

# The Ultimate Australian Job Search Handbook

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# **The Ultimate Australian Job Search Handbook**



The Ultimate Australian Job Search Handbook

1st Edition

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# Introduction

## **FIND A JOB IN AUSTRALIA!**

Are you currently seeking a job in Australia?

Are you a highly skilled migrant or an international student looking to find employment opportunities in Australia? Or perhaps you're an Australian job seeker trying to find a new job?

No matter who you are, if you require a job in Australia this EBook is for you!

The Ultimate Australian Job Search Handbook will give you all the tips that you require to find job success in Australia.

Every job market from around the world is unique, and the Australian job market is no different. In order to find a job in Australia you need to properly prepare yourself for the entire job process. This includes preparing an "Aussie" resume (that targets Australian hiring managers and recruitment agents), establishing your job searching strategies and acing the job interview. This EBook will also help you with every stage of the job interview process including preparing for common interview questions, how to answer those tough interview questions, preparing for phone interviews and even how to dress on the day of your big interview in order to create that first impression.

The purchase of the EBook is your first step to finding your dream job in Australia.

# 1 Australian Resume Writing

## 1.1 The Australian Resume:

A well written and properly presented Australian resume can be your ticket to finding an Australian job. The Australian job market is different to job markets around the world and it is important that your resume is presented in the “Australian way”

- Responsibilities, achievements and duties need to be written clearly and backed up with supporting evidence. If these are not present, it is assumed you do not have any experience at all
- Use British English ONLY in your Australian Resume – words such as “specialise” and “realise” need to be spelled with an “s” not a “z”
- Ensure you tailor EVERY application to suit the job for which you are applying. If you are going to stand out from the crowd, you have to make sure that your application is outstanding
- No picture is necessary on your Australian Resume
- Do not include personal information such as marital status, date of birth, number of children, occupation of spouse, gender, religious affiliation, colour or race on your resume. It is true that in certain countries (South Africa, for example) personal information is included and is required, however it is not necessary or needed on your Australian Resume
- Spend as much time as possible ensuring you address EXACTLY what the Australian employer wants. For example, if the job advertisement lists certain duties for the job, make sure you incorporate these duties into your current resume. If the job requires excellent customer service skills, provide examples about how you have provided excellent customer service

## 1.2 Strategic Keywords, Achievements & Presentation:

### Strategic Keywords

Using strategic keywords throughout your resume is imperative for a number of reasons. Recent reports suggest 80% of companies use some kind of software or scanning program to search for candidate resumes. In today's society it is no longer good enough to target your job toward the role you are applying for – you also need to target your resume toward software programs that are now performing first rounds of candidate selections. In this technological world where applying for a job can literally take a couple of clicks of a button, hiring managers are seeing hundreds of resumes (sometimes thousands) for one particular job. As much as we would like a hiring manager or recruiter to read through our entire resume, this rarely happens. As such, using strategic keywords will help your resume rank higher and ensure that it passes the first test of being read by either a recruiter or hiring manager.



## Highlight Your Achievements

Resume writing and job seeking has changed a lot over the past couple of years. With new online networking sites such as LinkedIn being available and making it easier for a job seeker to network with a potential boss, highlighting your achievements on your resume and cover letter is more important than ever. When a boss or hiring manager decides to employ a new person to their staff, the first thing they want to know is how this person is going to add value to their organisation. Including basic duties and responsibilities is not enough to make you stand out as the perfect person for the job. You need to prove that you are the best person by highlighting your skills and achievements.

### 1.2.1 What Types of Achievements should you include in your resume?

Employers want to know the value you are going to add to the business and therefore want to see examples of your past behaviours to indicate your future behaviours.

Types of achievements to include are:

- Ways you saved the company money
- Examples of how you reduced costs
- Examples of new ideas or implementations that resulted in positive outcomes
- Special awards or recognitions you received (e.g. voted #1 salesperson for two consecutive years)
- Training, hiring, mentoring, leading, managing staff
- Resolution of problems or issues that led to a positive outcome
- Training courses, seminars, workshops that you successfully completed

## Presentation & Format

Your resume is the first impression a hiring manager will make about you. A well-presented and structured resume that is written in a clean font will portray your resume in a professional manner and immediately give your resume application a higher ranking. Alternatively, a resume application that has spelling and grammar errors, different sized fonts, long sentences (as opposed to bullet points) and a lack of headings will not portray a positive image to the reader, and you won't look like the right person for the job. A lack of professionalism may even lead to your resume being deleted without even being read. No matter how good your skills and experience may be, once your resume is deleted, it will never be read again.

