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When Netflix Makes a Documentary About Corporate Life in 2026

The Job Search Will Be Its Most Devastating Chapter

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I have spent almost two decades in the corporate world. That also means I spent considerable time looking for new opportunities whenever I had to pivot from one specialized area to another or from one location to another. But the last two years spent searching for my next big break have been the most brutal so far.

When (and if) Netflix ever decides to make a documentary about the corporate world circa 2026, they might have to dedicate more than a few episodes to the dark chapter called job searching.

Indeed, job prospects were already looking grim in the post-pandemic era. But there has been a noticeable shift in the overall hiring process post-2022, with this shift becoming more pronounced in 2025. Sadly, that trend has continued in 2026, too. Coincidentally, this very much goes hand in hand with the rise of AI.

However, it would be wrong to lump all the Gen X and Millennial workforce under the boomer tag for not understanding generative AI from AI agents. These are the same Gen Xers, especially xillennials and millennials who have been pragmatic in their approach towards new techniques and technologies at work. Not only have they survived but thrived in the modern workplace due to their adaptive nature to embrace new trends and innovations like digital ecosystems.

My real concern lies with how this innovative technology is being used in the recruitment process, from job applications to final candidates' selections. It seems there is no coherent strategy for evaluating candidates' profiles beyond that the job description has few matching attributes. Instead, this entire selection process seems to be hijacked by the ATS rankings and filtering systems.

Surely, it works well when the keywords and similarities in one's profile align with the job description. But it doesn't work in favor of people like me who have worked across multiple industries and different profiles. Such profiles act like the outliers for the straight-jacketed ATS systems, which have been trained to focus on matching the key parameters and highlighted buzzwords to define their ranking. As a result, such non-linear profiles tend to fall through the cracks. This is a significant disadvantage stemming from over-reliance on the ATS system.

Then, it's no surprise that such systems are flawed and riddled with opportunities for manipulation by the recruiters. That is not a far-fetched statement but rather a real-world problem, as proven by the case against Workday.

Speaking of Workday, it's one of the most detested job application platforms out there. Social media is filled with videos and memes poking fun at complicated job application processes and systems like Workday. One of the main pet peeves among job seekers is filling out the job application with the minutest details, only to be rejected by automated systems at an incomprehensible hour.

It keeps the ATS fear truly alive when rejection emails pop up in the middle of the night or on a random Saturday when you are sure no humans are sending these from the other side of your submissions.

Then comes the interview process. At the risk of sounding vintage, I would like to add that interviews used to be straightforward for almost all job postings. You knew for certain there would be two to three rounds, depending on the company policy or size, and that they would announce the outcome within a few days afterwards.

Unfortunately, this entire interview process has now taken an irreversible turn of one eighty degrees and has become one of the toughest challenges to crack. And candidates have to cross hurdles like assessment tests, online questionnaires, logical quizzes, brain teasers, presentations for case studies, and AI interview rounds to cross the first few rounds of this challenge. More often than not, companies ghost candidates after completing these automated rounds. Those

chances of ghosting are even higher in case you come up with a strategic solution for their long-standing problem presented through the case study. It's unpaid work that can consume substantial resources, but it's rarely valued or compensated by the organization in question.

Therefore, by the time a candidate reaches the actual rounds of human interviews, which can vary from three to thirteen, depending on the nature of their business, size, strategy, and internal hiring policy; that candidate is all but mentally exhausted. Plus, this entire interview process is quite skewed towards emphasizing readily available skills, thus placing importance on selecting candidates from specific backgrounds carrying exactly identical qualities. There is almost no emphasis on selecting candidates with similar skills so that they can learn and grow into their new roles. Sure, this can be attributed to the rapid turnover rates among employees. Still, it's unfair to expect a profile to tick all the boxes without giving any margin to learn.

Meanwhile, such prodding and pushing of candidates' profiles like dead fish in a busy Saturday market without following any decipherable logic is taking a toll on their mental health.

Maybe the job market is not broken as it looks, but rather evolving into an unrecognizable entity altogether. It's hard for anyone to decipher it at this moment and even harder to make sense of it.

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Philip S. Naudus

Jul 11



It's time companies are held accountable for treating candidates' time with respect.

Corporations feel like they own people, even the people who don't work there yet...



1



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