



Ghosting – A New Challenge for Veterans

ACP11: This article was written for and originally published on the ACP AdvisorNet site. The site is no longer available.



Online Community
Assisting Veterans

“Ghosting” as part of the recruiting and hiring process has become a prominent issue based on reports from several sources. According to hiring strategy company Greenhouse, “ghosting” is experienced by a higher percentage of candidates. 39% of respondents have experienced ghosting in the last year.

While 62% of white candidates said they’d experienced no follow-up from a company at some stage of the interview process, that number rose to 78% among underrepresented candidates—those with Arab, Asian, Black, Hispanic, Latino, or multiracial backgrounds.

When I read about this new information on the topic, my first reaction was: **what about veterans?** While there is a lot being written about what organizations should do to address ghosting and the possible biases, my focus on job-seeking issues repeats the question: **what about veterans?**

“Ghosting” Candidates – “Ghosting” Employers

Ghosting isn’t just an employer behavior, job seekers also ghost employers.

A recent survey by ZipRecruiter found that more than a fifth of US workers who had started a new job in the previous six months admitted to ghosting a prospective employer while job searching.

The reasons job seekers give for their disappearances vary, from receiving another offer (20%) to dissatisfaction with the offered salary (13%). And 15% simply decided it wasn’t the right job for them.

Candidates cut off communication early in the hiring process — after an initial phone screen or interview. But others take it further, with one-quarter of employers reporting new hires “no-showing” on their first day of work.

While these latest insights on ghosting appear in most HR and business publications, the issue itself is not new. In a survey I conducted more than three decades ago, 48% of responding organizations admitted to some type of ghosting behavior. And 65% of candidates admitted to ghosting potential employers in some way.

What is “Ghosting?”

Ghosting" in the context of workplace recruiting, interviewing, and hiring is when a candidate or an employer abruptly ends communication and cuts off contact without providing any explanation or closure. It involves one party in the hiring process disappearing or ignoring the other party's attempts to reach out, leaving the other party confused and uncertain about the status of their application or the hiring process.

Ghosting occurs at various stages of the recruitment process. For job seekers, it typically happens after submitting an application or completing an interview. Instead of receiving a rejection or an update on their application status, they are met with silence and no further communication from the employer. On the other hand, employers may experience ghosting from candidates who fail to show up for scheduled interviews or stop responding to follow-up inquiries.

The rise of digital communication methods, such as email and online application platforms, has made it easier for ghosting to occur. Candidates may submit multiple applications and interviews simultaneously, making it tempting to ignore or forget about certain opportunities. Employers, on the other hand, receive a high volume of applications and struggle to respond to each one individually.

Possible Impact on Veterans

There are several factors related to ghosting in the hiring process that can be particularly challenging for veterans or transitioning veterans:

Transitioning from military to civilian life: Veterans often face unique challenges when transitioning from a military career to the civilian workforce. They may have limited

experience with the civilian job application process and may not be familiar with common hiring practices. As a result, they may be more vulnerable to experiencing confusion or uncertainty when faced with ghosting from employers.

Skills translation: Veterans possess valuable skills and experiences gained during their military service, but these skills may not align directly with civilian job requirements. They may face difficulties in translating their military experience into civilian terms on their resumes or during interviews. When employers ghost veterans without providing feedback or guidance, it can make it even more challenging for them to understand how to effectively communicate their skills and experiences.

Unique qualifications and needs: Veterans may have unique qualifications and needs that require specific consideration during the hiring process. For example, they may have acquired specialized technical or leadership skills during their military service. Ghosting can hinder the process of addressing these specific qualifications or needs, leaving veterans feeling disregarded or overlooked.

Reactions and Actions

The first reaction to being ghosted in your job search is simple. Recognize that it's part of the many challenging aspects of the job market. Many articles on this site offer insights into these realities.

Second, make sure your resources, your resume, interviewing skills, etc., address the issues raised in the previous section. Being prepared as you submit applications, practicing for interviews – these are steps that can take you deeper into the selection process.

Finally, **and I believe this is the most important action to address ghosting**, work with a mentor or a career coach so that you are constantly monitoring your career search. Obviously, a coach can help you with the previous point, helping you to fine-tune your resume, practice your interviewing skills, and support your understanding of today's more complicated hiring processes. A coach can work to ensure you are focusing on your strengths and advise you on if (and how) you can follow up when you're being ghosted.

Your search for a satisfying career is an active process, it cannot be a passive "submit and wait." That only invites ghosting behavior from a possible employer – and from you as a candidate!

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