

Ghost Protocol: When Candidates Disappear

Jessica L. Sanchez
Access Capital, Inc.
jsanchez@accesscapital.com

Our world is increasingly influenced by our digital culture. Whether you need to restock household groceries or arrange a driver for your next flight you are most likely using an app on your phone. While convenient and efficient, the increased use of technology to run our day-to-day lives seems to have created gaps in communication and social interactions. A culture of people swiping left to find their dates has led to changes to certain social mores.

What was once a term applied only to modern dating, “ghosting” can now be used to describe other areas of social interaction. When you get ghosted, the person with whom you’ve been dating cuts off all communication with you with no warning. You don’t even get the benefit of the “it’s not you, it’s me” speech when someone ghosts you. There’s just radio silence and perhaps a feeling of rejection on the side of the “ghostee.” Not a great way to end a relationship is it? Ghosting has become so prevalent that even the [New York Times](#) explored the phenomenon earlier this year. And now, we are seeing that ghosting has found its way into the workplace with regards to candidate behavior. More and more recruiters and employers are being ghosted by candidates. Sometimes for interviews and even for the first day of an assignment!

With an unemployment rate of 3.8% and job openings at 7.6 million (as of January 31, 2019), there are more open jobs than employees to fill them. Nowadays, candidates are empowered and can afford to be finicky about their next project and their behavior is showing that. Some are simply blowing off interviews or becoming no-show employees when day one of a new assignment arrives. For recruiters, this poses a major disruption to fulfilling client needs and has the potential to negatively affect your relationships with your clients.

If a behavior like ghosting manifests en masse, how can we combat it? The key seems to be to ensure you take good care of your candidates - be sure to keep the lines of communication open and touch base often.

Address the Elephant (Ghost) in the Room: Communicate clearly about ghosting. If you broach the topic upfront with candidates, you may help mitigate the likelihood of being ghosted. Create a safe space for communication and encourage your candidate to let you know if they’ve decided to take another offer. Take the perceived stigma out of telling a recruiter no. In other words, make it okay for a candidate to refuse an offer or change his or her mind with you and chances are, they will be forthcoming with you.

Engage and Inform: Just as it's frustrating for a recruiter to suddenly lose communication with a candidate, potential employees appreciate ongoing communication at each stage of the recruiting process. When working with a candidate, be sure to provide status updates and a timeline for the process so there is no uncertainty. If a candidate feels informed by a recruiter, they will feel valued and may be less likely to disappoint you when it's time to meet with your client. Also consider working to have less lead up time until the start date. In the days leading up to the start date, send info about the new company to your candidate and see if you can connect your candidate to someone at the new employer sooner to help establish a connection before your candidate's first day. This will lessen the threat of your candidate going elsewhere or abandoning the assignment altogether.

An informed and well-tended to candidate will be less likely to stray than one who hasn't heard from a recruiter in weeks. Providing a positive experience for your candidate will help ensure they follow through with you and show up for your clients. It will take some extra care but you will appreciate the benefit of a forthcoming candidate. While we may not be able to halt the social phenomenon of ghosting, we can at least work with it and try our best to not fall victim to it.

About Access Capital:

Access Capital is a privately held non-bank lender that has been supporting the growth of staffing companies and other entrepreneurial enterprises for over thirty years. Headquartered in New York, Access Capital offers asset based lending and acquisition financing services to staffing companies nationwide.

Learn more about how we can work together to support your success by calling us at (212) 644-9300

ⁱ Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics