

75

minutes

The fastest rejection in this report.

JOB HUNTING IN 2026

We'll Keep Your Resume on File

287 applications.
All sent by a person.
1 human wrote back.

PRATEEK NAIR · PRATEEKNAIR.DESIGN

A person sent every one of these.

Between July 21 and October 13, 2026, I applied to 287 jobs, almost all of them in design, and logged each one in a tracker: role, pay, which resume I sent and what happened.

I used AI to help tailor my answers, after months of teaching it how I write.
I never used a bot to apply.
I read every posting and pressed submit myself.



DATA NOTES

Ghosted	No reply after 30 days.
Human reply	A screening, an interview or a real conversation with a person. Automated steps (AI interviews, online tests, virtual-assistant screens) don’t count.
Missing dates	81 entries were logged after the fact with no application date. They count in the totals, not in the timing charts.
Missing details	Some early entries have no resume variant logged. Counts by resume use only the 178 that do.
Rejection speed	Measured on the 39 rejections with both dates.
Anonymous	No company or person is named, and nothing here identifies one.

Two-thirds never answered.

1 in 287 applications reached a human.



2 of every 3 got no answer at all

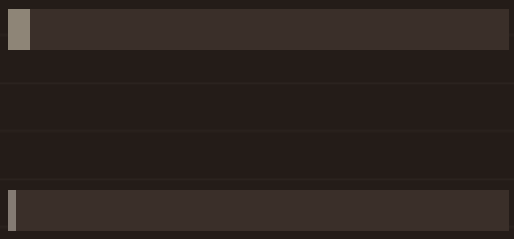
190
no reply



85
rejected



8
closed, withdrawn or dropped



3
automated screens: an AI interview, online tests, a virtual-assistant screen

1
human reply.
One recruiter, one real conversation.

Bars share one scale. n = 287.

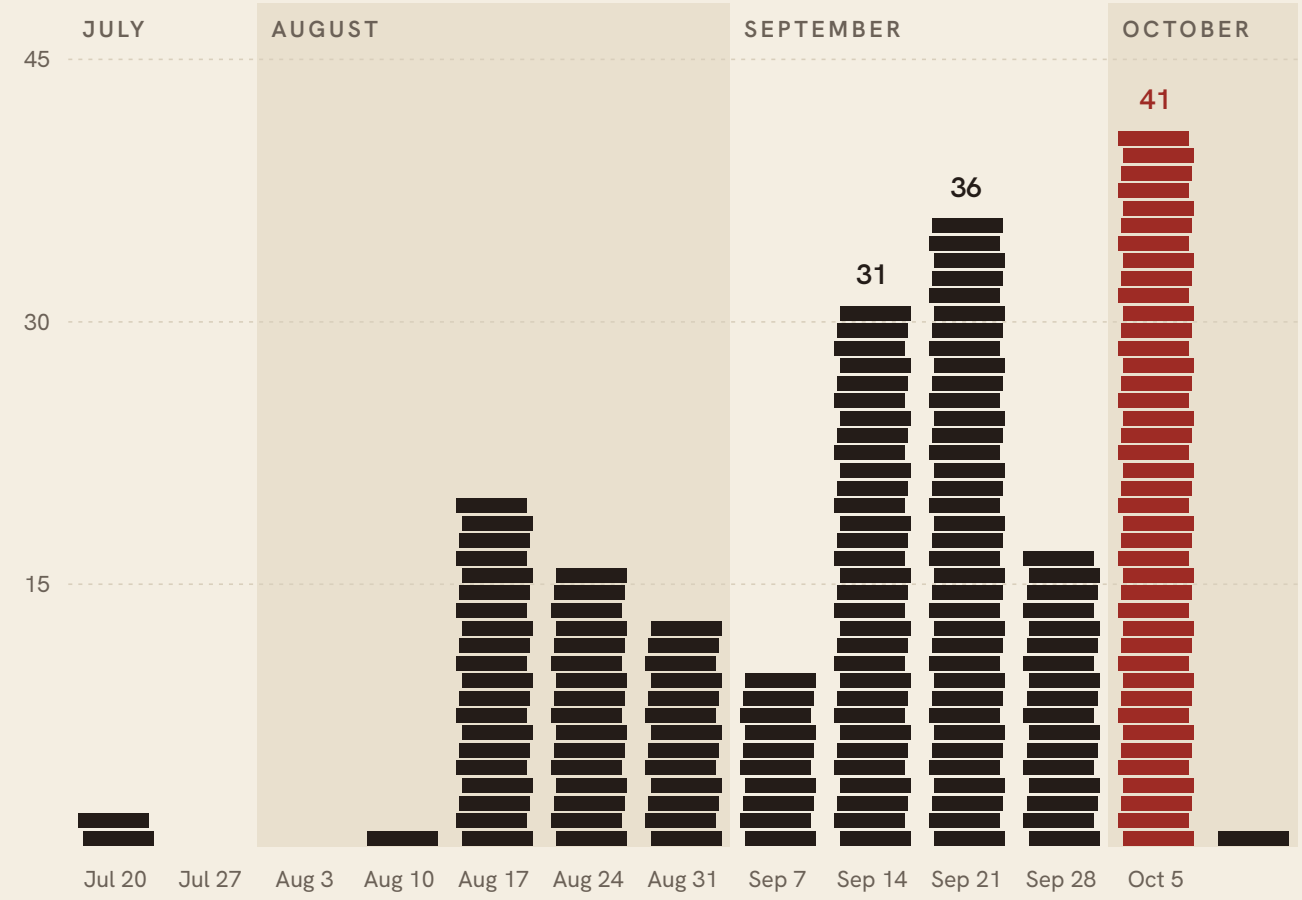
Then I started applying like it was my job.

