunk.

The job market is constantly changing and everyone wants to offer you advice ... but, it may no longer be effective.

However, you can steer clear of these common myths:

- You should keep your resume to one page; any longer, and hiring managers won't read it. That's not necessarily true. Just because it's longer than a page, doesn't mean it will go directly in the trash. But, have it contain errors? That's a different story. According to a poll by Robert Half International, a staffing firm with a global network of more than 350 offices, 84 percent of executives said it takes just one or two typographical errors to remove a candidate from consideration. And 47 percent said a single typo can be the deciding factor.

- It's pointless to request an interview with a company that isn't hiring. Nonsense. It might not get you a job, but you will build your professional network and, in turn, could learn of future opportunities with the firm. Look to set up a meeting with someone who can give you info about the company.

- If you've applied for a position and haven't heard back, it's safe to assume the position has been filled. Not so. An overwhelming 94 percent of executives surveyed by Robert Half said candidates should contact hiring managers after submitting application materials; 82 percent recommend doing it - whether by e-mail, phone or letter - within two weeks of submitting a resume.

- The most-qualified candidate always gets the job. Smarts alone do not always land the job. While employers want competent people on the payroll, they also depend on intuition when making a decision. Almost half, 46 percent, of those surveyed said they rely heavily on instinct when hiring. Another 49 percent follow their gut at least some of the time. It's employee's soft skills - such as getting along with the team - that causes the antenna to rise. So, don't give up on jobs where you only have the minimal requirements.

- There's no room for salary negotiation in today's job market. Yes, there is. Demand for skilled professionals continues to outpace supply in a number of markets. Research what others with similar qualifications are making. The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Outlook Handbook is an excellent resource as is Robert Half International's annual Salary Guide.

- In tough times, take the first job offer you get. Don't give into the pressure. Tolerating a job you hate - whether for a week or a year - can set you back professionally and emotionally. Sometimes you have to take a job like this but don't feel guilty holding out for the position you dream of if you have the financial means to do so.

For more information, visit www.rhi.com.

DON'T LOOK LIKE A FOOL

So, now you have that new job you've been looking for.

Don't let a dream turn into a nightmare.

"Starting a new job can be like a honeymoon or your first night in hell, and you have unique control over which way it goes," said Tom Gimbel, chief executive officer of The LaSalle Network, a Chicago-based staffing, recruiting and executive service firm that has worked to place employees at over 800 companies.

Gimbel offers these tips to make sure you don't get off to a bad start:

- One week warning. A week before you start, call in to make sure everything is in order. Ask if you need to bring in any additional info and check again on work attire.

- Clear your calendar. Don't make personal plans during your first week. Managers don't take kindly to you checking your watch ... especially when you've just started.

- Race to work. The commute can be maddening, so give yourself time. Arrive early? Have a cup of coffee. Arrive late? Your job may not be waiting tomorrow.

- Patience and paperwork. Your first challenge will most likely be gads of paperwork. Expect it and deal with it graciously and with enthusiasm.

- Before you start, get smart. Learn names ... of reports, supervisors, co-workers. Your initial effort to get acquainted makes a lasting impression and goes a long way.

"I've learned from overseeing the placement of over 8,000 employees that starting well transforms your experience at a company," Gimbel said. "Take control of your first few days and they can set the tone for the rest of your time there."

For more information, visit www.thelasallenetwork.com.

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