

**LEE HECHT  
HARRISON**

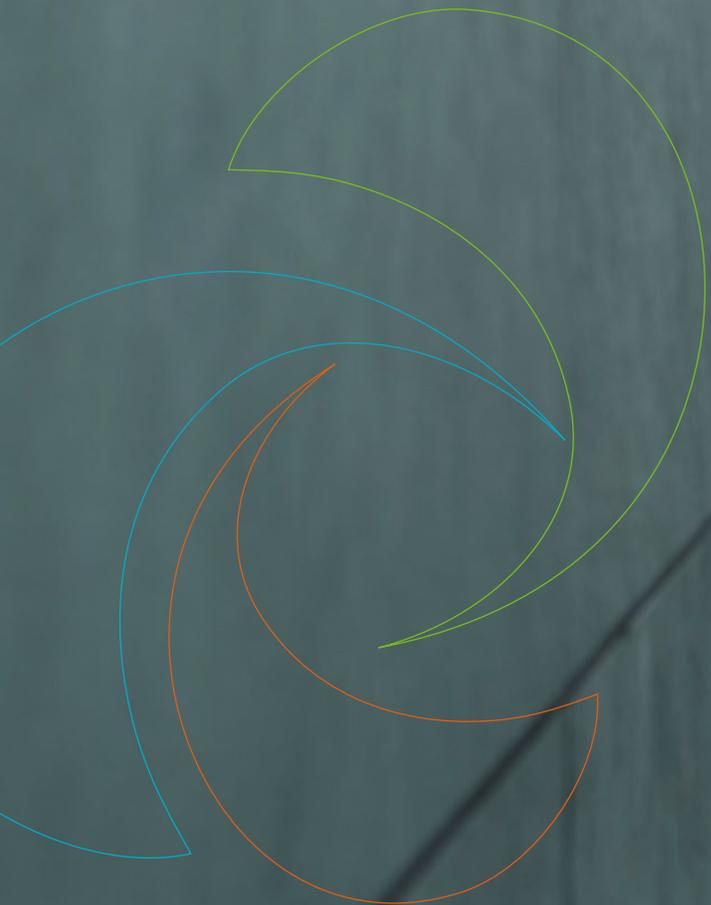
# Unraveling the Mysteries of a Job Search:

*Hiring Managers Share Pitfalls and  
Opportunities When Applying for a Job*



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	3
How and Where Do Employers Find Talent?	4
Your Resumé Opens the Door to an Interview	6
The Evolving Interview	8
Nailing the Interview	10
Preparation, Meet Opportunity	11
Interview Pitfalls: What to Avoid	13
Conclusion	14
About the Research	15



# Executive Summary

A job interview is a watershed moment in the life of any job seeker.

Nail the interview, and a door will open to new career opportunities. Bomb and job seekers could find themselves constantly on the outside of great job opportunities, looking in and wondering what went wrong.

Despite the fact that job seekers understand the stakes—and more information is available now online than ever before about what do to and what not to do in a job interview—many continue to make rookie mistakes that could have easily been avoided—with coaching and practice.

All that information does not necessarily prepare the average person for the modern job interview. Sourcing and interviewing methodologies are

constantly evolving. The inability to keep up with these advances, along with the capacity to fall victim to some long-standing pitfalls, is what holds many people back at the doors of a great job opportunity.

To better understand why so many interviews go wrong, Lee Hecht Harrison surveyed 277 human resource managers responsible for sourcing or hiring talent. The respondents came from organizations of all sizes and major industries across North America, Latin America and Asia-Pacific.

Our research clearly shows that while technology has made its presence felt in the sourcing and hiring process, face-to-face interactions remain a key element in recruiting and hiring talent.

# How and Where Do Employers Find Talent?

The first thing you need to know about current trends is hiring managers are mining an increasingly broad array of social platforms to identify talent.

Our survey revealed that hiring managers rely not only on LinkedIn, but also (albeit to a lesser degree) on Twitter, Facebook and Glassdoor to source and attract the interest of top candidates. While all platforms are being used to advertise and

post open positions, LinkedIn is used much more often than all others to also evaluate candidates.

When conducting a job search, know where you'll want to focus your attention for sourcing open positions. Your online profile(s) should support your career aspirations. And remember that employers will be looking at your LinkedIn profile to evaluate you more carefully.

