

Offers can take time: Bring patience, humor and an updated reference list

Written by Julie Desmond • Plan Your Career
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This time, it's all about me. If you are looking for work, let me tell you, I feel your pain. In keeping with the new frugality of our times, I had the brilliant idea that I would find a part time job within a gym and, for the cost of a few hours of my time, enjoy the free membership afforded employees at many fitness centers. I started this process in November. January is now behind us and I am beginning to pack on the pounds.

In December, a hiring manager called. She left a voicemail saying she wanted to schedule an interview. I left an enthusiastic message in return and waited by the phone, for a week. Afraid she had somehow missed my message, I dialed again. Still no response. Until January.

Hooray, an interview. Or so I thought. We talked, arranged a meeting time and I arrived a few minutes early. However, she did not. She was out sick that day. I left her a voice mail, hoping she made a quick recovery and letting her know I was eager to meet.

A few days later, when she called back, I was losing steam for this big idea and for this supervisor. I agreed to an interview, we had a great conversation and I was back on board. She wanted to check my references, of course, and would get back to me.

Two weeks later, she began calling my references, apparently not realizing my big (literally) hurry to start my new job and my new workout regimen. She was rude to them, and rude to me when one of them (who had changed jobs) was not available at the first number provided. Likely, this manager is overworked and understaffed. I'm still wondering what the decision will be. My references wonder why I want to work there.

I have found jobs for myself and countless others, in every economy, at every career level and in a wide range of industries, and this might be the toughest one yet. But did I do everything possible to facilitate the process? No, I didn't. Maybe you can learn from my mistakes.

First, I applied for positions at only one gym. All those eggs in one basket – rookie mistake. Second, based on the interview, I thought this was a done deal. But I never sent a thank you note. It might have helped her realize I was excited about the opportunity, which I was.

Third, I failed to update my references' contact information. I knew one had changed jobs; I should have brought updated reference information to the interview.

Will they hire me? Who knows? I am typing with my fingers crossed and my gym shoes on. Julie Desmond is Director of Career Planning Resources with Help Wanted! Workshop in Minneapolis. Send comments and questions to julie@insightnews.com.