

# Ghosting Isn't Just for Dating Apps: How to Get Ahead of the Latest Hiring Trend

If you haven't been ghosted on a dating app, count yourself among the lucky ones. But be wary. Ghosting isn't just for romantic encounters. The practice of showing interest and then dropping off into the internet abyss has become commonplace in the hiring and onboarding process. It's a drain on time and resources. And let's face it, by the time you start recruiting, there is a gap in your business model. Your performance depends on filling it with good talent promptly. Should be easy, right?

## What is Ghosting?

Ghosting is a problem rooted in disconnection. You may have heard the word tossed around in conversation, but what does it really mean? The New York Times talks about ghosting as a phenomenon that infiltrates everyday interactions, even changing your mind about a latté order and slipping out the door of a hipster coffee shop before paying.<sup>1</sup>

Ghosting happens when a person cuts off communication without explanation. The option to hide behind apps and web pages has depersonalized our interactions, making it more common than ever, even in the workforce. In other words, your prospective hire stops picking up emails, texts, and phone calls. After all, what is a ghost? It plays on the senses and the imagination. It's something we think is there but is not.<sup>2</sup> Whether it's a romantic relationship or an offer to interview at a restaurant kitchen, ghosting has become second nature, a form of social capital.

- Feeling panicked? Ghost
- Confused? Ghost
- Bored? Ghost
- Disinterested? Ghost
- Uncomfortable—ghost...



<sup>1</sup>Popescu. (2019, January 23). [Why People Ghost - And How to Get Over It](#). The New York Times.

<sup>2</sup>Popescu. (2019, January 23). [Why People Ghost - And How to Get Over It](#). The New York Times.



## What's the Deal with Industry Ghosting?

One such ghosted industry is the hospitality industry, which faces the largest labour shortage in the country. According to Statistics Canada, 64% of all businesses in this industry, including hotels, restaurants, and entertainment, will face labour shortages in the next few months. Not only is it hard to find the right talent, but it's challenging to keep it: 43.4% of employers in the industry struggle to retain workers. Now for the ghosting part: in a recent interview with the Globe & Mail, some managers in hospitality reported over 40% of candidates ghosting interviews, an increase of 35% before March 2020.

## It's not just YOU. Ghosting activates our pain receptors.

Science shows that rejection doesn't just hurt the business. It hurts you. "Social rejection activates the same pain pathways in the brain as physical pain." The connection between rejection and pain is biological, and that's because human beings have evolved to have a social monitoring system which helps us read the room, from facial expressions to mood, environment, conflict, and energy. The reason this social monitoring system is so well intact is that it helps us survive.



<sup>3</sup>Zaidi. 2022, June 23. Labour shortage: food, hotel industries continue to be the hardest hit by lack of workers. CTV News.

<sup>4</sup>Zaidi. 2022, June 23. Labour shortage: food, hotel industries continue to be the hardest hit by lack of workers. CTV News.

<sup>5</sup>Spencer. 2022, July, 01. Firms see rise in candidates 'ghosting' interviews among tight labour market. The Globe and Mail.

<sup>6</sup>Roberts. (2015, December 28). Rejection and physical pain are the same to your brain. Forbes.

<sup>7</sup>Koban & Pourtois. (2014, March,26). Brain systems underlying the affective and social monitoring of actions: An Integrative Review. Neuroscience & Biobehavioural Reviews.

When we get ghosted - on a date, during an interview, or over an email communication - our brain can't close the loop, and we scan and search to make sense of that missing cue under the guidance of our social monitoring system. At the least, it leaves you dissatisfied, but it can also erode your self-esteem and that of your business. The pain is so real that it can be treated with Tylenol.



### **The job market puts the candidate at an advantage, so you've been ghosted...but why?**

- 40% of candidates report that they received another job offer
- 22% were not satisfied with the salary
- 15% were unhappy with the benefits package
- 13% said they had unsatisfactory communication with a recruiter
- Candidates would give up 12% of their salary for more training and flexibility

From the sounds of it, your hiring process is too long, and your communication needs strengthening. Employees expect the same things as employers: timeliness, engagement, connection, respect, and equity. It's a myth that ghosting has come onto the scene with the surge of Millennials, the rise of the internet age, or even the pandemic. It's been going on for decades. According to Human Resources Director America, 83% of employers have experienced ghosting while recruiting and hiring.