*Hiring managers told us how they are using social networks to source candidates and what their objectives are.*

Sourcing Objective	LinkedIn	Facebook	Twitter	Glassdoor
Building a talent pipeline	32.0%	15.6%	20.6%	21.4%
Utilizing recruiting tools	37.5%	14.1%	5.9%	16.7%
Facilitating conversations	40.8%	25.0%	32.4%	19.0%
Seeking referrals or recommendations	54.8%	34.4%	20.6%	21.4%
Evaluating candidates	58.1%	17.2%	11.8%	16.7%
Advertising open positions	58.5%	50.0%	55.9%	61.9%
Searching for talent using key terms or hashtags	64.0%	14.1%	14.7%	19.0%
Posting jobs	70.2%	53.1%	61.8%	69.0%



*Hiring managers told us which social media platforms they are using to source candidates for their company.*



Twitter



Glassdoor



Facebook



LinkedIn

# Your Resumé Opens the Door to an Interview

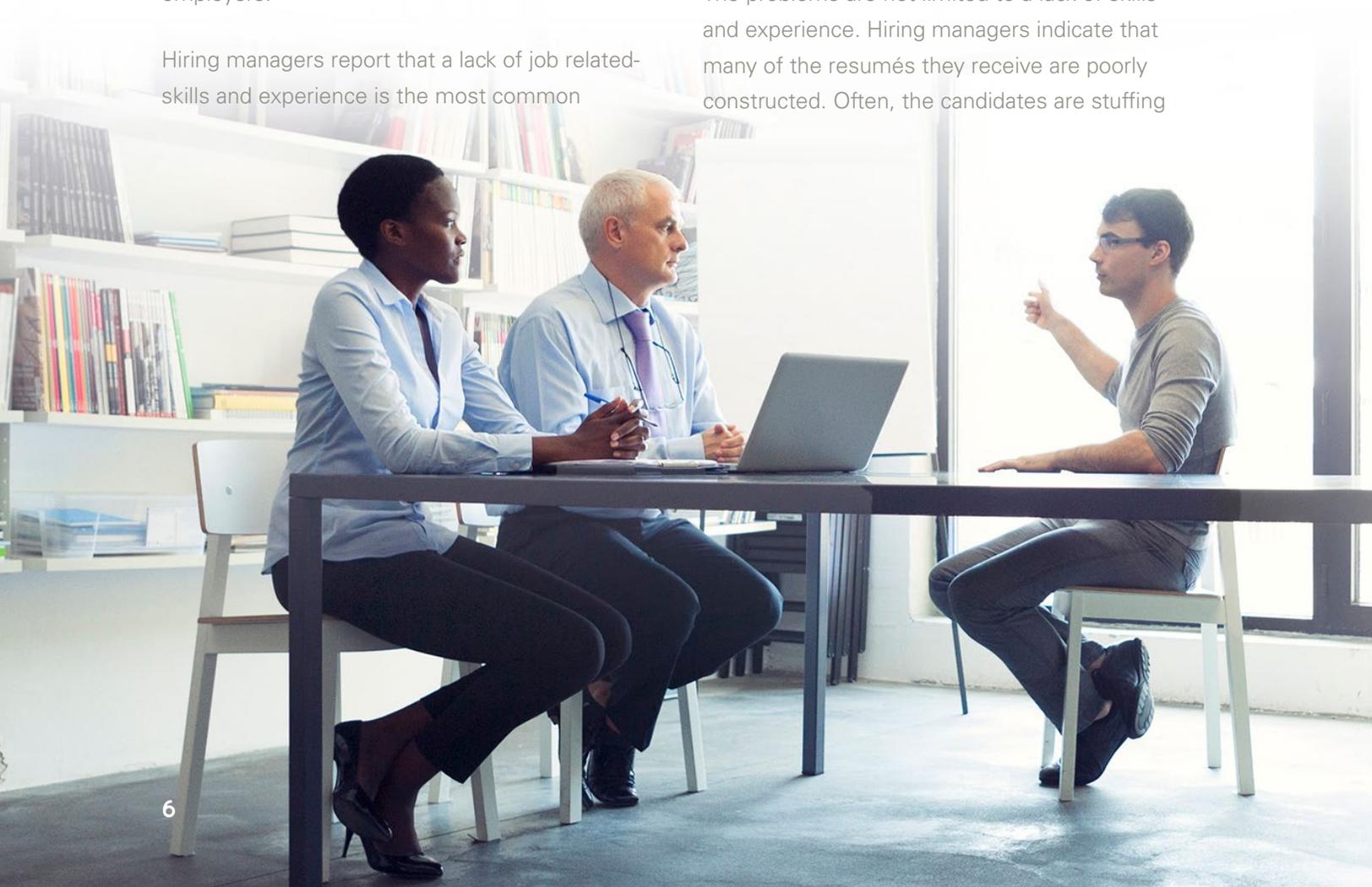
Applying for a job and submitting a resumé certainly does not guarantee anyone an actual job interview. That has never been truer than it is today when online job postings can generate an avalanche of thousands of resúmes. With so much information often overwhelming many hiring managers, job seekers face increasing challenges to get noticed and be selected for an interview.