Volume went up.
Replies didn’t.

48
August

96
September

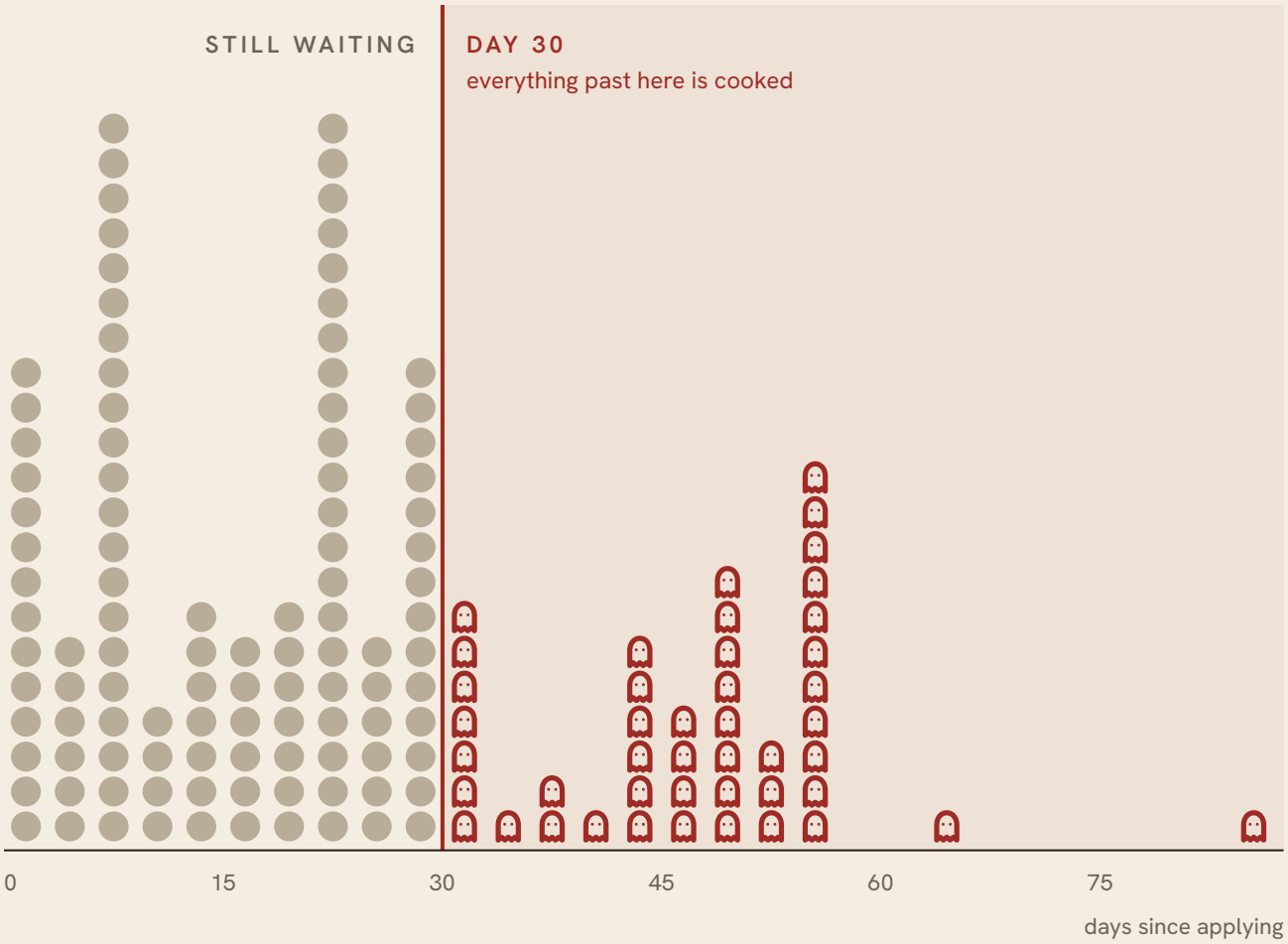
60
October, in under two weeks



One slip per application, by week starting Monday.
The last week is two days.
Excludes 81 undated entries and 7 August entries with no exact day.

After 30 days, it's cooked.

Of the **190** applications that never got an answer, **84** are past the point where anyone is coming back. The other **106** are younger than a month. Ask me again in November.



