

THE WAITING GAME

Nobody likes to wait ...
especially for offers

By Vincent Scaramuzzo, Ed-Exec Inc.

You are heading to check out at the supermarket. Your eyes scan for the register that looks like it will move the fastest. Why? You don't want to wait.

Wi-Fi. 3G, 4G, LTE – faster, faster! 15MB up, 30MB down. Why? No one wants to wait for buffering.

As you approach a red light, you quickly switch to the empty lane next to you. Why? You guessed it. No one wants to wait behind another car.

People hate to wait for anything, especially job offers. After many interviews, the last thing someone wants to do is sit in the dark waiting for an offer. And not just a verbal offer, but a tangible, legal, written offer letter that clearly outlines everything. After all, a person's career, livelihood, family and future location are all affected by it – it holds a lot of weight.

It astounds me on a regular basis that so many educational institutions don't get this, especially when they are so good at being fast and efficient in other areas. Fill out an online lead form, and within minutes a representative from the school is calling to answer your questions. Visit the website, and a virtual assistant pops up to field your questions instantly or offers to call you. Can't get to a campus? No problem. Take the course online - it's faster.

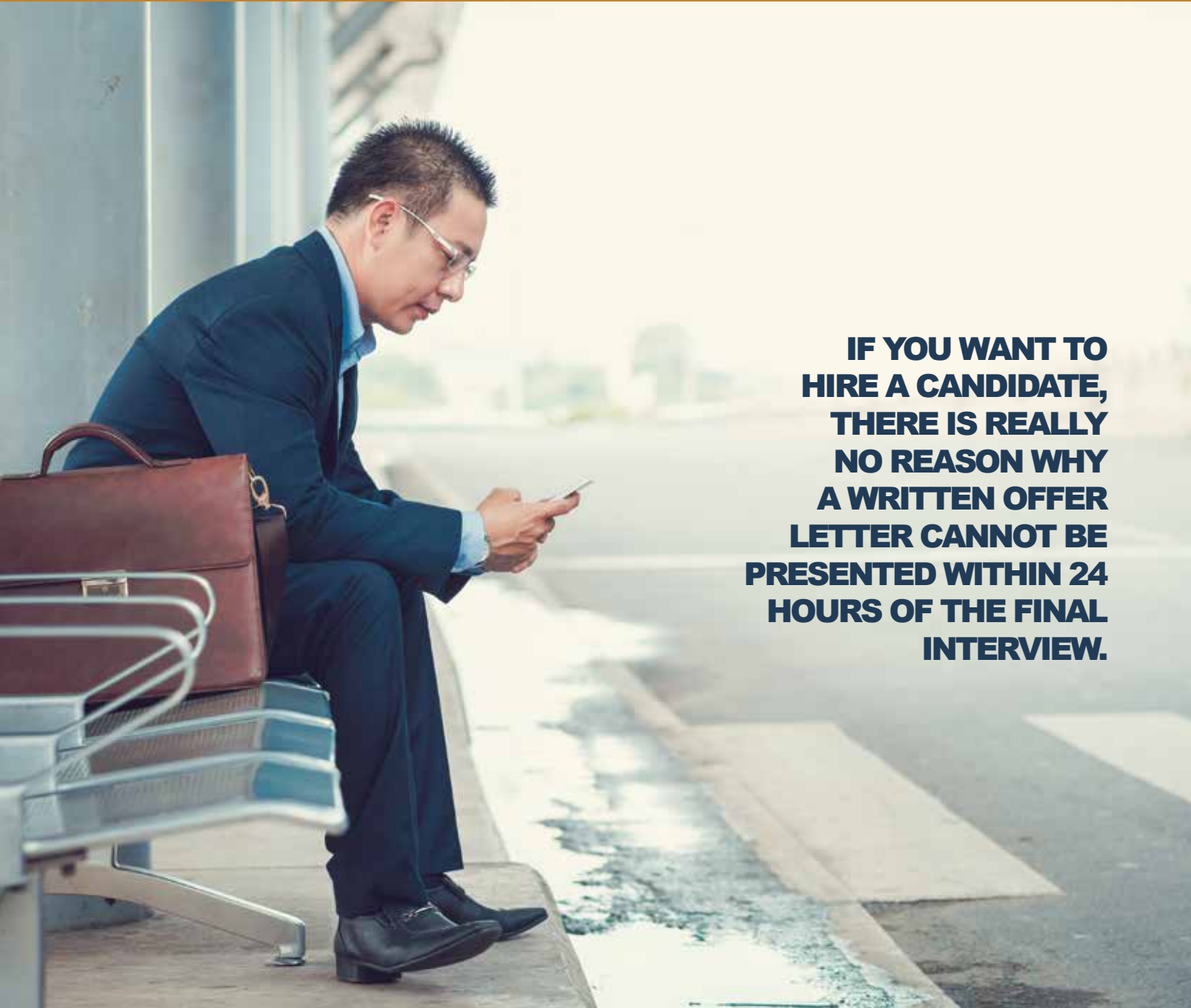
So why, oh why, are some schools so slow at hiring? It is like they instantly forget how to do anything quickly once the interview process begins. I don't suggest they hire fast and bypass due diligence or compromise a search process – just that they be efficient about it. If you want to hire a candidate, there is really no reason why a written offer letter cannot be presented within 24 hours of the final interview.

Why is it so important? Because you will lose potential hires, period. Every single candidate we have placed in 2015 has had multiple offers, and almost all have received a counteroffer from their current institution in an attempt to retain their employment. You have to move fast to beat the competition. Time kills all deals, and it kills many hires, too.

It is a strange time of transition in the education sector, and the general perception is that many candidates should be available. But schools are painfully discovering that this is not the reality. A hundred more schools can close (let's hope they don't) and this wouldn't change. National unemployment was 5.5 percent at the end of March, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. For those over the age of 25 with a completed Bachelor's degree, the rate drops to 2.5 percent.

These candidates are just going to work in other sectors. The demand for strong, hands-on, savvy managers is tremendous in many fields. That leaves the truly dedicated and passionate education administrators in short supply. No school wants to lose them, and everyone wants to hire them.

I spoke to the regional operations manager of a well-respected university system the other day. They recently posted a director of admissions opening on all the popular websites. This university pays a premium; has a stellar reputation; will pay for relocation; and has a beautiful, brand-new campus in a very popular area. They received 42 responses. Only 42. Two years ago, that would have been 242. And of the responders, two candidates were from education, and only one was qualified. Needless to say, we are now handling the search.



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In my opinion, finding good talent will be the greatest obstacle for schools to overcome in order to succeed in the coming years. There is a direct correlation between failing groups and flaws in the talent acquisition process and retention strategies. You need to move quickly. Treat your candidates as you would your student inquiries and you may avoid losing your next great hire. Because no one likes to wait. Ever.



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