ASK ELLEN – visiting a workplace without an appointment

2/22/12

Q: I wanted to get your opinion whether or not it would be beneficial or simply a bad idea to visit an institution of interest to drop off a resume and possibly trying to talk with a librarian or even the director about possible job openings.

I know it’s sort of old school to do this but I thought it could be another option as long as it is not viewed as an interference and/or intrusion.

A: I can appreciate that you want to do everything you can to get a job, and are thinking of strategies that are out of the ordinary, but I am afraid showing up without an appointment is not going to help with your job search and could possibly hurt your chances with a particular employer.

The initial contact between an applicant and an employer is almost always online now, and an applicant showing up in person would not be welcome. Also, it is the employer’s choice whether to speak to or interview a certain person; it is not the applicant’s choice.

From the employer’s point of view, too, with so many job hunters and so many people applying for any existing opening, if it became known that dropping by unannounced gave an applicant the slightest chance of success, they’d have people arriving all day long. They’d have to have someone attend to these visitors. If they are actively interviewing they’d already have plenty of people coming by who have appointments, and if they don’t have any openings, that’s a lot of staff time being spent with no benefit to anyone.

A visit would also take up some of *your* precious job-hunting time and effort, which would be better spent networking, perhaps identifying someone in your network who could make an introduction to a decision maker at the workplace you are interested in, volunteering, applying for a number of jobs, etc.

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Just for fun: this is what a librarian looks like: http://lookslikelibraryscience.com/archive

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Thank you and good luck!

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