GHOSTED

The 151 silent applications with an exact date, one mark each.
The other 39 have no exact date and are all past 30 days.

5 *days*

The median wait for a no. Half of the dated rejections came within five days.



The "NO" arrives fast.

75 min

Fastest.
An AI company.

~90 min

Second fastest.
A fintech company.

~4 mo

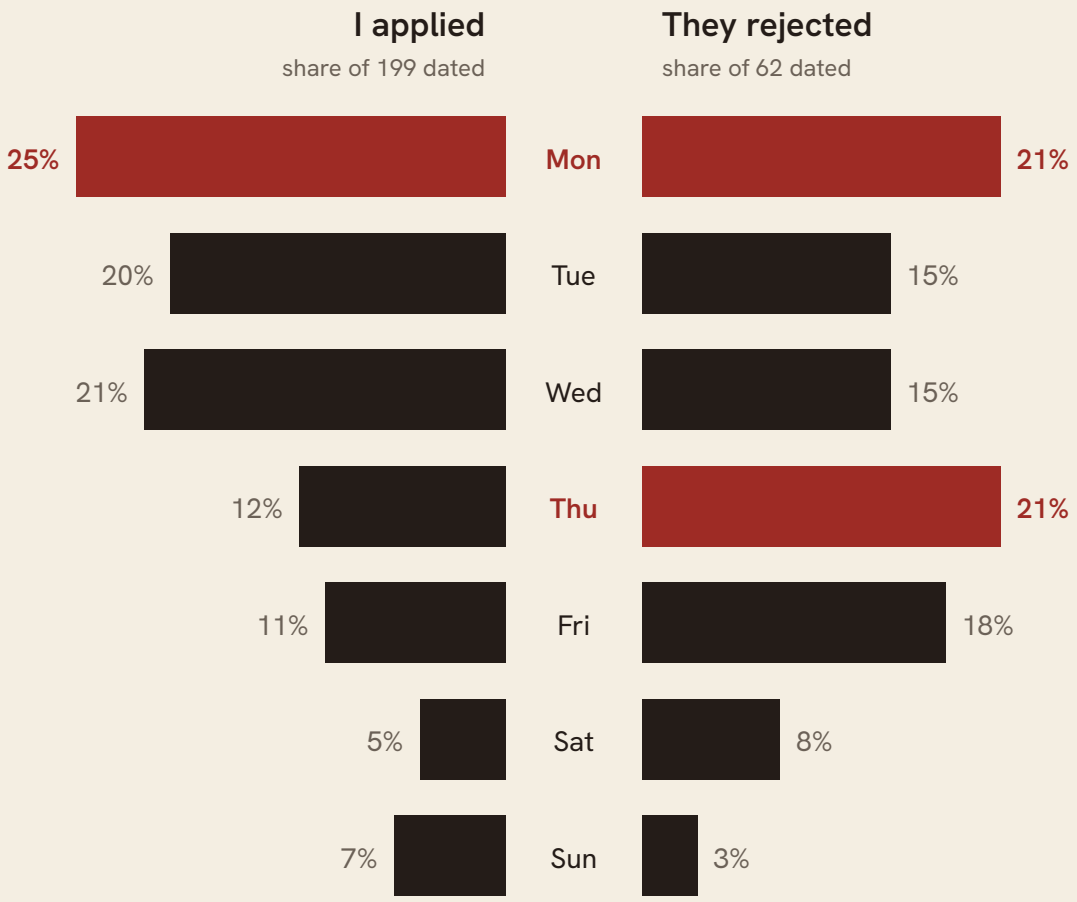
Slowest. Almost four months after my last contact.

