

Job Applicant Toolkit



Applying for
one of our
amazing roles!



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Where are you on your job search journey?



Click on the steps below for some great advice and top tips to support your job search and application. Alternatively, scroll to the next page to run through all eight steps.



Defining my goals



Updating my CV



Identifying my strengths and opportunities



Optimising my LinkedIn



Perfecting my interview skills



Writing a follow up email



Starting a new job



Handling rejection



How to define your career goals

Before you update your CV and start applying for a new role, you'll need to understand what you're looking for. Are you hoping for more responsibility, or a shorter commute for example. Are you eager to work for a company that offers better perks such as home working, medical insurance or have your birthday off! Taking time to identify your goals, both big and small, will help you to home in on the types of jobs you should be targeting.

Feeling stuck? Try ranking these five key factors in order of importance:



COMPANY
CULTURE



OPPORTUNITY
FOR GROWTH



PAY AND
BENEFITS



JOB
WELL BEING AND
SUSTAINABILITY



LEVEL OF
RESPONSIBILITY

Deciding what specific day-to-day responsibilities you would like to have will also be essential as you begin to update your Curriculum Vitae (CV), cover letter, and LinkedIn profile. Try asking yourself what you've enjoyed doing most throughout your career and what you'd prefer not to do. This exercise should help you to picture your ideal role more clearly.

TOP TIP

Try browsing job postings for the different types of roles you're considering. Do you find the responsibilities described to be interesting and exciting? Make note of the duties that appeal most to you and keep them in mind as you begin searching and reading job descriptions.





Tweak your CV

The structure and contents of your CV are both essential to get the attention of prospective employers, who are often filtering through dozens of others. Here is a guide to laying out and filling in a logically structured and easy to read CV, so that your application goes to the top of the pile.



Katie Smith

Insert desired job role title

Phone 773-00405-02
E-mail k.smith@yahoo.com
LinkedIn linkedin.com
Twitter @katiesmith.utw

Career history

Starting with your most recent employer, list your past jobs in chronological order. If you do have gaps in your work history, due to travel, a break in employment, or redundancy, just be clear about them. Think about things relevant to the role you are applying for that will catch the eye of the recruiter. Include skills that are relevant to the role and use acts and figures or examples to back them up.

Skills and achievements

list a few short bullet points, describing some of your key achievements and skills. Tailor these for the job you're applying for and make sure they're as relevant as possible.

Education and training

Starting with the most recent, lay out your education and qualifications in chronological order. Make sure that you have the 'to and from' dates of the school/college/university etc. you attended, then fill out the subjects, grades obtained, and other related awards and achievements.

Interests and activities

This is a good opportunity to reveal a little of your personality. Talk about some of the things you like to do outside of work and any interesting or fun facts you might have.

References

Use this extra space on your CV wisely. List the name, job title, and address of a former employer and also make sure you give them a heads up that you're using them as a reference.

TOP TIP

Always do a typo and grammar check before sending out your CV. Any errors will affect your chances of a job interview or offer. If you can, get another person to look at your CV too and if you're applying for a job vacancy in the UK, remember to name it as a CV and not a resume.





Selling your strengths and turning your weaknesses to positive opportunities

In most job interviews, you will be asked to describe your strengths and opportunities. In preparation for an interview, you should consider how best to answer this question so that the information is useful to employers.



Selling your strengths

EXAMPLE ANSWERS

Leadership Skills



“ I consider my leadership skills to be some of my biggest strengths. During my time as a team manager, I successfully merged two teams and organised training programmes for all team members to ensure that everyone was confident in their new role. As a result, we were able to increase sales by 5% within our first month as a new team.”

Communication Skills



“ Thanks to my experience as an HR representative, I have gained excellent communication skills. I was responsible for setting up workshops for colleagues and mediating any conflicts in the workplace. I have also completed a course on effective communication.”





Turning your weaknesses to positive opportunities

EXAMPLE ANSWERS

Public speaking



“ I sometimes find presentations intimidating in a new environment. To overcome this I have recently signed up to an effective Presentation course to help boost my confidence when it comes to presentations or speaking in meetings.”

Delegation



“ I can sometimes struggle with delegating and choose to take on a larger workload to ensure that a task is completed perfectly. I know that this puts more pressure on myself, so I have recently been using new software tools my calendar/diary more effectively to assign tasks to others and track their completion. So far this has helped me to trust my co-workers and focus more on my own tasks.”

Keeping a healthy work/ life balance



“ Because I truly love my work and I am very ambitious, I sometimes find it difficult to set boundaries between my work and personal life. However, I know that ignoring my personal needs can have a negative impact on my motivation and focus. To overcome this weakness, I now actively create time in my schedule to spend with my family. Small changes, such as putting my phone on silent, have made a huge difference. Having more balance in my life between work and leisure makes me more productive at work.”





Optimise your LinkedIn

Making sure your LinkedIn profile is up to scratch is key to getting noticed by recruiters and hiring managers. Here are our five steps to creating a LinkedIn profile that'll get you noticed.