In order to prepare the perfect resume follow these three main ingredients. Take time to prepare your resume and ensure that you give yourself every opportunity to succeed!

### 1.3 100 Powerful Resume Words:

Your Australian resume is the most important document you have to get yourself an interview. Including power resume words will increase your chance of getting hired by 80%! When a hiring manager is seeing the same old resume time and time again which includes the cliché words and phrases such as “highly dedicated individual” or “great team player” you are guaranteeing yourself that your resume will be deleted.

Poorly chosen words and clichéd phrases can destroy the interest of the reader. Power words when chosen correctly can have the opposite effect of motivating and inspiring the reader

Power Resume Words will make help you stand out from your competition and increase your chances of getting hired!

#### 100 Power Resume Words!

Advanced, Assigned, Assessed, Absorbed, Accelerated, Attained, Attracted, Announced, Appraised, Budgeted, Bolstered, Balanced, Boosted, Bargained, Benefited, Beneficial, comply, Critiqued, Closed, Collaborated, Designed, Delegated, Demonstrated, Developed, Detected, Efficient, Enhanced, Excelled, Exceeded, Enriched, Fulfilled, Financed, Forecasted, Formulated, Generated, Guided, Granted, Helped, Hosted, Implemented, Investigated, Increased, Initiated, Influenced, Integrated, Innovated, Instituted, Justified, Listed, Logged, Maintained, Mentored Measured, Multiplied, Negotiated, Observed, Operated, Obtained, Promoted, Presented Programmed Provided Projected, Qualified, Quantified, Quoted, Recommended, refine, revamp, reacted, Retained, Recovered, Reinstated, Rejected, Sustained, Skilled, Saved, Scheduled, Supported, Secured, Simplified, Screened, Segmented, Streamlined, Strengthened, Triumphed, Troubleshoot, Taught, Tutored, Translated, Trained, Uncovered, United, Unified, Updated, Upgraded, Validated, Viewed, Worldwide, Witnessed

### 1.4 Spelling & Grammar Mistakes On Your Australian Resume:



It's common knowledge that spelling and grammar mistakes can be extremely damaging to your resume's chances of landing you a job interview. Everyone seems to be aware of this fact, and this is why they are constantly reminded to check and then recheck their resumes.

So then why are these mistakes found all the time on resumes? A lot of times, people are reluctant to share and have their resumes edited by others, and failing to do so can result in small errors going undetected.

Showing your resume to someone else benefits you in more ways than one. For one, it provides an extra pair of eyes to look for any spelling or grammar mistakes. While you may be absolutely positive that there are none, especially since you've edited it numerous times, it can't hurt! I can tell you from experience that 7 out of the 10 resumes I read contain some sort of spelling error, and I'm willing to bet that most of these people did several edits on their resumes.

Have you ever read something so many times that you started memorising and reciting it more than actually reading it? This happens a lot with resumes. We get so caught up in what we think it says that we sometimes forget how this translates onto paper. I notice a lot of times that people write things like "...responsible updating data..." or "...selected represent the company at various trade shows." If you just read that for the first time, you probably noticed that a few words are missing there. Obvious, right? Read it a few more times and you might find yourself automatically inserting the missing words. This is what happens quite often with people who write and then edit and re-edit their resumes.

Showing your resume to someone else eliminates the chances of this happening as they will be more likely to catch small mistakes like these. They can also provide an objective critique on your resume.

While you clearly know more about your past experience than anyone, translating this onto paper for a stranger to understand is sometimes very difficult, and the person critiquing it can point out any job descriptions that don't make sense or aren't very clear.

Overall, having another person or two look at your resume before you send it off can do nothing but help you. The job market out there is tough at the moment and you want to give yourself the best chance possible – don't let small errors that you looked over damage your chances of landing an interview.

