



The Day We Stopped Answering the Knock

By Dale Jodoin
Columnist

It did not happen all at once. No one woke up and said, "That's it, I don't care anymore." It came in small moments, quiet ones, the kind you almost miss. Like standing at the grocery checkout. The screen lights up. It asks for a donation. You pause. You think. You look at your cart like it might answer for you.

Then you press "no." Not fast. Not angry. Just tired. You glance around for a second after, like someone might have seen. No one did. Or maybe they did and just understood. That is where the story really starts. A few years ago, most of us would have said yes. A dollar. Five dollars. Maybe more if we could. It felt like part of who we were. You help where you can. You do your part. That part of us is still here. But life has changed. Walk through any store now.

People are not browsing. They are calculating. You see it in their faces. They pick something up, check the price, then put it back. A man holds two packs of meat. He only takes one. A woman counts coins before she taps her card. A young worker checks his bank app before he pays. No one says a word.

But everyone understands. Money is tighter than it has been in a long time. Food costs keep rising. Every week it feels higher. Rent keeps climbing too. For many people, it is not just hard, it is overwhelming. You pay it, and there is not much left. Young people feel it the most. They are trying to start their lives, but it feels like the ground keeps moving.

Jobs are harder to find. Good jobs feel out of reach. Some move back home. Some take whatever they can get. Some just keep trying and hoping something opens up. And in the middle of all this, the tasks keep coming. Charities call. Emails pile up. Ads show up online.

The bank asks. The store asks. There is always another cause, another need, another voice asking for help. At first, people try to keep up. They give a little here, a little there. They tell themselves it still matters.

Then reality hits. A bigger grocery bill than last week.

A rent increase. A payment that suddenly hurts more than it used to. That is when something shifts. You start saying no more often. Not because you want to. Because you have to. And here is the part people do not say out loud. Some of us have started avoiding it on purpose. We tap faster at the machine. We look away from the person with the clipboard. We scroll past the story that asks for help.

Not because we do not care. Because we cannot carry one more thing. That is when the guilt creeps in. You feel it when you walk past a donation box. When you skip a fundraiser. When you ignore a message asking for help. You tell yourself, "Next time." You tell yourself, "When things get better."

But next time I keep moving further away. After a while, something else happens. You start turning the volume down on that feeling. You have to. Because caring like that, all the time, costs something. It costs energy. It costs peace. It follows you home and sits with you when you are trying to rest. So you quiet it.

From the outside, it can look like people stopped caring. That is not what is happening. People are trying to stay afloat. You cannot be generous when you are scared. Picture someone in deep water. They are not thinking about saving everyone else. They are trying to keep their own head above the surface. That is where a lot of Canadians are right now.

And here is the hard truth. The more people are pushed, the less they can give. When every moment feels like another ask, another reminder, another weight, people do not open up. They close off. They protect what little they have left.

Money, yes. But also their energy, their peace, their sanity. There is another side to this that makes it even harder. We still spend on small things sometimes. A coffee. A treat. Something to feel normal for a moment. Then later, we look at the bill and wonder if we should have said yes to that donation instead. That back and forth sits with people. No one talks about the moment caring starts to feel like pressure.

But it is happening. There is also the question people keep to themselves. They look at what they pay in taxes. They hear about spending, programs, and promises. They are told more is needed. But their own lives are getting tighter, not easier. So they ask, quietly, where is it going? Why does it feel like it is never enough?

Those questions hang there. And still, the tasks keep coming. This is where the warning lives. If we keep pushing people who are already struggling, we risk losing something deeper than donations.

We risk losing trust. We risk wearing down the very instinct that made people want to help in the first place. Because generosity is not endless. It needs room. It needs stability. Right now, many people have neither.

They are not bad people. They are not selfish. They are tired. They are stretched thin. They are doing everything they can just to hold their own lives together.

We still care. We just ran out of room to carry it all. If we want that caring to come back strong, we have to let people stand again first.

Ease the pressure. Give people room to breathe. Because when people feel steady again, they will give. They always have. But here is the part we should not ignore. Some people have already stopped answering the knock.

And that number is growing. That is the warning. Because when people stop answering, it is not loud. It is quiet.

Quiet enough that no one notices at first. Until one day, the knock is still there. But no one opens the door.



