



# Top 10 Ways Employers Can Avoid Getting Ghosted This Halloween...And Beyond

Insights

10.23.18

As if things aren't spooky enough this time of year, employers have a new concern: getting "ghosted" by an applicant, a new hire, or even an existing employee. But this modern phenomenon isn't just something to worry about during the Halloween season—it can happen at any time, to just about any employer. The good news is that there are some techniques you can employ to reduce the chances of it happening to you.

## Ghosting: Not Just For Dating Apps

You may be familiar with the term "ghosting" from dating apps and personal relationships gone bad. It happens when the person you are in touch with—and perhaps with whom you have already shared a few dates—just disappears out of the blue. Your phone calls go straight to voicemail, your texts and emails go unanswered, and you may even get stood up at a restaurant waiting for them to show up. Like an apparition vanishing into thin air, you realize your potential companion has turned into a ghost, never to be heard from again.

And it can happen to employers, too—those looking for a potential new hire and not a love connection. What if you hold your calendar to conduct an interview with a promising applicant and they fail to show up? What if the superstar candidate you hired doesn't show up for their first day of work and never calls you to let you know? What if that brand-new employee with a week's worth of tenure under their belt goes AWOL without any notice to anyone? If any of these horror stories sound familiar, you've been ghosted. And if you want it to avoid it happening to you, read on.

## Ghost Sightings On The Increase

Before we get to the practical tips to help avoid getting ghosted, how common is the not-so-supernatural experience in today's world? Unfortunately, the practice seems to be happening with more frequency. You can blame any number of reasons: record-low unemployment rates, a highly competitive hiring environment where applicants hold most of the cards, a younger and less formal generation entering the working world, or some combination of these factors. Whatever the reason, there is no doubt the phenomenon is happening with more regularity.

USA Today recently reported that many businesses are reporting ghosting incidents anywhere between 20 and 50 percent of the time, with job applicants, interviewees, and new hires skipping out

on employers without any notice. The story described an auto sales center that had about half of their most recent 65 job candidates go missing from their scheduled job interviews, and a call center that reported similar statistics from the previous month. And it's not just lower-paying blue collar workplaces spotting ghosts; the report indicated that up to 20 percent of professional workers end up vanishing into the night.

Some believe that workers are just turning the tables and giving employers a taste of their own medicine. After all, when unemployment rates were in double digits not too many years ago and the job market was difficult for those looking for work, many businesses ignored scores of job applications and resumes without a word in return. This kind of behavior may have resonated with those looking for work at the time; workers may now think that this lack of communication is an acceptable business practice, or are merely enacting their own form of revenge.

## **What Can You Do?**

The good news is that there are steps you can take to avoid falling victim to this spectral horror show. Follow these 10 practices to ensure your workplace doesn't become a home for the undead.

1. **Maximize Your Chances** – You will increase your odds of getting candidates to stick if you consider a greater number of them. Keep an open mind when you open your hiring pool and be ready to embrace applicants from varied backgrounds that you might not have otherwise considered. For example, you may find a diamond in the rough if you choose to invite six applicants for interviews rather than your standard two or three.
2. **Consider Group Hiring Sessions** – Some employers frustrated with candidates blowing off job interviews have started to plan group interview sessions. That way, even if 50 percent of them don't show up, you still have a qualified pool of people to meet with and start vetting in a group setting. Others have reportedly begun to double-book their interview slots assuming that at least one won't show up; this probably isn't the best hiring practice as it could lead to frustrations when both show up. Instead, letting them know ahead of time that they will be joining other candidates is a better way to go.
3. **Increase Transparency** – Candidates who understand the process and where they fit into it will be more likely to stick with you for the long term. Make sure your HR representatives and hiring managers provide detail to applicants about the timing of the hiring process and the overall steps your company takes when hiring (how many rounds of interviews, background checks, drug screenings, etc.).
4. **Keep The Connection** – If there are delays in the hiring process, let your candidates know. If you are waiting for approval from another department, pick up the phone. If there is a week or so between rounds of interviews, there's nothing wrong with sending a quick message to the applicant to let them know you're excited about the next step and are looking forward to seeing them again. The more communication you have with your candidates and the less you keep them in the dark, the better the odds they will feel invested in your workplace and will return the favor.

Make sure you let them know you have an open-door policy when it comes to communications and that you aren't a "don't-call-us-we'll-call-you" kind of manager.

5. **Be Honest** – Make sure your job announcements, advertisements, job descriptions, and other external hiring communications are accurate. There is no better way to lose a candidate than for them to discover somewhere along the way that the job they thought they were applying for is actually different from the reality of the situation.
6. **Personalize The Process** – Cookie-cutter communications will make applicants feel they are a nameless cog in a giant machine. They will feel less guilty about blowing you off if they think there is nothing more than an automated machine on the other end of the line spitting out form letters and emails. When you are setting up interviews, gathering background information, and extending job offers, put your own personal spin on things. It might take a little longer to craft an individualized message—or even pick up the phone to place an actual call—but that investment of time will pay off in the end.
7. **Be Timely And Shrink Timeframes** – Make sure you have an efficient hiring process in place that allows you to move quickly. If you have arrived at a decision to advance a candidate to the next round or are ready to extend a job offer, don't delay. The quicker you let them know where you stand, the better your chances of keeping them on the hook. At the same time, see what you can do to ensure the process doesn't drag out too long. Rather than scheduling that next interview for next week, why not carve out time to do it this week? It might require you to rearrange your schedule or offer time slots at unconventional times, and you might need to take advantage of video conferencing or other modern communication methods, but you will see your odds improve if you pick up the pace. Similarly, when extending an offer of employment, ask the candidate if they would be available to start right away rather than waiting for the standard two weeks. The candidate might be able to work things out with their current employer and be available sooner than you think.
8. **Don't Reject Too Quickly** – The other benefit to shrinking hiring timeframes is that you can keep your Plan B option in play. If you have made your choice between two qualified candidates, don't necessarily tell the second-place applicant that you have gone in another direction until the first-place applicant has accepted your offer and shown up for their first day of work. That way, you have a backup plan in place should you find yourself rejected—or ghosted—by your Plan A. But this will only work if you move quickly.
9. **Sell Yourself** – Every step along the way, your interview process should be selling your candidates on your organization. By putting yourself in the best light possible and highlighting the benefits of working at your business, you will do your best to compete in a cutthroat environment. Remember, interviews aren't just a chance for you to get to know the applicant and make a decision about their candidacy, they are a chance for you to start pitching yourself as an attractive work environment.
10. **Improve Your Onboarding Process** – Make sure your onboarding process—from the first communication letting the candidate knowing they got the job through orientation and their first few weeks of work—are well-thought out and a good reflection of your organization. Make sure

few weeks of work—are well-thought out and a good reflection of your organization. Make sure that you have a designated worker ready to shepherd them through those critical first few days, available to answer their many questions and provide them with the resources they will need to succeed. Your new hires are more likely to jump ship and accept a competing offer of employment if they aren't immediately made to feel welcome or if they develop the impression that their time at the company is going to be wasted.

We can't guarantee that you aren't going to see ghosts this Halloween season—or beyond—given the realities of the modern working world. But following these tips should help you to reduce the number of mysterious and creepy encounters you experience when it comes to your applicants and new hires.

---

*This Legal Alert provides an overview of a specific developing situation. It is not intended to be, and should not be construed as, legal advice for any particular fact situation.*

### ***Related People***



**Richard R. Meneghello**  
Chief Content Officer  
503.205.8044  
[Email](#)

### ***Service Focus***

Counseling and Advice