In assessing applications, hiring managers report a wide array of chronic problems that limit an individual's ability to land that interview. Problems that are actually amplified when job seekers rely solely on online solutions to connect with employers.

Hiring managers report that a lack of job related-skills and experience is the most common

problem they see when assessing resumes and applications. That may seem an odd and obvious shortcoming in an age when people have access to millions of open positions through online job boards. However, exposure to all those potential jobs seems to encourage job seekers to broaden their job search to include positions for which they are not entirely qualified. It's a platform that seems to foster a hit-or-miss approach that does more to frustrate hiring managers than impress them. With an absence of strategic intent or targeting, there is a low likelihood of generating a true match between candidate and position.

The problems are not limited to a lack of skills and experience. Hiring managers indicate that many of the resúmes they receive are poorly constructed. Often, the candidates are stuffing



their resumé with keywords in an obvious bid to get through resume screening software and applicant tracking systems. This results in resumé that are solely focused on tasks, rather than skills and accomplishments.

Instead, job seekers should be tailoring all messaging to align your skills with the needs of the potential employer. You should seek to highlight accomplishments that are quantifiable, and avoid sending your resumé out to any/all openings.

Most importantly, don't be afraid to undertake the extra legwork to use social platforms to research hiring managers and company executives to see if you have anyone in your personal network that can make an introduction. For example, a good

practice is to go to the LinkedIn profile of the person you want to get introduced to. You'll see mutual connections displayed on the right side of the page. Then simply click the "request an introduction" link and click "send."

Be careful to proofread materials submitted to a potential employer and content included in your online profile(s). Many hiring managers are unforgiving of even one typographical or grammatical error and will quickly disqualify you.

And finally, if you aren't selected for an interview but feel you'd be a good fit for the organization, continue to pursue the company. You may not have been selected today, but you might be selected next week or next month.

*Hiring managers rated how detrimental they believe each of the following issues is to a candidate's chances of being selected for an interview.*

<b>Candidate Issues</b>	<b>Detriment</b>
Lack of job-related skills	9.0
Lack of required technical skills and experience	8.9
Spelling/grammatical errors	8.5
Lack of required education/training	8.1
Inappropriate social media	7.7
Resume doesn't showcase results or accomplishments	7.5
Gaps in work experience	7.4
Lack of industry experience	7.3
Lack of tenure in current/previous positions	7.3
Titles don't accurately reflect position(s) and/or responsibilities	7.0
Poorly defined value proposition	6.2
Generic resume and cover letter	6.0
Failure to include a cover letter	3.9

*Ratings based on a 0-10 scale, where 0 represents "Not at all detrimental" and 10 represents "Very Detrimental."*