Not Getting Hired Doesn't Prove Hiring is Broken

By Nick Kossovan

If I had a nickel for every time a job seeker told me, "I'm doing everything right! Why am I not getting hired?" I'd be writing this column from a Southern California beachfront house. Most job seekers aren't doing everything right. They're doing what's comfortable and easy, and what self-proclaimed career coaches tell them to do.

I find many job seekers treat their job search like a hobby, something they tinker with when the mood strikes, usually between scrolling through social media and complaining that the hiring system is "broken."

Clarification that a "hiring system" doesn't exist: No two employers assess candidates the same way, so there's no universal hiring system. Individual employers design their hiring processes according to what they feel is in their best interests, which is for them, not the job seeker, to determine.

Especially in today's job market, "doing everything right" means meeting the demanding expectations of an employer whose keen business acumen considers employees as human capital investments and expects every hire to add value to their business that justifies their compensation. If you aren't getting hired, it's not because the mythical hiring system is broken; it's because you aren't positioning yourself as someone an employer needs to maintain, ideally increase, their profitability.

To protect their egos, job seekers complain that employers don't know how to hire. By blaming everyone and everything but themselves for their lack of success in their job search, they're telling themselves (read: their ego) that it's not their fault; it's the recruiter's, the employer's ATS, or [whatever].

The "it's broken" excuse is a sedative for the unsuccessful.

Ponder this: The likelihood of a high school football player making it to the NFL is about 0.2%. For hockey players aspiring to the NHL, it's about 0.11%. Do you hear the thousands of athletes who don't make the cut, screaming that the scouting and drafting system is broken? Professional sports teams are successfully filling their rosters with elite athletic talent. The system works for the NFL and NHL; it just doesn't work for those who weren't fast or strong enough to be drafted.

Imagine the stress and pressure of trying to secure a surgical residency or being selected for a major airline pilot training program. In both cases, the application and selection process is intense, resulting in the majority of applicants being rejected. Is the selection process for a neurosurgeon "broken" because a straight-A medical student didn't get selected by their first-choice hospital? No, not at all. The application and selection process is designed specifically to select only the "best of the best."

As we delve deeper into 2026, AI is constantly moving the goalposts. AI isn't just a tool anymore; it's a viable alternative to back-office functions. In tech and white-collar sectors, entry-level roles once considered "safe" are being automated.

Increasingly, human roles are reserved for those able to deliver a healthy ROI on their compensation investment that, for now, machines are unable to match.

Job seekers who are searching for a job by the "traditional rules" are the ones who aren't getting traction. I see this often: recent graduates with impressive academic credentials wondering why their inbox is empty. They did what they were told to do, but they neglected to develop real-world skills through internships, side projects, and informational conversations.

Conversely, experienced professionals are struggling because they're failing to adapt their career story to a job market that prizes agility and digital fluency over decades of "doing things the old way."

Given that employers are hiring great candidates every day, job seekers need to ask themselves: What are successful job seekers doing right?

- **Networking over Applying:** They go beyond simply submitting their résumé. In a world of AI-generated applications, human connection is the only thing that scales. They create, maintain and leverage professional relationships to bypass digital gatekeepers.

- **Proving their value with Data:** They don't merely claim to "manage a team"; they specify the exact cost savings, or efficiency gains they achieved for their employer.

- **Lifelong Skill Development:** They prioritize acquiring knowledge and skills, knowing, for example, that if they don't become proficient with AI collaboration tools, they'll become obsolete.

Resisting how employers choose to hire for their business is a monumental waste of energy. It's their business, their turf, and they're taking on the hiring risks. You don't have to like that they use AI filters, demand six rounds of interviews, or prioritize "cultural fit," but you do have to adapt to the new world order.

As I pointed out, hiring processes differ from employer to employer, so there's no universal hiring system that's broken. However, universally, employers don't care whether you believe or are being told you're doing "everything right." Employers only care whether you'll create value for their business that's worth paying for.

The takeaway: Not getting hired isn't evidence that an employer's hiring process is "broken." As an outsider, you have no visibility into what goes on inside. However, it's safe to assume an employer would fix their hiring process if they were concerned it wasn't attracting the candidates they need to maintain and increase their profitability.



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10 AM TO 10 PM

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