

# JOB MARKET

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## STEP IT UP

Consider this your intervention. Time to change job search strategy

There are a variety of reasons why your job search may not be yielding results, such as a still uncertain economy or where you live, but it may also be because of you. You may have updated your résumé and applied for hundreds of jobs, but could you be the reason your job search is stalling?

### You're treating every listing the same

Not all companies are looking for the same application. "The biggest mistake is thinking this is a numbers game. It isn't. It is a care game," says Marcia LaReau, career services expert. "Understand the company, their needs, the position, the industry and their hiring processes. Every application should be clearly customized. Not doing this is a quick trip to the black hole. The time it takes to turn out a fine, well-crafted application is two to eight hours." If you believe you're the right person for this job, take the

time and make the effort to prove it.

### You're making up your own rules

Job applications come with specific requirements so that hiring managers have the information they need to choose the right person. However, job seekers can fall victim to job-application fatigue and start picking and choosing what they include or submit, which works against them.

"Job seekers often simply don't follow instructions," says Anna Mathieu, marketing communications manager. "If an advertised position lists a contact, contact that person, and not anyone — or everyone — else whose email address you have. Most hiring professionals do not have excess time; they are busy trying to get the job done. If you can't follow protocol or take the time to read and follow the instructions, you may have just self-selected yourself straight out of the process."

### You're getting ignored

Timelines vary for career coaches and hiring managers, but you shouldn't be ignored forever if you're submitting quality résumés. "Our standard is that if a job seeker doesn't get at least one response for every 10 résumés, there is something wrong," LaReau says.

"They need to look at what they are submitting and carefully track and document their changes to see what will work in their industry. Truly, one in seven résumés should receive a call if the person qualifies for the job and understands the hiring processes that their paperwork will travel."

"If your résumé isn't getting you a foot in the door, take a look at it," Mathieu says. "Does

your résumé seize attention? Does it quantify your results? Does it differentiate you? Does it do all this in 15 seconds? A résumé needs to accomplish a lot quickly. If you aren't getting calls, rewrite your résumé to brand yourself and demonstrate how your employment would solve the company's challenges and meet their goals."

### You're applying for jobs you can't do

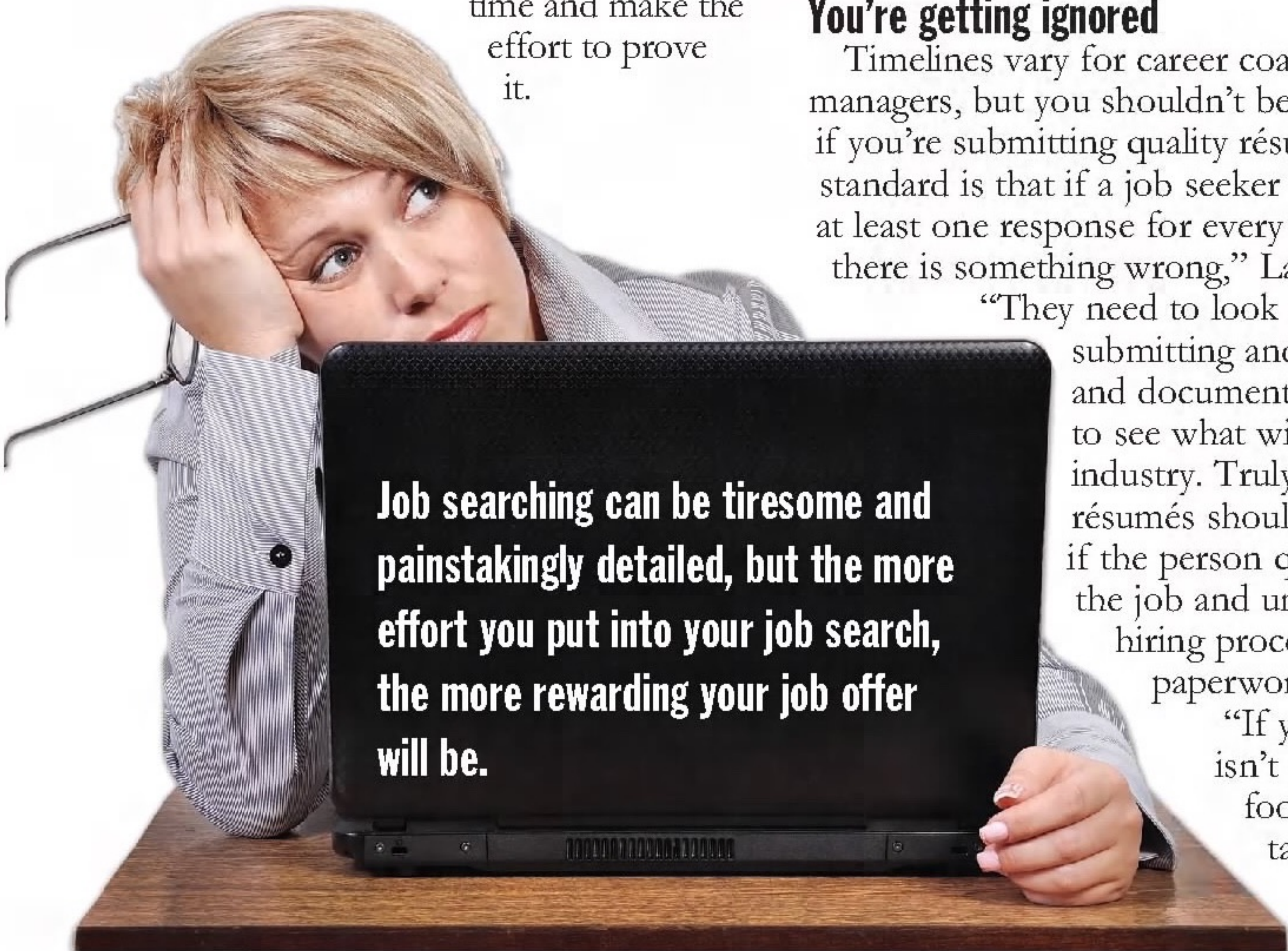
Maybe it sounds like a dream job, maybe it sounds close enough to what you do now, or maybe it's in the same industry. That doesn't mean you should apply for it.

"One of the most common mistakes job seekers make is applying for positions that look appealing, regardless of whether they meet enough of the employer's requirements," says Kelly Donovan, professional résumé-writer.

"It's easy to say, 'I think I could do that job; I've done some of those things before.' But the hiring manager wants someone who meets specific criteria, and the human-resource professional screening your résumé will be checking whether you meet the required qualifications listed in the job posting. Ideally, you should meet all of the required qualifications for a position, but at the very least you should make sure you meet at least three-fourths of the required qualifications — and make sure your résumé clearly shows how you meet those requirements."

### You only have one game plan

The modern job search requires a mixture of different approaches, so be sure to use them all. "Many job seekers put all their eggs in one basket, relying too heavily on a single job-search tactic, when they would be better off incorporating a variety of approaches, including networking, applying for advertised openings, cold-calling, using social media and reaching out to recruiters," Donovan says.



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