Katie Smith
IT Project Manager
 London, England, United Kingdom • [Contact Info](#)
 500+ connections

[Open to](#) [Add section](#) [More](#)

About

Hi, I am Katie. I'm a skilled IT project manager with over 5 years' of experience in...

Experience

IT Project Manager
 A company
 Jan 2017 - September 2021
 London, United Kingdom

In my roles as a IT Project Manager at A Company I'm responsible for:

- Activity and resource planning
- Organising and motivating a project team
- Controlling time management
- Cost estimating and developing the budget
- Ensuring customer satisfaction
- Analysing and managing project risk
- Monitoring progress

Skills & endorsements

Project management
 Endorsed by **10 connections**

Meeting management skills
 Endorsed by **8 connections**

Communication
 Endorsed by **15 connections**

1. Photo - Keep it professional. It is all too easy to use LinkedIn as an extension of your personal Facebook or Twitter profile. LinkedIn is a professional media platform, this is not conducive to finding a new job.

2. Headline - A clear job title/function and a unique selling proposition (USP) (a characteristic that distinguishes you from others of a similar nature and makes you more appealing.) helps recruiters and potential hiring managers to know whether you fit their criteria or not right away.

3. Summary - Writing a summary in the 'About' section on your LinkedIn will help recruiters or hiring managers find out more information about you and your career history. This is also a great place to promote your personality and you can make this section as formal or as informal as you see fit.

4. Jobs/History - Make sure you have a clear career history with employer, job title and ideally some detail about your role and responsibilities. It also helps when you add in a small summary of what the company does, or the industry they're in for extra clarity.

5. Recommendations - This means that recruiters can see that your services are valued, and others have had positive experiences working with you. Recruiters or hiring managers trust these more than anything else.





Perfect your interview skills

Getting to the interview stage is an exciting time for any job hunter. However, when you enter a job interview it is crucial to have answers to several typical 'STAR' interview questions prepared.

With this tried and tested interview technique, you can structure your answers to common interview questions clearly and professionally:



SITUATION

Describe the situation or the task you needed to accomplish

TASK

What goal you were working toward?

ACTION

Describe the situation or the task you needed to accomplish

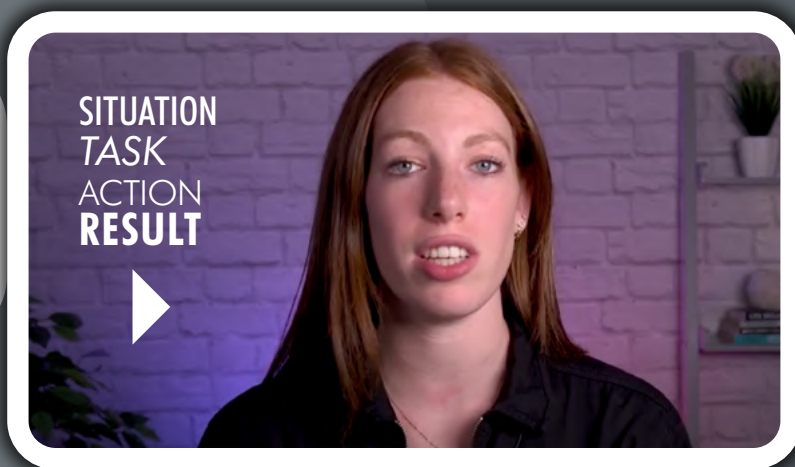
RESULT

What were the results or outcome of your actions?

VIDEO GUIDE

Using the STAR interview guide

Click to watch





Your video interview checklist

There has been a rise in interviews being carried out over video, especially for the first few stages of the interview process anyway. That's why it's important to know how to tackle them. Here's a handy video interview checklist that'll help you conduct yourself perfectly in an interview:



✓ Power, connection, and your device

If you are using a laptop, make sure that it is properly charged or plugged in throughout the interview. You don't want to get cut off in the middle of your conversation! Make sure you choose a location with a good internet connection too.

✓ Light, background, and what to wear

Try to arrange your space so that there is a good source of natural lighting. Otherwise, ensure you have strong lights overhead and slightly behind. Shadows can distort your appearance and your interviewers will want to see you clearly. A plain, light-coloured background is best.

✓ Avoid distractions

You need to be away from all distractions when you sit down for your interview. Choose a quiet room and make sure that any people who are around are aware that you should not be disturbed.

✓ Practice makes perfect

A practice run before the interview is essential. You want to ensure that you look good, can be seen clearly and all the equipment is working properly. A huge advantage of video interviews is that you can have prompts. Set them just above the line of the camera and no one will even know you are using them.

✓ Camera

Make sure your camera is set in line with your eyes. If it is too high, the interviewers will see too much of the top of your head, and if it is too low your face will be distorted. You want them to be able to see your head and shoulders clearly, so do not sit too close or too far from the camera.

TOP TIP

Often on camera, there is a slight delay. So, it's a good idea to wait a few seconds before responding to a question just in case. You don't want a situation where you accidentally cut off your interviewer mid-sentence.