## 1.5 Top 10 Resume Writing Blunders:

### **Abbreviations**

Avoid abbreviations! They are unprofessional and not universally accepted. Trust me; nothing looks worse on a resume than seeing sentences resembling the following: "duties included answering the fone and going 2 c clients." This is a resume, not a text message or a twitter post. Make sure you use correct words and proper sentences. First impressions count, make sure your first impression is a professional one.

## Personal Information

Your resume is a professional document as opposed to a facebook profile. Leave off anything related to hobbies or personal interests. If it doesn't relate to employment it doesn't belong on a resume. Information such as weight and height is irrelevant (unless of course you're trying out for basketball team). I have seen resumes where people include their eye colour and comments about their skin ("glowing skin"). Do not give the reader a reason to eliminate you because of your personal characteristics. Again, stick to the formula – if it does not relate to the job it doesn't belong on the resume.

## Graphics / Artwork

Graduates often feel that in order to be noticed they need their resume to look like a piece of artwork. This perception is wrong and actually can have the opposite effect of appearing unprofessional and amateur. At the end of the day, the employer only wants to see skills, duties, and achievements. He or she is not interested because your resume is shaded yellow with a butterfly in the top right-hand corner.

## Negativity

Never, never, never be negative on your resume or cover letter (and most importantly, in your interview). If you left your previous job because you hated your boss, keep it to yourself. Do not try to explain this on your resume because you cannot explain those reasons in writing. Remember, a resume's job is to promote and sell. Do not get eliminated immediately for being negative.

The advertisement features a dark background with red binary code (0s and 1s) forming a jagged, mountain-like shape. The text 'strategy&' is in white at the top left, and 'DATA EMERGENCY' is in large, bold, red letters in the center. A pink box in the top right corner contains the text 'Bewirb Dich bis zum 18. Oktober 2015.' Below the main title, the date '7. - 9. November 2015, Berlin' is listed. The PwC logo is in the bottom left. A paragraph of German text describes the event's focus on the healthcare industry's data crisis and e-Health strategies. A URL for more information is provided, along with a copyright notice for 2015 PwC.

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**No Dates**

DO NOT MAKE THE READER HAVE TO GUESS! This is such a killer on any resume. INCLUDE DATES. What years did you go to high school? How long did you go to university? When did you graduate? How long did you work at your current job?

Do not make the person reading your resume have to ask these questions. The minute this happens, your resume is going to one place – the trash bin! Make sure your resume flows and you have no gaps in your dates. If you took a year off to go travelling, include this. When you include dates DO NOT just include years. For example, “I worked at McDonalds from 2006–2008” – what does this mean? Did you work for 3 years (January 2006 to December 2008), or for a little over 1 year (December 2006 to January 2008)

**Long-Winded**

Long long long long long resumes are boring!!!! If an employer sees an extremely long resume, they will immediately develop a negative frame of mind. Remember, resume readers tend to have little patience, especially considering that most graduate recruiters or employers can receive in excess of 100, 200 even 500 resumes for one particular job. You do not gain extra brownie points for writing the longest resume – enough said!

**No Achievements**

I never understand how people get this wrong, but so many times people fill up their resumes with irrelevant information, and they leave off the most vital part of a resume – showing off your highlights and achievements. Think about it – most people who apply for the same job can all do the standard day to day duties. So what separates the good resume from the bad resume? It's the one that includes achievements and highlights. It includes how they were an asset at their previous job. Employers want to see not that you just worked and did a good job, but that you added value to the company. Leaving off your achievements is the best way to get your resume tossed in the bin. Alternatively, including value-added achievements is the best way to get your resume put on the top of the list and ensures that your resume application will stand out from your competition.

**Unrelated Information**

Everyone is proud of achievements they have accomplished throughout their life. Finishing second place in the 100 metre sprint final in my first year of high school was a great thrill, but is it relevant on my resume. Use common sense when including “extra information.” Receiving your CPR certificate is relevant when you're applying for a job that requires this, such as a lifesaver or swimming instructor. It isn't so relevant if you received your CPR certificate 10 years ago, and now you're going for a job in a corporate environment.

## Spelling Errors

People read this point and think, “Obviously my resume isn’t going to have spelling mistakes and typos.” I can tell you from experience that 1 in 5 resumes will make this vital mistake. When an employer has 100 resumes, the first 20 are eliminated because of grammar mistakes or typos. These mistakes are glaringly obvious on a resume. Make sure you use spell-check, but more importantly, re-read your resume. Even give it to someone else to read over.