# The Evolving Interview

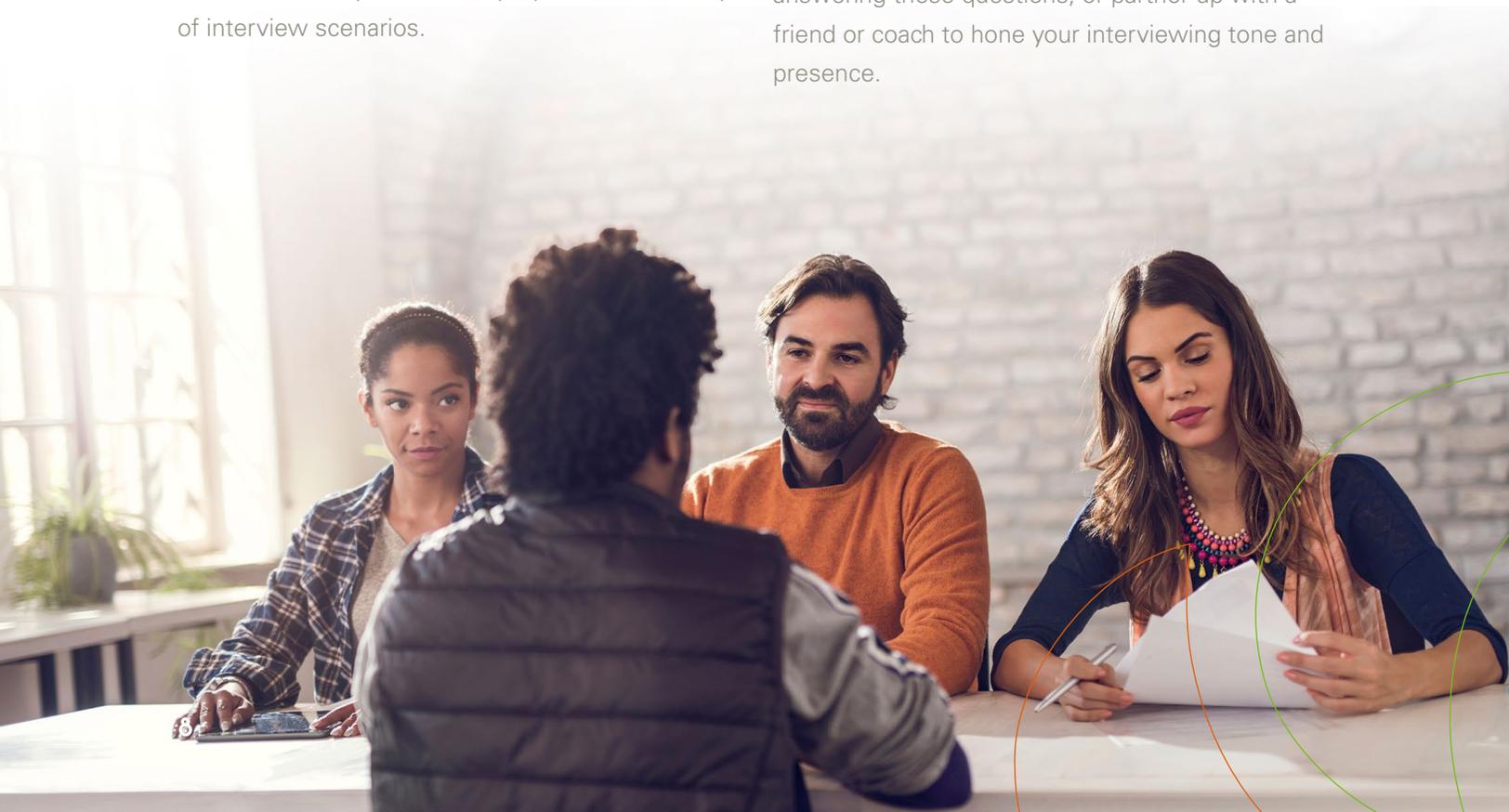
What are hiring managers looking for, and how are they looking for it?

According to our survey, hiring managers increasingly see behavioral interviews as the most effective way of assessing skills and cultural fit. They do this by asking candidates to tell stories about past job performances as a means to predict future performance.

However, our results also reveal that the interviewing process has become much more complex in recent years, with a range of styles and methodologies at play in the assessment process. Candidates today need to be prepared for a variety of interview scenarios.

The high cost of bad hires has driven hiring managers to dig deeper to gain as much information as possible, sometimes through several interviews, to ensure the candidate is a good fit. Again, technology can open the door, but hiring managers still rely on the visceral experience provided by a face-to-face interview.

Remember that even if you landed an interview through your network or through a personal referral, you still need to be able to manage a face-to-face interview. To that end, invest time in honing your interviewing skills by practicing answering typical interview questions. Record yourself answering these questions, or partner up with a friend or coach to hone your interviewing tone and presence.

