

Title:

"Why Don't Recruitment Agencies Get Back to Me?"

Dealing with a recruitment agency can be frustrating. Here's the brutal truth from an insider on how they work and why one has such a tough time with them.

AND ...the 5 streetwise strategies you can use to make them work for you.

Hi – Thanks for downloading the article. Please print it out, pass it around.

Gerard le Roux (that's me) is/am a 'guerrilla' job search coach – giving you the streetwise strategies on how to conduct a job search that works. Fast. Landing you more job interviews and more job offers.

You may have read some of my advice in The Star, Financial Mail, The Argus, online at Career Junction or on IOL.co.za, or heard me on Radio 702, Cape Talk 567, SAfm and Radio 2000.

Take my free job hunting e-course by sending a blank e-mail to tendays@getresponse.com or visit www.jobsearching.co.za/free-stuff to register. It's a real injection of energy, motivation and good advice. Also visit my website with many, many articles to assist you – www.jobsearching.co.za or take advantage of my CV writing service – find out more at www.wowcv.net.

All the best – oh, and by the way: there's a RANT! page on my website where you can go to let out all your job search, career and job market frustrations and ask questions – go to www.jobsearching.co.za/rant-add-yours-here

Regards,

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"Why Don't Recruitment Agencies Get Back to Me?"

Ever get the feeling your recruitment agency just doesn't care? No need to answer that. They're famous for it. And it's frustrating, infuriating. It drives you nuts. So here are some facts, brutal but true, and 5 easily do-able strategies for dealing with it successfully.

The Brutal Truth About Recruitment Agencies

- Your agency doesn't care
 - unless you're an exact match for one of their clients
- The agency doesn't make money
 - from just having 'people on their books'
- They thus only view you as important if
 - you're an 'in-demand' kinda guy/girl
- The agency environment is very sales driven
 - commission is what matters most
- And it's very competitive due to a low entry point - no particular qualification, experience or large investment required to start operating an agency
- Agents will frequently place adverts for positions they actually have no definite mandate from the company on – they're just hoping the 'best' candidate will apply to them and that will give them an 'in' with a company they want as a client
- Job adverts are frequently duplicated – i.e. numerous agencies advertising the same position – again, hoping they'll get the best candidate – so you, the applicant, can run around interviewing several times for the same position
- Job adverts placed by agents on the job boards, employment sites are often left there even though the position has long since been filled. Often they pay a monthly usage subscription which gives them the advertising space – they just put ads up willy nilly and leave them up because they don't get paid to take them down
- Some individual agents – wrongly – seem to be on a bit of a 'power

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trip' – they have the vacancy and you don't!

- Agencies – relatively – are highly ineffective in finding jobs for people. Their ratio of applicants to actual placements is very high (1000:1 maybe)
- They will often try to twist your arm into accepting a completely unsuitable job interview or job offer – because "things are tough – this is a good opportunity" – with little or no regard for what you want. They just want their commission

All of this adds up to ... you guessed it ... bad service to you the applicant.

BUT Wait! An Agency's Defense

However, it's not all their fault and employment agencies are not all bad:

- They play a valuable role from an employer's point of view in hiring new people
- Good agents can 'get you in' sometimes against the odds, due to their positive relationships with clients - even when you may not have the perfect profile for the job
- They get thousands of low grade, irrelevant, poorly written CVs, emails, faxes, etc on a monthly basis from job hunters – they can't possibly deal with the volumes
- They have to deal with people who don't understand – at all – any of the above points. Most applicants don't understand that agencies are NOT there to serve them – and so many make all sorts of demands which cannot be fulfilled
- Very often job hunters expect the agency to be a 'career guidance' center. It's not
- Applicants seldom come in to an agency with a clear focus on exactly what they want, exactly what benefits they can deliver and how – agents have to try 'figure it out'
- Agency owners commonly place their agents under extreme pressure to make their sales targets. So, giving you quality service just doesn't feature on their list of priorities. Individual feel stressed

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and under pressure

- Because companies usually approach agencies as a last resort to hire for them – they expect the earth: only the best candidates, with exactly the right qualifications and experience. They're not that open to applicants without the perfect profile. And very few applicants have it

So, back to the original question: "Why don't recruitment agencies get back to me?"

