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### Why texting and job hunting don't mix

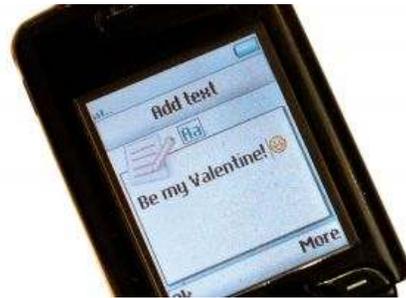


Photo: Jenny Rollo

With all of the choices in technology we have today, it's a lot easier to communicate with each other—and easier to make communicative missteps. Many people who are job hunting, particularly recent college graduates, are learning this the hard way as they attempt to incorporate the casual nature of texting into their formal exchanges with would-be employers.

Sarah E. Needleman of *The Wall Street Journal* points out in the article "[Thx for the IView! I Wud ♥ to Work 4 U!! ;\)](#)" that although hiring managers always appreciate thank you notes from candidates after an interview, they are increasingly finding them littered with phrases like "thank u 4 the meeting" and cutesy emoticons. By using the communicative characteristics found in textspeak, applicants look unprofessional and this can cost them opportunities that they may otherwise be qualified for.

Needleman adds that hiring managers say they are also receiving messages immediately after meeting with candidates—sometimes literally within minutes of an interview. This makes interviewers wonder how serious candidates are about a position and whether they have actually digested the discussion. Other less-than-professional behaviors resulting from technology include texting a prospective employer's cell phone without permission or sending them "friend" requests on Facebook.

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California-based human resources expert Danika Davis, CEO of the Northern California HR Association, likens the job interviewing process to pursuing a new romantic partner.

"The interviewing process is much like dating—hiring managers often view it as the best possible behavior they are ever going to see," she told me. "Every behavior on these 'dates'—including how a potential candidate communicates in writing—becomes part of the decision on whether or not to get married and extend an offer."

Just as with romantic relationships—when we are gathering information about our love interests in order to determine if they are the right fit for us—hiring managers are looking for "the one." If they learn something that makes you a less-than-desirable match, they consider it when deciding if the relationship should go any further.

"A hiring manager's personal reputation is on the line if they bring in an unsuitable match for the organization. Overly casual communication—and an individual's failure to actively think through what the best behaviors might be from the perspective of the potential employer, rather than their own preferences—are a red flag to potential problems in the future," said Davis. "The use of text lingo in the selection process is akin to wearing flip flops and shorts to an interview—the applicant might be more comfortable, but in almost all cases it would be inappropriate."

*This article originally appeared on my Workplace Communication Examiner page on June 21, 2009.*

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