THE REJECTION CALENDAR · EACH × IS ONE REJECTION

					MEDIAN	
Same day ×××××	Day 1 ××	Day 2 ×××	Day 3 ×××××××	Day 4 ××	**Day 5** ×××××	Day 6 ××
Day 7 ×	Day 8 ×××	Day 9 ×	Day 10	Day 11 ×	Day 12	Day 13
Day 14	Day 15	Day 16 ×	Day 17 ×	Day 18	Day 19	Day 20
Day 21 ×	Day 22	Day 23	Day 24	Day 25	Day 26	Day 27 ×
Day 28	Day 29 ×	Day 30 ×	Day 31	Day 32	Day 33	Day 34
Day 35	Day 36	Day 37	Day 38	Day 39	Day 40 ×	Day 41

Mondays are rough for both of us.

Rejections don’t keep office hours.
Seven landed on a weekend.



Hiring Team — Saturday
Update on your application
...a high volume of applicants...

Hiring Team — Before 7 AM
Your application
...isn’t an ideal fit at this time...

Hiring Team — After midnight
Thank you for applying
...experience more closely aligns...

Same scale on both sides: 199 applications and 62 rejections with an exact date.
Rejections tie at 21% on Monday and Thursday.
Notification cards are recreations, not real emails.

Template bingo.

Every square is a real line from a rejection I received. Collect all nine. I did.

REJECTION BINGO — CARD NO. 287

B I N G O

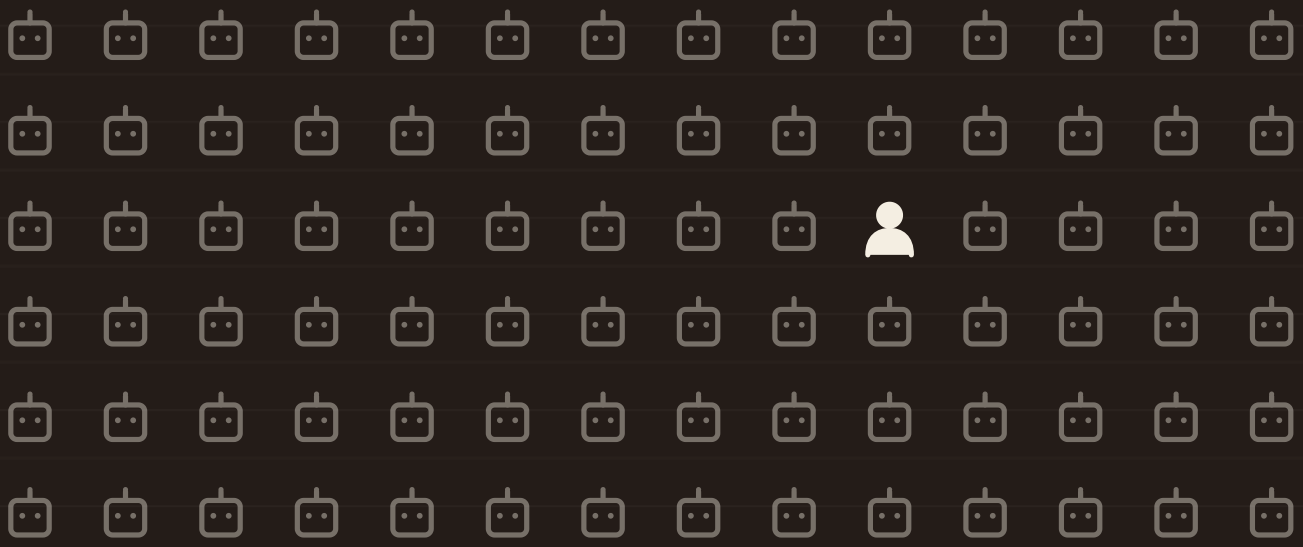
"high volume of applicants"	"candidates whose experience more closely aligns"	"we'll keep your resume on file"
"isn't an ideal fit at this time"	FREE SPACE "Hi Nair,"	"we encourage you to apply again"
"decided to move forward with other applicants"	"a very competitive process"	"impressed by your background"

BINGO!