Here Are the Reasons Why They Don't Get Back to You

Any one of the following reasons could be why they're not getting back to you – or a combination of a number of them:

- They're in a position of power – and they like making you sweat
- They just don't care
- They don't like giving applicants bad news – they're hoping you'll just 'go away' quietly
- They don't want to admit that actually they never had the mandate to recruit from the company anyway, or that the company won't accept their applicants or calls
- The client/company isn't getting back to *them* – it happens a lot – as companies also go through all sorts of complex 'stuff' when hiring people. Ever heard "*the position has been frozen*" before? Sure you have. And it's frustrating for everybody
- The recruiter is not wanting to deal with the ugly business of 'blowing you off' – maybe you were just wrong for the position and they don't have the guts to tell you
- It's also possible that the reasons you're not considered suitable for the job are actually illegal. The client wants a hot chick! And you don't fit that description!
- There are no consequences for them not getting back to you – it's not like you pay for their services – or have the time or energy to take them to task
- They are just too busy, there are too many applicants, and it's not a

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profitable activity

Now, what's most infuriating is when you have a genuinely – well, it feels like it anyway – positive interview: "you're great for the position", "excellent, this is looking good" they may have told you, etc. And then you hear nothing for weeks. It's confusing.

But it may be all of the above factors at work. And it's sometimes as frustrating for the agency as it is for you – with no-one at the company being straight with them about why their applicants (including you) are 'no good', or even not getting back to them after repeated follow ups.

So there you have it. **But what can you do about it?**

Practical Ideas to Help You Turn it Around

The solution is really mainly about not having unrealistic expectations. You have to take the position that using an agency is only ONE of your job search strategies. You cannot afford to just apply to agencies and then sit waiting for calls. You're likely to be disappointed before long.

Here are some innovative things you can try:

- At the end of an interview, tie things down firmly: not "when will you follow up with me?" but "Can I follow up on the 27th (specific date) with you?" Then do it.
- Send a thank you note. Hey, not some lame e-mail or a pretty little card, okay? Make it a powerful marketing message:

"Hi Jane – thanks for the interview! Just a reminder – here are the 3 best reasons why your Client may consider me a great applicant: ..." or "... after giving the interview and your client's requirements further thought, here's a short list of projects I've worked on as proof that I've done the work and can get the results they're your Client is looking for."

Give them the 'ammo' they need to make a convincing 'case' to their client to see YOU.

- Go in to an interview with focus - after interviewing for a position ALSO ask:

"Right, now Jane, so I'm looking at the Financial Services industry. What other clients do you have in that sector? Who do you have relationships with? Where else have you placed

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people in the past?"

The reason you ask this is because you're keeping up to date with what's happening in your industry of interest. You know the companies. And you know where you can fit in. You know the problems you can solve. You know what benefits you can provide. And you're looking to the recruiter to provide you with an introduction.

You want them to set you up with an 'exploratory interview'. Even when no vacancy exists, you want them to set you up with a 15 minute interview in your industry of interest, with a decision maker.

As agencies know well – most jobs are only advertised at a late stage in the recruitment process. Some are never advertised. But good companies are always interested in talent – good people who can make money for them, or who can help them beat their competitors in some way. And this, whether they have an official 'vacancy', or not.

Doing this may land you 2 or 3 interviews instead of just one, or none. But you've got to have your act together. Agents will only go out of their way if they feel confident in you and they're convinced that you can do what you say you can.

- Make your CV and cover letters really clear. You need to have a well presented 'marketing message' immediately featuring why you're a great candidate (experience, job titles, qualifications, past successes/achievements for eg.).

Don't expect the agent to spend time trying to figure it all out and put your marketing 'picture' together – y'know, wading through your 20 page CV. They just won't. They can't. You have to do it for them right up front.

One last comment regarding agencies getting back to you – and how to handle it – is this: if 3 weeks have passed and you've heard nothing – by all means give them a call! However ... agents stand to make up to 25% of your annual salary as commission. For someone earning, say, R240 000 per annum, and at a commission of just 15%, that

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"take the strategies and ideas above and really work with them. You will have more success"

means a commission of R36 000.

I mean, if there's good news of you maybe being offered the job (and them getting that commission), do you think for a minute they'll delay giving you a call? No.

So if you don't hear from them and you've followed up and applied some of the above suggestions – and you've *still* heard nothing, then in the words of a popular book (and now, movie): **they're just not that into you!** Move on.

What's a real waste of energy is trying to force the issue with agencies. Your energy is better spent elsewhere. A lousy reality, but true. Rather take the strategies and ideas above and really work with them. You will have more success and more joy in your job hunt - and even with agencies - than ever before.

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Gerard le Roux is a 'guerrilla' job search coach – giving you the streetwise strategies on how to conduct a job search that works – fast - to land you more job interviews and more job offers. See www.jobsearching.co.za for more info and take Gerard's free job hunting e-mail course by sending a blank e-mail to tendays@getresponse.com, or visit www.jobsearching.co.za/free-stuff to register. It's a real injection of energy, motivation and good advice.

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