



WHY I DIDN'T RESPOND TO YOUR JOB APPLICATION

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Most of you know my weekly column for resume writing tips. But I'm changing direction a bit this week to address something I've found is really important to job seekers everywhere. It begins with a confession.

I don't respond to every [job application](#) RezScore receives (yes, [we're hiring!](#)).

When we first launched and weren't getting that many [applications](#), I'd review every one and respond with some personal comments, even when we were not going to conduct an interview. But eventually I stopped. I'm not proud of that, and I'm working on getting better at responding to job applicants. It's a shameful thing to admit. But I think there may be some lessons for employers and job seekers in reviewing why I haven't been responding to [job applications](#) as well as I should be.

I'll clarify up front, some of these are poor excuses, but they are all the truth. Job seekers are right to demand that hirers change, but until hiring managers begin doing things differently, job seekers should try to understand why they don't always get a response to their applications. I'm also hoping you'll see that not getting a response to your job application doesn't necessarily mean you did anything wrong.

I hate saying no

You took the time to write me a targeted cover letter, an excellent resume, and connect with me on LinkedIn. But you're simply not a fit for the role. I respect your effort so much that I just hate to say no off the bat, even though I know that you are not the right hire. It's easier for me to ignore your application and not respond at all. Job seekers probably like getting rejected even less than I like writing rejections, but it's still painful for me to do.

You won't take no for an answer

In the beginning, I'd carefully write out my reasons for rejecting a candidate and share it with them. Problem was when I did that, candidates frequently took it as an invitation to rebut. I certainly can't blame them for wanting to rebut, but 99% of the rebuttals took the form of "...but I can learn that skill" when I need the candidate to already have that skill. I'd get caught up in these long back and forth emails when the answer was simply, no. Smart candidates won't take no for an answer, but unfortunately that means I've learned to just avoid saying no altogether.

Your application is untargeted or didn't follow directions

If your cover letter mentions another company's name, or your background is a mechanic and I'm hiring for a writer, I'm not going to put more effort into a response than you put into your application.



Similarly, if we ask for a particular format or line item – it’s for a reason. If you didn’t follow the directions, it means you either didn’t read or didn’t care enough to follow them. In fact, sometimes I throw in a small direction (i.e. use subject line “RezScore Job Application”) to automatically weed out hasty applications.

I don’t have time

This one is the worst. But I get dozens, if not hundreds, of emails a day that require a meaningful response. Never mind the avalanche of marketing or unsolicited emails. Some days I feel like my entire job is simply replying to email. That means I have to prioritize, and it’s easier for me to downgrade responding to an applicant than it is to delay a reply to a big client. We’re also constantly hiring writers, but mostly because we like diversity, not because our existing group of writers can’t handle the volume. I can always afford to delay responding to an applicant because we have a good enough writer roster as is.

There are a few other reasons I may not have responded. I may not have received it in the first place. You may have mistyped my email address. My emails to you may be going to your junk folder. You may have an email address that is off-putting. The role may be on hold. The list goes on and on....

There is hope though! **I respond to 90% of follow up emails I get.** If you’ve applied online through our Simply Hired [posting](#) and then taken the time to [follow up with me](#) a week later, I will respect your effort and make sure to reply to your application. And I **know** that other employers work the same way.

What do you think? Are my excuses valid? Have you ever ignored an applicant?