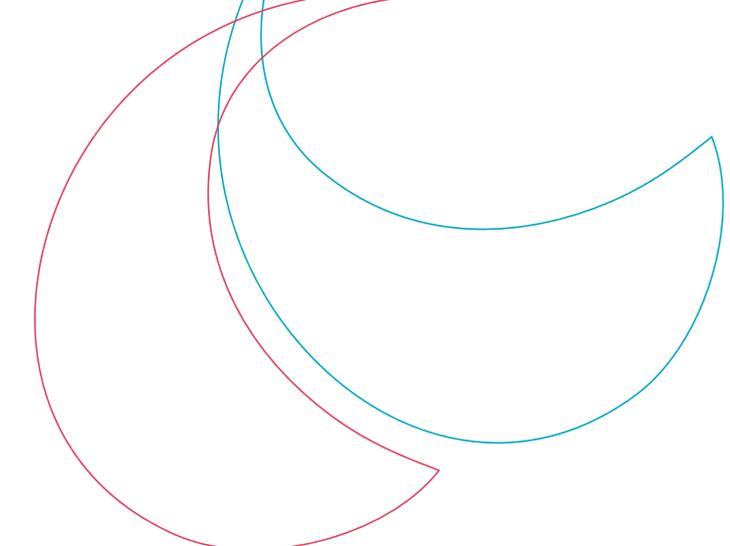


Hiring managers told us how effective they believe each of the following practices are for assessing candidates.

Interviewing Style	Effectiveness
Behavioral interview style	8.7
One-to-one interview style	8.5
Assessment effectiveness: Situational interview style	8.4
Multiple interviewers	8.3
Background checks	8.0
Case interview style	7.9
Reference checks	7.8
Presentation interview style	7.4
Panel interview style	7.4
Leadership style/type surveys	7.3
Simulation-based assessments (role play exercises, in-baskets)	7.2
Video/virtual interview	7.2
Personality assessment	7.1
Phone interview	6.9
Cognitive tests	6.7
Online screening survey	6.3

Ratings based on a 0-10 scale, where 0 represents "Not at all effective" and 10 represents "Very Effective."

Many candidates launch into interviews without professional coaching or support that can provide unbiased, constructive feedback about the job search skills they need to compete effectively for top jobs.



## Nailing the Interview

You know you nailed an interview when you come out of a face-to-face meeting with a hiring manager and you feel that there was a connection. Where all the questions you were asked, and that you asked of your potential employer, were answered fully. Where you established an easy rapport.

However, along with those great encounters, hiring managers get to see the other side of the interview equation. They have to suffer through awkward conversations with candidates who are poorly prepared, and lacking in knowledge, skill and motivation. Overall, hiring managers we surveyed found too many candidates were simply unprepared for a challenging job interview. As a result, they continue to see far too many candidates that display surprising—and avoidable—gaps in their interviewing skills. See

page 12 for specific advice to help you prepare for an interview.

*We asked hiring managers how often they saw the following interviewing pitfalls.*

<b>Interviewing pitfall</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Failure to research company	6.7
Failure to ask smart questions	6.5
Talked too much	6.3
Poor listening skills	6.2
Arrogant	5.9
Critical of former employer/colleagues	5.7
Too reserved	5.5
Lack of enthusiasm	5.5
Overly enthusiastic or intense	5.4
Arriving late for interview	4.6
Inappropriate attire	4.5
Interruptions with electronic devices	4.1

*Ratings based on a 0-10 scale, where 0 represents “Not Often” and 10 represents “Very Often.”*



## Preparation, Meet Opportunity

You've landed a sought-after job interview at one of your target companies. Now ask yourself, how much do you really know about the company and the people who are interviewing you for a job?

Far too many applicants fall into the "little or none" category. And that is unfortunate because a failure to demonstrate basic knowledge of that potential employer is one of the worst mistakes you can make in an interview.

Our recent survey of hiring managers makes this point, with "Failure to Research Company" selected as the number one interview pitfall.

Why is this one issue so important to hiring managers? Remember, employers thoroughly research job candidates prior to each interview.

HR recruiters and hiring managers check out Facebook pages, LinkedIn profiles and search engines to vet candidates. Add the candidate's resume with work history and educational background to the mix, and the potential employer has a good deal of information available.

They've done their homework on you and they expect you've done your homework on them. Now, it's not necessary to undertake a full forensic investigation of a potential employer; just 30 minutes of pre-interview research using readily available information sources can give you enough basic information to set you apart from your competition. How can you, the candidate, gather similar information and nail that interview? Here are five simple steps you can take prior to your meeting:

### **1. Visit the company's website.**

The website will provide the information the organization wants you to know: the mission statement and history, the products and services, the company's press releases and the latest financial figures. While not as objective as third-party sources, the website provides insight into the organization's sales and marketing strategy as well as its corporate culture.

