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"I'll take anything": Three words that will kill your job search

By Beth Braccio Hering, Special to CareerBuilder

It's not unusual for job seekers to reach a point in their searches when they stop hoping to land a coveted job and resign themselves to considering *any* position. In theory, this "I'll take anything" attitude sounds promising: Less selectivity means greater possibilities, right?

Not so fast. Before spending precious time applying to jobs for which you're not qualified, consider these ways that a cast-your-net-everywhere tactic can backfire:

1. Employers don't care if you're desperate.

"Hiring managers are looking for one thing: a good match between the job and the applicant," states Catherine Jewell, author of "New Résumé New Career." "Employers want to know that you will fit in and feel comfortable with their culture. The more you *sound* like them the better."

So just because you're willing to settle for anything, don't assume your value has increased. If you aren't well-versed in the field, your inexperience is bound to be noticed either on paper or in conversation. Conversely, shooting too low in a job search reeks of neediness (never an attractive quality) and raises red flags as to whether you'd be happy in the position or are simply buying time until you can bolt to a more suitable job.

2. Untargeted applications aren't going to be noticed.

When quantity starts taking precedence over quality, the end product is going to suffer. A general résumé that could fit any position at any company is simply not going to make a hiring manager choose to interview you over countless others.

"The targeted application helps you stand out from the talented pool of applicants," says Joel Garfinkle, founder of DreamJobCoaching.com. "You can highlight specific experiences that relate to what is outlined in the job description, and the employer can easily see how your qualifications fit what he desires." Garfinkle also recommends learning as much as possible about the company *before* submitting an application in order to tailor to its needs.

3. Busy-work takes away from profitable actions.

Most candidates have a certain amount of time and energy they can devote to job searching. If they waste it on generic mass mailings, there is less left for activities that could generate good leads.

"Focus on the positions you really want instead of applying for something you don't want," says Richard Deems, co-author of "Make Job Loss Work for You." "Use the same amount of time to network for introductions into organizations that hire people who do what you want to do. Research companies of interest. Find out their unmet needs, think of how you can meet those unmet needs. and then present yourself."



4. People may see you as wishy-washy.

Networking means reaching out to others and letting them know what you have to offer. An elevator pitch of "Help! I need a job" is unlikely to convince anyone that your skills are worth remembering. Likewise, contacts may be less inclined to think of you or to offer a recommendation if they are unsure what type of job you actually want.

While you may view yourself as flexible by trying to get a foot in any door at places you'd like to work, others may think differently. "If you apply for just 'anything,' you are wearing out your welcome with that employer," Jewell cautions. "It's tricky to present one image -- say, [marketing](#) -- one day, then turn around and present yourself for another opportunity -- such as [customer service](#) -- the next week. It leaves the impression that you don't know who you are and what you are about."

5. The strategy can create deceptive hope.

Finally, be aware that churning out applications can do a number on your mind. Initially, the boost in productivity may feel like gaining more chances in the job-hunt lottery, but if most of what you've sent out is destined for somebody's wastebasket because it lacks the qualities needed for genuine consideration, your odds of success have not improved.

Garfinkle notes that constantly applying for a job may make you look impressive on the surface. "At the end of the day, your spouse will ask you, 'How's the job search?' and you can respond, 'I sent out 10 résumés today,'" Garfinkle says. "This provides a false sense of feeling good about yourself and the progress you are making on this job search."

Worse yet, the corresponding rejection can damage your self-worth. As Deems warns, "For every 100 you send, you'll only hear from five to seven of them, if that many. And for every one you send that you don't hear from, you'll get a bit more depressed."

So look for opportunities that offer real hope and put in the effort needed to be a viable candidate. True satisfaction comes from landing a job -- not counting the number of attempts you made.

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