## Trying to Sound “Too Clever”

You may think that using words such as “meticulous,” “scrupulous” or “industrious” to describe yourself may make you sound smart, unfortunately they can have the opposite effect. Your resume is a representation of you. Hiring managers were not born yesterday – Don’t forget this!

## 1.6 Qualifications Profile:

### *Replacing the Objective Statement with a Qualifications Profile*

Does your current resume begin with a generic objective statement telling the reader what type of jobs you are looking for? Let me guess that it reads something similar to this:

*“I am seeking the opportunity to expand my skills, knowledge and experience in a challenging professional environment. I am honest, reliable, eager to learn and open to tackling a range of tasks. I am a strong and empathetic team player and always complete tasks to a high degree of quality and to deadlines”*

If this is how your resume begins, it’s time to make changes. In the competitive job environment where hiring managers may receive upwards of 500 applications for a single position, an objective statement is more likely going to lead to your resume being deleted. From a hiring manager’s perspective, they are not interested in a non-specific, all-purpose statement that adds no value to the resume and provides them with no reason to want to hire you. You may have the best skills and be the perfect fit for the job however, you may never get this opportunity because your resume has already been deleted.

### 1.6.1 What is a Qualifications Profile?

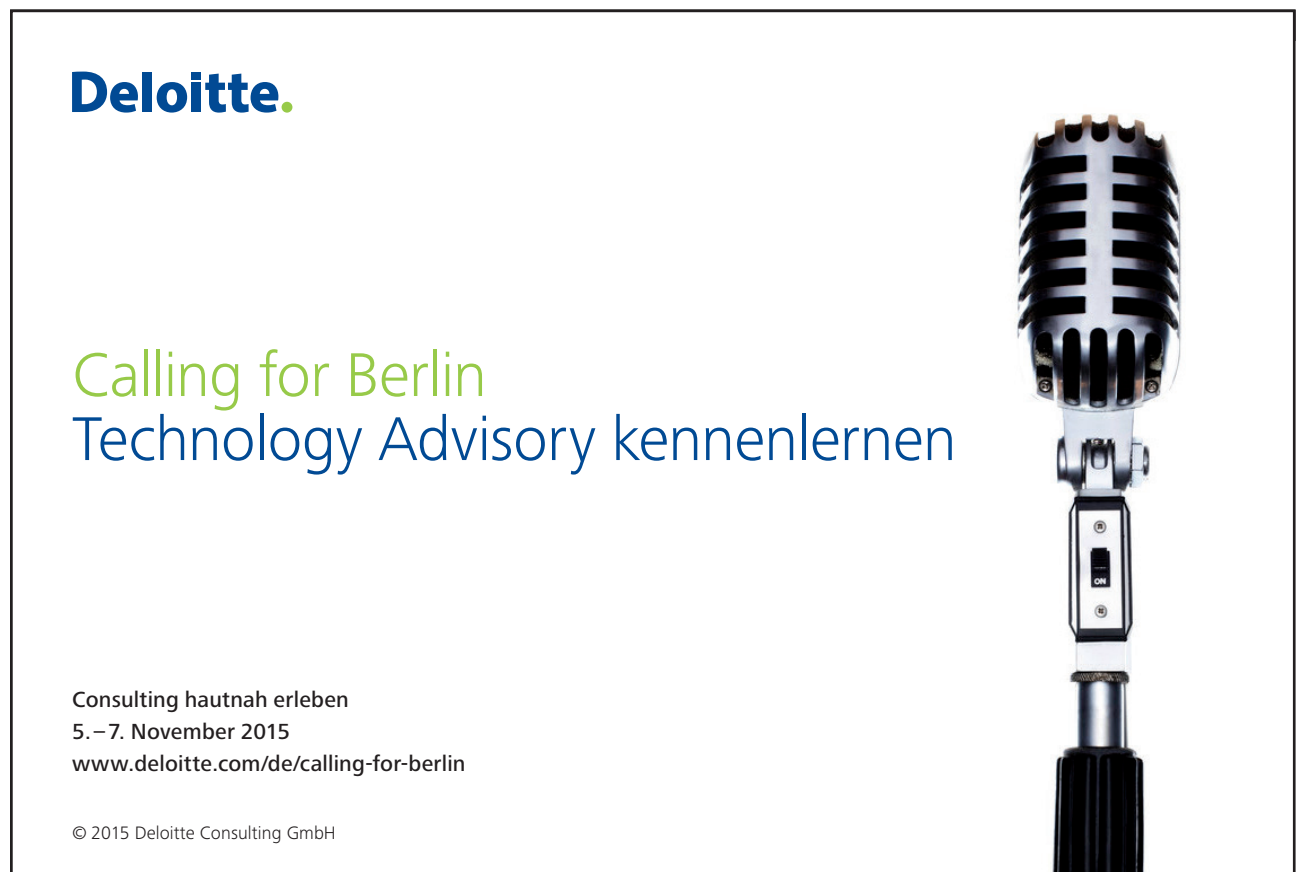
A great way to introduce yourself on your resume is by creating a qualifications summary or career summary. Rather than telling the reader you are seeking an opportunity to expand your skills, rather promote what skills you actually can bring to this specific role. A targeted resume including a targeted profile will encourage the reader to continue reading the resume as opposed to pressing the delete button. For example, if you are applying for an IT job that requires programming skills, list your programming skills within your introductory profile. That way, the reader will straight away be interested to read on as they know that you have skills that are required for this position.

