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Job Seekers Lament Black Hole of Online Portals

In Era of Online Applications, Job Seekers Want Better Communication

“Conversation is Needed”

OKLAHOMA CITY, Oct. 24, 2018 – Americans are more connected than ever as most people use digital communications in their relationships, but job seekers are lamenting the lack of direct communications with potential employers.

According to Janis Petrini, an Express Employment Professionals franchise owner in Grand Rapids, Michigan, applicants “definitely feel that applying online is a black hole. They often complain about employers not responding or ever following up with them.”

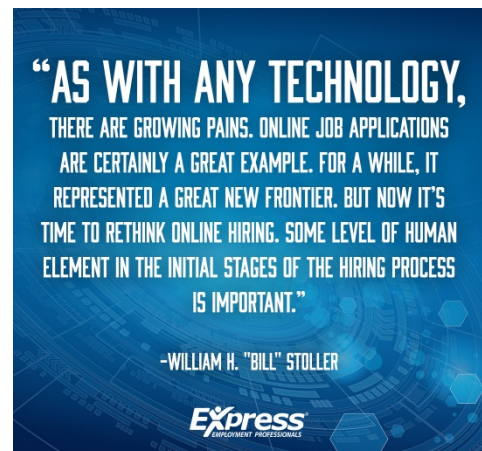
Jason Patrick, an Express franchise owner in Nashville, Tennessee, offers a similar perspective.

“Attitudes about online job boards are going down,” he said. “Believe it or not, in Nashville, we have had positive responses to direct phone communication with job seekers. People simply want a call back. It may be a text to let people know you want to talk, but conversation is needed.”

Patricia Callihan-Bowman, an Express franchise owner in Salem, Oregon, has witnessed this firsthand.

“We have this contest going every month to determine that we’ve answered every single online application,” she said. “So, we are answering those, and we are seeing a really good response from that. People are posting online, ‘I didn’t think anyone would respond to my resume, but I got a reply right back.’”

Applicants’ surprise in hearing from Callihan-Bowman’s office demonstrates the low expectations that so many job seekers have for online applications.



Petrini warns that being overly reliant on online job portals can cause employers to overlook strong applicants, a real danger in today's tight labor market.

"Employers need to give people options on how to apply," she said. "They should be willing to speak with someone on the phone, in-person or over the internet. In the current market, employers need to be willing to actually speak with and learn more about every candidate who applies for a position. They can't rely on technology to filter people in or out or else they might miss out on valuable talent."

The human element is important, notes Callihan-Bowman, because it "helps job seekers get seen for who they really are sooner in the process and will likely lead to better hires for employers as well. It just might take them more time investment in the short-term."

So why are businesses so reliant on impersonal online applications?

"Because of the lack of time," Petrini said. "Ever since the recession, people are doing the jobs of two to three people at once. Many small- or mid-sized companies don't have dedicated HR teams, so the recruiting and hiring falls on the owner or hiring managers."

Businesses "are overwhelmed with applicants," adds Callihan-Bowman. But if you don't review them carefully, "you may miss someone who is a hidden jewel."

To give job applicants more opportunities for direct communication, while still embracing the convenience of online applications, Express recently launched [ExpressJobs](#), an app that allows applicants to submit applications and then stay in touch directly with their local staffing offices and monitor up-to-the-minute details. This approach eases fears of applications going into a "black hole," while still allowing employers to process high volumes of applications.

"As with any technology, there are growing pains. Online job applications are certainly a great example," said Bill Stoller, Express CEO. "For a while, it represented a great new frontier. But now it's time to rethink online hiring. Some level of human element in the initial stages of the hiring process is important to find the right match for the job seeker and the employer. Going forward, successful companies will find a way to allow for more direct communication between recruiters and job seekers at the outset."

If you would like to arrange for an interview with Bill Stoller to discuss this topic, please contact Sheena Karami, Director of Corporate Communications and PR, at (405) 717-5966.

About Bill Stoller

William H. "Bill" Stoller is chairman and chief executive officer of Express Employment Professionals. Headquartered in Oklahoma City, the international staffing company has more than 800 franchises in the U.S., Canada and South Africa. Since its inception, Express has put more than 6 million people to work worldwide.

About Express Employment Professionals

Express Employment Professionals puts people to work. It generated \$3.4 billion in sales and employed

a record 540,000 people in 2017. Its long-term goal is to put a million people to work annually. For more information, visit ExpressPros.com.