

# How to stand out from the job seeking crowd

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LET'S face it, the job market is tough.

And with hundreds of people applying for roles, some job seekers are resorting to showy tactics to stand out from the crowd.

A survey by global recruitment firm OfficeTeam asked human resources managers to recount the most impressive actions they have seen from candidates to try and land a job.

One candidate walked into the office off the street with coffee and donuts – her resume tucked underneath.

Another heard that the hiring manager was sick that day, so she sent a handmade get well card.

But recruitment expert Richard Wynn said that while doing something different will always get you noticed, job-seekers should be cautious.

"There's a fine line between being noticed and being noticed for the wrong reasons," said Mr Wynn, regional director at recruitment firm Michael Page Australia.

"Ultimately it's your CV and you that will get you the job and not the gimmick that got you there."

Mr Wynn said trying to stand-out might even work against some job-seekers because it suggested they were compensating for a lack of skills.

"I don't think in this tight market gimmicks are going to do you any favours," he said.

"If you can't back yourself up and back up the CV then what was the point of the round of coffees and the get well card?"

Mr Wynn added that creative applications – such as making a video resume – would work well in industries such as marketing, PR, retail or at digital firms.

"I think it would depend on the level of role and the company you were applying to, and most definitely the industry you were applying to," he said.

"If you were applying to, say, an accountant's role or a finance management role I think it would be dangerous and to be honest I think it would be slightly disrespectful."

One HR manager surveyed said a candidate had contacted the company's board of directors to make a case for why he should be hired.

But Mr Wynn said that would only be appropriate if you person was applying for an executive position, such as Chief Operating Officer or Chief Financial Officer.

"Generally that is going outside the protocol of what is acceptable," he said.

Mr Wynn said that if candidates want to stand out they should network and use LinkedIn.

"Look at [the employer], know their background, give reference to the fact that you know where they were before, or if they've moved internationally," he said.

And if candidates secure an interview they should prepare well and engage with their interviewer.

"Don't just turn up and expect to give 'question answer question answer'" he said.

"And don't just give a one page summary of their company, they know about their company."

"Give them something like a really cool keynote iPad presentation."

Other responses from the 650 HR managers surveyed suggested that showing initiative and an understanding of the company was most impressive:

- "I've had someone outline what he planned to do for the company in his first six months."
- "Someone applying for a position as a car detailer brought in his own vehicle to demonstrate his skills."
- "One applicant explained what he knew about our company. I was very impressed with his knowledge and research."
- "I had a follow-up email from a candidate immediately after our meeting."
- "One woman didn't just recite her skills -- she provided many examples of her work."
- "I am impressed when a job seeker arrives on time and is well-dressed. It's that simple."