### 1.6.2 How long should my Qualifications Profile be?

The last thing you want to do is turn your qualifications profile into an essay! Statistically, a hiring manager will only spend between 15 to 20 seconds when initially reading your resume. If they open your resume and see a half page profile they are more likely to be turned off as they won't be bothered to read all this information. A well written profile should be no longer than 2–4 sentences. It needs to be targeted and present value.

### 1.6.3 Final Thought:

When you begin to write your new resume, don't forget the number one rule. Your resume is a marketing document. The more you can showcase your skills and achievements the greater chance you will have of being selected for the interview stage.



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## 1.7 Should I Include Hobbies On My Resume?

I frequently come across resumes that include a section for “hobbies and interests” or something similar. Many people think it’s necessary to include something like this, however I can assure you that it’s probably best to avoid doing so. There is a limited amount of space for content on your resume and just a small amount of time for the reader to look over your information. That being said, you should use it strictly to highlight your professional qualifications and achievements, not your personal hobbies and interests.

Hiring managers are looking to see how you can specifically help them and their companies, not whether you enjoy skiing or bike riding. This sort of information is often times seen as “fluff” – in other words, irrelevant information that is used solely to take up space on a resume to make it seem longer. If you’re concerned about your resume looking too short, there are lots of ways to increase the content without having to list your hobbies and interests. Think about substituting them for something more work-related, like a section for your professional qualifications or computer-related skills. Or maybe try adding some achievements onto your professional experience section.

While I feel I make a strong point against listing these on your resume, people are always going to be adamant about using them. So, if you absolutely must include your hobbies and interests, try to at least make them pertain to the job you are applying for. Do any of your hobbies involve using your leadership skills, for example? Do they show a pattern of long-term commitment? The most important thing to remember is to keep the content on your resume professionally relevant.

## 1.8 How Many Years Of Work Experience Should I Include?

I recently came across a resume that listed a summer cashier position in 1976 as part of a person’s “professional experience.” While it may seem a little strange or ridiculous to include an irrelevant position from nearly 25 years ago, I can tell you that it’s actually not that uncommon to come across something like this. A lot of people think that they literally need to include everything they’ve ever been involved with on their resumes, and I can assure you that not only do you not have to follow suit, you also don’t really need to go back any longer than 10 years.

The main goal of your resume should be to impress the reader with the specific qualifications and experiences that make you fit to be hired for a desired position. That being said, the reader is most interested in what you have done recently, not in what you did over 10 years ago. The bulk of your resume should be devoted to the last few years of your working history – this is what potential employers want to know about.

If you’re like most people, you’ve probably held a number of jobs over time if you include the part-time and casual positions. If you wrote a little bit about each one of these, your resume would probably near the 4 page mark on experience alone. Considering it shouldn’t be longer than 2 pages, this is far from ideal.

