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Resuscitating a Stalled Interview Process

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Here's a depressingly frequent situation: You survived several interviews with a single employer. But after a fifth or tenth meeting that seemed to go even more swimmingly than those before, communication abruptly stops.

How if at all can you [get things moving again](#)? An article in Forbes magazine's Jan. 26 issue offers tips from several career experts we've sometimes cited at eFinancialCareers News. The story is a useful compendium of advice that's found piecemeal in various other places. Many of the tips also can be applied in an interview process that isn't stalled.

Here are the key points, followed by our observations in parenthesis:

When You Follow Up, Offer Information

The best way to avoid sounding desperate or pestering when you check in is to share a piece of relevant information with the prospective employer. In an ideal world, you'd inform them in a low-key way about [a competing job offer](#) you have. If you find yourself in that enviable position, take care to avoid sounding smug or confrontational. Instead, "you should be providing information," career coach Roy Cohen told Forbes. "Say, 'I want to let you know where things stand for me.'"

If you don't have another offer in the works, Cohen suggests telling the hiring manager you'd like to "strategize about what we should do to move forward."

The Mechanics of Communication

If you check in by email, don't send more than one a week. If you rely on the telephone, [keep trying at different times until you reach the person](#), and don't leave any message when you don't.

(Forbes leaves out an important caveat that applies when using this tactic: To avoid looking like a stalker, start each call by pressing *67 to prevent the recipient seeing you called repeatedly. Note that the prefix won't block your phone number from showing when you call a toll-free number.)

Probe For Information During Meetings

Coaches quoted in the Forbes story advise asking questions while face-to-face with an interviewer that will help you picture what lies ahead. Questions such as: Where are you in the search process? How do I compare to your ideal candidate? How many other candidates are in the game at this stage?

The 'Influence Letter'

Career coach Anita Attridge favors sending a letter or email after each meeting, that details "what you would want to accomplish in

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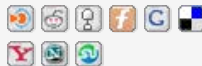
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your first six months on the job."

(This assumes a lot. [As eFC News has noted](#), pulling that off usually requires substantial knowledge about departmental priorities, the hiring manager's needs and the current division of responsibilities within the work group. Such information is rarely found in job postings or early-stage interviews, and – in my personal experience at least – might not be forthcoming even after three or four interviews.)

When You Smell an Offer Coming, Don't Relax

With that long-sought offer finally in sight, it's natural to sit back. Smart candidates do just the opposite: they [accelerate their search](#), career coach Eileen Wolkstein tells Forbes.

(Safeguarding against disappointment is only part of the reason. Equally important is that offers beget other offers. Coaches say notifying other prospective employers that you're in a fast-moving interview process with one, is the most effective tool there is for re-starting processes you were in that stalled elsewhere.)

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