### **2. Tap into social media.**

Check out the top social networking sites (LinkedIn, Glassdoor, Facebook, Pinterest, Twitter, Instagram, Google+, etc.) for both the organization and interviewer. Review corporate blogs. Check the interviewer's LinkedIn profile. Reach out to your networking contacts for their input about the company and check to see if you have any mutual contacts who can facilitate an introduction.

### **3. Search smart.**

Use search engines and set alerts to find recent news articles, reviews and legal issues related to the organization. Also conduct a search for the interviewer's name to gain additional insight into his or her background and interests.

### **4. Investigate the local angle.**

If you're interviewing with a national or global organization, you still need to get up to speed as to what's going on at the local level. Search your local newspaper or Business Journal for nuggets of information on the organization or interviewer.

### **5. Uncover inside intelligence.**

Glassdoor provides reviews of organizations written by current and former employees—in addition to salary information and actual interview questions asked of other candidates.

Use your research to develop a list of informed questions to ask your interviewer. This will set you apart as a serious candidate who respects the interviewer's time. It also communicates that you understand the importance of preparedness. Those two factors alone will set you apart from the large majority of people competing for the same job.



# Interview Pitfalls: What to Avoid

Despite an abundance of information on the biggest mistakes to avoid in a job interview, candidates seem to have a strong tendency towards making the same errors over and over again.

Not surprisingly, hiring managers identified lying as the number one way to torpedo an interview. Having a negative attitude was ranked as the second-most troubling interview mistake. But there are a myriad of other missteps and shortcomings that our survey identified.

*Hiring managers were asked to rate how detrimental they believe the following issues are to a candidate's chances to being hired.*

**Behaviors**

Lying or acting untrustworthy	9.6
Bad attitude	9.5
Poor cultural fit	8.9
Poor communication skills	8.7
Insufficient skills	8.7
Failure to clearly articulate accomplishments and results	8.2
Poor interviewing skills	8.1
Lack of experience	7.9
Lack of credible references	7.8
Not likeable	7.5
Inappropriate presence on social media	6.9
Failure to send thank-you note	4.3
Lack of extracurricular activities	4.1

*Ratings based on a 0-10 scale, where 0 represents "Not At All Detrimental" and 10 represents "Very Detrimental."*

On the positive side, hiring managers we surveyed agreed that candidates that received personal coaching to improve their interview performance typically avoid the most common pitfalls and mistakes. They produced much better resumés and were more likely to interview well. Unfortunately, coaching is not always available, leaving many candidates to rely heavily, even solely, on technology to apply for and land new jobs.

# Conclusion

Too often, candidates seem to believe resumes are enough to land a job. They completely underestimate the enduring need to differentiate themselves from their competition through strategic use of social media and strong networks when hiring managers take the next step and initiate a face-to-face conversation.