When it comes to listing your professional experiences, stick to the most recent and relevant positions. There is no need to include everything, and writing about too much will sometimes blur your positions together and detract from your real qualifications. Unless you've held the same position for over 10 years, there is really no reason to go back any longer than this, and employers don't even expect to go back that far on your resume anyway. If you do have quite an extensive work history of relevant positions, focus on the most recent ones and then simply list the earlier positions under a new category for "previous or other employment."

Just remember that there is such a thing as "too much" on a resume. Focus on what the hiring manager wants to see, not on how much information you can cram onto it.

## 1.9 Do References Belong On An Australian Resume:

I recently had a conversation with a job seeker who told me that she was unable to send out her resume because she was waiting on a reference to come back to her. I was shocked to hear this and asked her why she was even putting references on her resume in the first place. She told me it was "the standard thing to do on a resume".

A hiring manager wants to know what value you can bring to the business. They are interested in your experience and skills, and therefore these are the areas that need to be highlighted. Including referees/ references on your resume is not required. Not only does it take up an unnecessary amount of room on your resume, but it also does not add any value to your initial application. All that is required is to write the following four words at the very end of your resume:

### 1.9.1 "References Available Upon Request"

Employers will NEVER contact referees without speaking to you first. Think about it – why would they? Would you bother doing research on a potential candidate without even having a conversation with them first? A hiring manager or recruiter sees hundreds of resumes on a daily basis. Do you think they have time to start reading through candidates referees and contacting them directly. This will never occur.

Contacting a referee is generally the final stage in the job process. Employers and hiring managers, more than anything, rely on their own judgments and will contact your referees as a final step in the process. Only at this time will an employer ask you for a list of references to contact.

Great references do help and if the decision is down to two candidates, your choice of references could be the extra difference in getting offered the job. Have your references ready and available if they are going to be contacted, however first try to focus on presenting all the right information in your resume and cover letter.

### 1.9.2 How the job search process works:

Write a professional resume and cover letter that highlights your achievements, skills and experiences to convince the hiring manager that you are the right person for the job:

- Apply for jobs
- Interview stage
- The employer will contact references and perform background checks
- Job offer!



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## 2 Preparing To Find A Job In Australia

### 2.1 Job Seeking Is A Full Time Job:

A true story... A candidate was applying for a job that he felt was probably beyond him in terms of experience and skills, however he figured he'd apply and "hope for the best". The job application asked for a resume and personally written cover letter to be submitted to the hiring manager. When the candidate went to send the resume and cover letter he decided that instead of writing the generic "To whom it may concern" on the top of his letter, he would call up the company and find out the name of the hiring manager. Thus, he began his letter with "Dear Mr. XXXX."

As insignificant as this seems, the candidate ended up getting the job. Years later this young man became the right hand man to the hiring manager who had now become the CEO of the firm. When the hiring manager was asked why he had originally employed the boy he said, "He was not the strongest academically or experienced candidate, but he was the only person out of 100 candidates who had taken the time and effort to find out my name..."

Although gaining employment is subject to many unpredictable factors that are far beyond your control (such as employer perceptions, competition and personal choice), there are countless factors that are controllable that you may be doing wrong. Remember, your resume only has 10 seconds to make an impact. When the hiring manager has 100 resumes on his or her desk and needs to pick the top 5, all it takes is the simplest error for your resume to be deleted.

My advice is this: If you're going to spend time applying for jobs then DO IT PROPERLY. You are not going to get an interview by sending out a resume that is written or formatted incorrectly. By doing just the smallest things correctly you will find that success is just around the corner.

Is your resume full of clichés? Do you use words such as "hardworking", "loyal worker" or "enthusiastic"? Do you send out the exact same resume for every job? If the answer is yes, then you need to take greater effort to differentiate your resume and make it stand out from the crowd. Include your achievements with examples. Don't just write "I am a hardworking individual" as this does not inspire. Rather, explain to the reader why you are a hardworking individual. If you're not inspired by your resume then why is a hiring manager going to be inspired?

Your resume is your selling tool. Take a look at it. Are you proud of how it reads? Does it sell your strengths, skills and accomplishments? In this tough economic climate you need to go the extra length to get an interview.