The importance of doing your research

Company research is the best way to learn about what the company does and what they look for in a candidate. You'll also be better prepared to answer questions and position yourself as the best candidate. As you prepare for your upcoming interview, here's what you need to know about the company and the job you're applying for:



The skills and experience the company values

You want to know what the company looks for in qualified candidates. This enables you to position yourself as the best candidate for the job.



Key players of the organisation

Find out who holds important positions in the company. These might be managers or directors, all the way up to the CEO. Good places to look are 'About us' pages on company websites or LinkedIn.



News and recent events about the employer

Going into an interview, it's always a good idea to be knowledgeable about the company's latest news and updates. This will show that you are engaged and are taking the interview seriously.



The company's culture, mission and values

Pay attention to what's written on their website regarding culture and company values. It's also a good idea to follow the company on social media for the inside scoop.



TOP TIP

Don't forget to use LinkedIn to find out some more information on your interviewer's background, their role within the company and even some common interests you both share.





Writing a follow up email

After a job interview, it's only natural to want an update on the hiring process, you may want to follow up using the email template below to craft the perfect email, so you can find out about next steps on your most recent interview:

Follow up email template:

SUBJECT: Katie Smith – RE: Interview on Tuesday at 4pm

INTRODUCTION:

Hi <Julie / Ms. Jones>,

BODY TEXT:

Thank you for your time <yesterday / date of interview>. It was great to speak to you about the <job title> role and I'm convinced that the position is a perfect fit for this stage in my career. I was hoping to get an update on the recruitment process, so any information that you can give me about the next steps would be greatly appreciated. Also, feel free to ask me any follow-up questions that may have come up since we last spoke.

SIGN OFF:

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Katie Smith

Send | ✓

Discard



DO'S

Leave the dust to settle. Leave time for the dust to settle. Wait a few days before sending that all-important follow up so the interviewer has time to reflect on the experience.

Keep your follow-up professional and courteous. No matter how well you thought the interview went, or how informal the process felt, it's always best to keep your follow up email professional.

Be clear about the purpose of your message. In your follow up email, mention your interest in the position and why you're the best candidate for the job.

Read over your follow-up email before sending. Ensure it's well-spaced, correctly punctuated, and free of typos.

DON'TS

Don't waste time and words on unnecessary small talk. Presumably you're simply looking for an update on the recruitment process, so get straight to the point.

Don't be pushy. Keep it casual and avoid being too demanding to a potential new employer or hiring manager.

Don't pester. Refrain from continually contacting the hiring manager if they have already informed you that you are no longer being considered for the position.

Ignore an interviewer. If after the interview you feel like the job is not right for you, just let the company know in a follow-up email that you would no longer like to be considered. This is much better than just ignoring their calls or emails.



Get ready for onboarding...

You've got the job, well done! Now it's time to prepare for the next phase – onboarding. Starting a new job can be an exciting yet daunting prospect, but the added pressure of starting that new job remotely may feel like stepping into uncharted territory. Your first day is likely to be face-to-face. But you should also be prepared that it may need to happen virtually instead. However you're starting your new job, stay positive by following these simple steps;



- ★ Read through any induction documents you get sent, familiarise yourself with any tools they might use, and ensure all your tech has arrived and is working correctly.
- ★ Get to know your colleagues.
- ★ Identify someone who could be your 'buddy' to guide you through unfamiliar processes.
- ★ Learn how your team communicates and works together.
- ★ Request regular catch-up calls with your line manager so you always know what you are doing.
- ★ Don't be afraid to ask for help. It's far better to be willing to learn by asking questions, than waste lots of time trying to figure something out yourself.
- ★ Remind people who you are: reintroduce yourself in meetings or at the start of emails just to remind colleagues of your name and role in the business.

TOP TIP

Be confident in yourself! Always remember you were hired for a reason, so you've nothing to fear. Be yourself, ask plenty of questions and most importantly have fun.



Handling rejection

What to do if you don't get the job

Unfortunately, after your final job interview, it usually goes one of two ways. If it is a rejection, here are a few things to remember to help you remain positive, optimistic, and motivated on your job search:



1. It is not personal

It's easy to take rejection to heart and blame your ability or interview skills. These decisions are rarely based on your performance and more likely around strengths of the other candidates and other external factors.

2. Always ask for feedback

Always ask the recruiter or employer for more detailed comments about your interview in order to help you improve. Remember though, interview feedback can sometimes be bland and unhelpful, so do seek out other genuinely useful feedback where possible.

3. A fresh approach

Don't carry interview baggage around with you. Approach each new job opportunity with a fresh perspective and learn from the feedback you received previously.

4. Keep learning and developing

Your confidence can take a hit when you get a rejection, so it is important to work hard at keeping your morale and motivation levels buoyant. Especially if you are not in current employment, it is a good idea to keep your skills sharpened and your experience up-to-date. This may take the form of a part-time training course (if relevant), a charity project, mentorship, or a voluntary position in a company of interest.

