

Why don't headhunters return my calls?

Q *"Let's admit it: Many headhunters are jerks. I should know better, but I keep wasting my time with them. It's always too late when I realize I'm just cannon fodder. They let me go through the interview process, but most of the time it's clear they submitted me for the wrong job. Headhunters pursue you then won't return your calls. Why do people tolerate such poor treatment and how do we stop taking it?"*

A It's all psychology and it's pretty simple. The problem isn't that headhunters don't return your calls or that they send you to the wrong interviews. It's that you take calls from headhunters when you shouldn't.

Why do you do it? *Because you'd rather have help than go job hunting on your own.* You have to get over it. Your experience just emphasizes how few good headhunters are out there—ones who actually need you for an appropriate job. If a good headhunter can lead you to a great new job, you both benefit. But it's when the opportunity seems most attractive—and when you're most willing to submit—that you must carefully check out the headhunter before proceeding.

Ie If you ignore due diligence at this point, you'll regret it later after you have invested time and emotion in a dead end. People have bad experiences with headhunters because they fail to verify who they're dealing with.

Look at how this problem comes about.

Q *"A headhunter asked for my résumé so I sent it, no big deal. The more I think about it, the more I think this job is perfect for me, but the headhunter won't call back. How do I get her attention again?"*

A Most headhunters quickly ask for your résumé. It may seem a small thing to agree to send it. But that's the way we all start down the path to making ever-larger commitments. We take a free trial subscription to a magazine for three months. We provide our credit card number to get 30 free music downloads. Or we sit through eight hours of sales presentations for a free weekend at a resort. And before we know it, we're rationalizing that first step by touting the resort to our friends, paying for a magazine we don't really want, or interviewing for the wrong job.

The request for a résumé turns into a request for detailed references and confidential information about your employment history—before the headhunter divulges information to enable you to decide whether you're really interested in "the opportunity." Soon you're in a hurry to chase a job that was "no big deal."