One rejection opened with "Hi Nair."
Maybe I typed my name in the wrong box.
Either way, nobody read it.

The bots are applying too.

Auto-apply tools send applications by the thousand, and companies answer with filters of their own.



One of these is me.



One posting hid a code word inside the job description, just to catch applicants who didn’t read it.

The bots missed it. I put it in my answer.

A recruiter I know says the bots are a big part of why everyone is getting wrecked right now.

What almost worked.

Every application that moved to a next step came from a role I had marked a strong fit before applying. All four came in October. Only one of them reached a human.



STRONG FIT

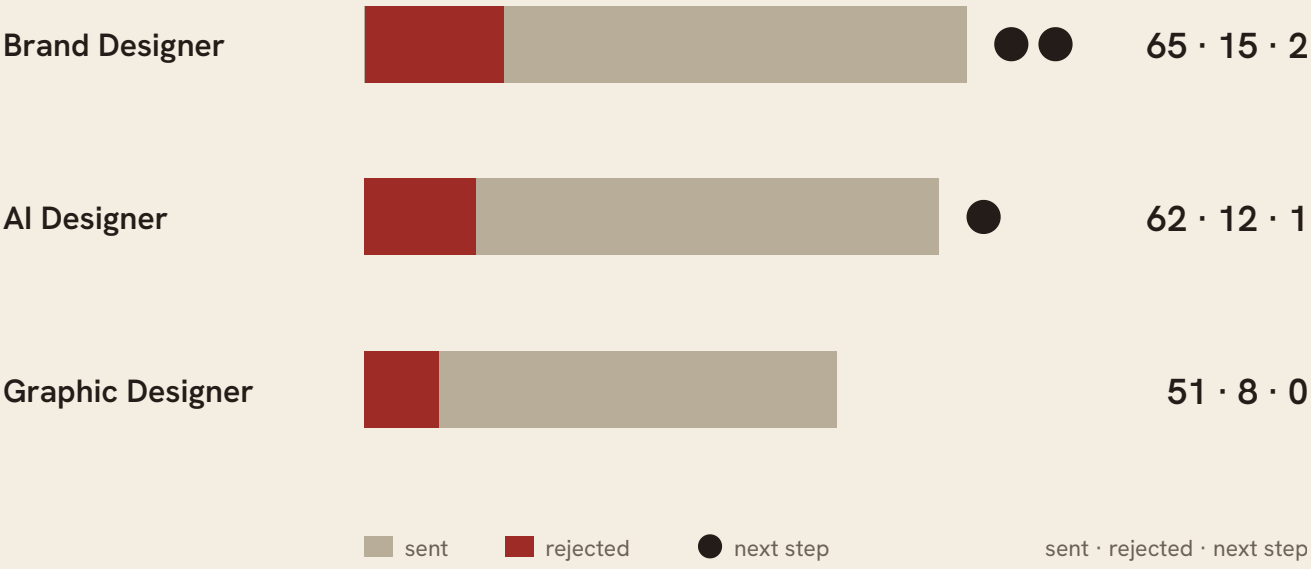
4 of 75

moved to a next step.
1 of the 4 reached a human.

0	Stretch	0 of 82
0	Unrated	0 of 130

Everything else combined: **0 of 212**

THREE RESUMES, SAME STORY



Fit was my read of each role, mostly made before applying.
130 entries were never rated.
A next step is any response that wasn't a rejection: 1 human conversation and 3 automated screens.
Resume counts cover the 178 entries where the variant was logged.
One of the four next steps had no resume variant logged, so it isn't shown.



We'll keep your report on file.

1–2	1	287
recruiter calls	interview that went anywhere	applications in this file

The search isn't over. If you're hiring a designer who reads the whole posting, you know where to find me.

prateeknair.design

G? ✦ STILL HIRING? ✦ STILL HIRING? ✦ STILL HIRING? ✦ STILL HIRING? ✦ STILL HIRING? ✦ STILL