**Find below 15 reasons why you may be missing out on getting that interview:**

- Generic resume
- Resumes that do not inspire
- Clichéd resume
- Your resume does not use key words
- Your resume is formatted incorrectly
- Your resume is not targeted
- You don't use a cover letter
- Your cover letter is boring/generic/clichéd
- Your resume and cover letter are too embellished
- Your job search is restricted to the Internet/Google/Yahoo
- You are only seeking out the perfect job (Is there such a thing?)
- Spelling mistakes / bad grammar
- Lack of professionalism
- No follow up
- Unqualified / Overqualified (you need to be realistic)

## 2.2 Job Search Tactics – What Else Can I Do?

What can you do to be competitive when looking for a new job? Writing a quick resume late at night and applying for random jobs is NOT going to get you the job you are looking for. Is there an educational or university course being offered which could help you now or in the long term? What skills do you have to shine above and beyond other candidates. Make a portfolio of your accomplishments you have achieved in your academic or professional life. In the current economic climate employers want to know what YOU have to offer them. You need to sell yourself! And sell your success.

Below are some further ideas and suggestions to find yourself a new job.

### **Learn new skills:**

It's never too late to try to learn a foreign language, or a new piece of computer software. (Best example was a senior archaeologist of 10 years who came to me wanting to change life direction. After 6 months learning Spanish then travelling through Spain for another 6 months, The senior archaeologist is now a junior English/Spanish translator.)

### **Research:**

Find out where the demand is. While many industries are having trouble in this recession and laying off employees other areas are increasing employment.

**Sell yourself:**

Take time writing your resume, and tailor your resume specifically to each job you are applying. Do not send out the same resume to every job advert you see. Remember if you're sending out generic resumes then you will get the same generic responses.

**Use your social network.**

Don't be embarrassed about looking for work. Tell your friends and family. You never know who may be looking at hiring staff with your set of skills.

Use **free networking sites** to advertise yourself and your skills.

Promote yourself via sites like LinkedIn: <http://www.linkedin.com/>

Use a **recruitment agency** that specialises in your particular area.

Get to know the recruitment consultant, and follow them up weekly. The more you appear visible, the more they will remember you.

The advertisement features a green background with white binary code (0s and 1s) arranged in a grid pattern. On the left, a white rectangular box contains a large green number '1' followed by the text 'Ziel: Du entwickelst unsere Zukunft. Wir Deine.' in a handwritten purple font. To the right of this box, the text 'IT-Traineeprogramm' is displayed in bold. Below it, a paragraph describes the program: 'In 18 Monaten durchläufst Du 3 verschiedene Stationen, wirst von einer Führungskraft als Mentor betreut und profitierst von einem breiten Seminarangebot. Anschließend kannst Du eine Fach- oder Führungslaufbahn einschlagen.' The website 'www.perspektiven.allianz.de' is listed at the bottom of this section. The bottom of the advertisement is divided into two parts: 'Allianz Karriere' on the left and the 'Allianz' logo on the right.

**1** Ziel:  
*Du entwickelst  
unsere Zukunft.  
Wir Deine.*

**IT-Traineeprogramm**

In 18 Monaten durchläufst Du 3 verschiedene Stationen, wirst von einer Führungskraft als Mentor betreut und profitierst von einem breiten Seminarangebot. Anschließend kannst Du eine Fach- oder Führungslaufbahn einschlagen.

[www.perspektiven.allianz.de](http://www.perspektiven.allianz.de)

**Allianz Karriere**

**Allianz**



**Share with friends:**

Brainstorm ideas and share experiences with friends that are also looking for jobs. Exchange advice, strategies, and plans.

**Act straight away:**

When you get a lead or hear about a job opening apply immediately. There is no need to wait. Prepare your resume and send it immediately. The longer you wait the more likely another candidate will apply ahead of you.

Don't let a **lack of experience** discourage you from applying for jobs:

When tailoring your resume towards the job you are applying for, concentrate on the skills and abilities you have to match that certain job.

**Don't give up** – Never stop looking. While you're searching for your new job is there something else in the meantime you could be doing. Do you have skills to freelance? Maybe you can sell goods online. Keeping yourself occupied helps you to stay positive and upbeat rather than moping around the house feeling sorry for yourself.