<sup>8</sup> Popescu. (2019, January 23). [Why People Ghost - And How to Get Over It. The New York Times.](#)

<sup>9</sup> Popescu. (2019, January 23). [Why People Ghost - And How to Get Over It. The New York Times.](#)

<sup>10</sup> Kurter. (2020, January 01). [Employers: Here are 3 Reasons Why Candidates Are Ghosting You. Forbes.](#)

<sup>11</sup> Kurter. (2020, January 01). [Employers: Here are 3 Reasons Why Candidates Are Ghosting You. Forbes.](#)

<sup>12</sup> Kurter. (2020, January 01). [Employers: Here are 3 Reasons Why Candidates Are Ghosting You. Forbes.](#)

<sup>13</sup> Kurter. (2020, January 01). [Employers: Here are 3 Reasons Why Candidates Are Ghosting You. Forbes.](#)

<sup>14</sup> Higgins-Dunn. (2020, January 28). [Nearly half of job seekers in high-demand industries rejected a job offer after an interview-here's why. CNBC.](#)



It may be easier to understand why people ghost if you think about it on a personal level. Picture this: an old friend has excluded you from a big event. You see pictures of it on social media and feel hurt, but you don't address it. Two weeks later, they text you, and you leave the message hanging. Months pass. If you can do it to someone you love, it becomes an afterthought to do it to a stranger.

Employers have reported that ghosting is their number one challenge in recruiting candidates, especially workers in the Gen Z age category - a demographic that now makes up for almost 20% of the workforce.

So, how can you pick up your hiring game? The simple answer: ghostbusting. And how do you ensure that you are in the best position to attract and retain the top talent to drive your business efforts forward? The answer lies in the sweet spot between human connection and technology.

With the help of an innovative and thoughtful platform, you can leverage technology to increase efficiency without sacrificing what's essential—human connection.

### Here are some insights to unpack your ghostbusting frustrations:

1. It's not you, it's them.  
Reassure yourself that the right hire wouldn't ghost—reframe it as a culling technique.
2. Mass applications can lead an applicant not to read the posting carefully until selected for an interview. So, they ghost.  
Don't sweat it, it wasn't meant to be.
3. Give yourself the gift of perspective, particularly in a digital world
4. Humans are wired for connection.  
Make your recruiting, hiring, and onboarding process about connection, and you'll attract the right one!

<sup>15</sup> Kurter. (2020, January 01). [Employers: Here are 3 Reasons Why Candidates Are Ghosting You. Forbes.](#)

<sup>16</sup> Kurter. (2020, January 01). [Employers: Here are 3 Reasons Why Candidates Are Ghosting You. Forbes.](#)

<sup>17</sup> Wilson. (2021, December 22). [Gen Z Presents Challenges for Recruiters. Canadian HR Reporter.](#)

<sup>18</sup> Popescu. (2019, January 23). [Why People Ghost - And How to Get Over It. The New York Times.](#)



**Take these 6 simple steps to start ghostbusting and effectively recruit, hire, and onboard new talent —no casualties.**

1. Offer fair wages
2. Provide sick pay
3. Flow with the times: flexibility counts
4. Incentivize with equitable vacation
5. Position your brand to stand out from the crowd
6. Leverage technology & quickly build human connection
7. Think beyond pay: learning and growth as motivators



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***We recommend employers ask the candidate what they are looking for right off the bat in attempts to avoid ghosting...***

***If it isn't a match, try to make it one or be wary.***

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**- FindWRK CEO Michael Wallace**

When it comes to hiring, a lot is going on. You juggle sourcing talent, aligning culture and mission with the right candidate, and leading a thoughtful onboarding to ensure retention and satisfaction. The key: don't do it alone. Think about the role of a coach. They might excel at bringing out the best in their players and teaching new skills, but sometimes it takes the help of a talent scout to put the team together.

Team-building is a two-way street: more than three-quarters of people report that not hearing from an employer in a timely manner is more frustrating than not hearing back from someone after a first date.

If you're looking for time-saving techniques and to bring out the best in your business, we've got your back. Leave ghosting in the rearview mirror and grow your talent today.

<sup>19</sup> Popescu. (2019, January 23). [Why People Ghost - And How to Get Over It. The New York Times.](#)

<sup>20</sup> [‘Ghosting’ is the Scariest Trend in Recruitment iCMS. iCMS.](#) Retrieved August 16, 2022