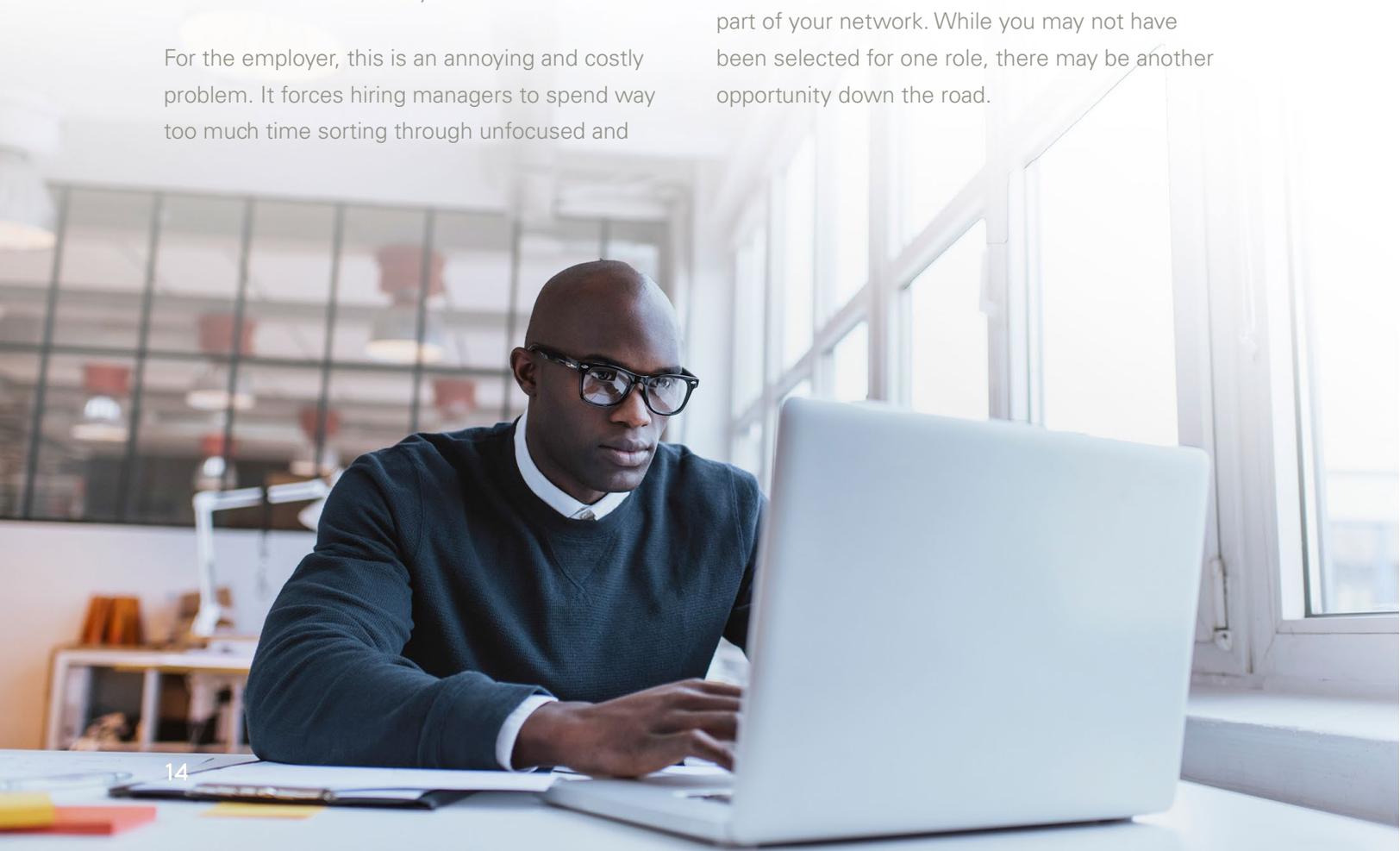
Many of these candidates launch into interviews without professional coaching or support that can provide unbiased, constructive feedback about the job search skills they need to compete effectively for top jobs. As a result, they will be left wondering what went wrong when interviews are hard to come by, or when job offers never seem to follow those interviews that they do land.

For the employer, this is an annoying and costly problem. It forces hiring managers to spend way too much time sorting through unfocused and

inappropriate applications from candidates that have neither the skills nor the behavioral profile to qualify for available jobs.

Don't squander your opportunities with hiring managers. Do your homework, work hard on your job search, practice your interviewing skills, and place yourself firmly in the ranks of those people who know how to position themselves effectively with potential employers.

And if you don't get an offer? Follow this practical advice and stay in touch with the hiring manager. You're now "known." The hiring manager has in-depth knowledge of your skills, experience and value you offer. Make the hiring manager part of your network. While you may not have been selected for one role, there may be another opportunity down the road.



### **About the research**

This study examined candidate sourcing and hiring trends among Human Resources managers with responsibility for sourcing and/or hiring candidates for their companies. A total of 277 online interviews were conducted, representing all company sizes, across North America, Latin America, EMEA and Asia-Pacific, and represented all major industries.

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As the Senior Vice President, Career Transition Practice Leader for Lee Hecht Harrison, Greg is responsible for developing, disseminating and monitoring the direction of career transition services for the world's largest career services firm. This includes identifying and articulating global trends while assisting in the development and implementation of the short and long term global strategy of the organization.

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## About Lee Hecht Harrison (LHH)

Lee Hecht Harrison helps companies simplify the complexity associated with transforming their leadership and workforce so they can accelerate results, with less risk. We do this by helping their employees navigate change, become better leaders, develop better careers, and transition into new jobs. As the world's leading integrated Talent Development and Transition company, we have the local expertise, global infrastructure, and industry leading technology required to simplify the complexity associated with executing critical talent and workforce initiatives, reducing brand and operational risk. Teams in more than 60 countries around the world leverage our proven programs and global experience to deliver tailored solutions to clients that align talent with the needs of their business.