## 2.3 The Importance Of Having A Professional Email Address:

First impressions are important when it comes to job seeking, and an email address can make quite a first impression. Often times, the email address is the first thing a hiring manager sees – before even seeing your name! Before you send out your next resume, consider what your email address alone might say about you. Do you “appear” professional?

As most job applications are sent via email these days, your email address alone can play a huge role into whether or not your resume is opened. I have heard numerous stories from hiring managers about applications getting tossed simply because of someone's email address. Often times, email addresses at face value appear to be spam and are never even opened. Email addresses like “sexykitten0007” or “bigmuscles”, for example, might be automatically filtered into a spam folder by an email server because of word content.

The good news is that hiring managers are quite straightforward in what they believe makes up an “unprofessional” or unappealing email address. While it may sound harsh that most hiring managers critique email addresses, it does happen because they do create a first impression. Below are 7 deadly email sins to make sure to stay away from so you don't end up in the “unprofessional” pile.

**Wrong Name:** John\_smith@....com (when your real name is David Jones).



Don't confuse the reader from the start! Is your name John Smith or David Jones? There is no reason to have the hiring manager ask this type of question at the start of your resume.

**Fantasy Name:** Invisibleman@....com

Are you applying for a job or are you auditioning for a video game?

**Creepy Name:** collegestrangler@....com

Given the fact that over 80% of companies now run background checks on potential employees, there is no reason to give an employer the impression that you may have a criminal record.

**Sportsperson:** tigerwoods50@....com

This might have been ok when you were in high school, but not in the workplace.

**The numbers:** 998877665544@....com

Confusing! You are just asking for someone to send an email to the wrong place.

**The Crude Name:** hairychest@....com

Not a good first impression. Also, many of these email addresses contain words that will usually get filtered into the spam folder

**Confess love email address:** bonjovilover@....com

Again, you are applying for a job, not a role as a groupie.

So...what should you do? Stick to the basics.

The best email addresses will contain your full or partial name, followed by either characters or numbers. Think about how most workplace email addresses are set up – most of them contain a combination of an employee's first and last name. Try to mimic this – a professional email address represents a professional job candidate. Don't give your reader the wrong impression!







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## 2.4 Your Online Profile:

I recently “Googled” my name (It was a slow day in the office!) and found an assortment of results come up that I didn’t even realise were out there and visible to the public. Social media sites, registries I created, and websites that I’ve registered on and long forgotten about. When it comes to job searching, employers are now able to see more about our personal lives than ever before through the internet. This can either help or hurt us when it comes to applying for jobs.

It is said that an estimated 2 out of 5 companies search the online profiles of job candidates. As we use more and more social media sites and more tasks are accomplished online, this number is expected to grow. It’s important that we be aware of the fact that our co-workers, bosses and hiring managers are able to see certain things about us that we might not even realise. To be prepared, you should do a little research on your online profile and see which websites, profiles and forums of yours are visible to the public.

You should make sure that the online profile you portray to the public matches the image you want to present to potential employers, co-workers and supervisors. There are a couple of things you can do to help create the image you want to portray through your online profile. To start, you can review your privacy settings on social media sites and limit the types of information that is visible to the public or to members of the site you’re not connected to. Many sites now allow you to customise the people that can see your posts; however some online forums and web reviews are visible to the public so you should be aware of the things you write about that everyone can see.

This doesn’t mean that you can’t enjoy social media sites to share pictures and stay connected to family and friends, but be conscious of what you’re putting out there. It is becoming more and more common for individuals to create a personal profile as well as a professional one to categorise what types of information are shared with whom. Creating a separate professional account to social media sites, such as Facebook for example, can be a good idea and a way for you to maintain a professional image while also being able to use these sites for personal enjoyment. It will allow you to share things with family and friends without worrying about your boss seeing it on Monday or a hiring manager getting the wrong impression of you because he doesn’t know about your sarcastic sense of humor or an inside joke you have going with your friends.

On the other hand, your online profile can enhance your chances at a job if it demonstrates the skills and experiences you have that are related to the jobs you’re applying for. For example, if you’re applying for a position as a web developer and your blog page is innovative and dynamic, this may show employers that you have what it takes. In any case, you should make your online profile what you want it to be and not what happens to pop up about you.



## 2.5 Advantages & Benefits Of Creating A LinkedIn Profile:

The advent of Internet has opened new avenues for people to build and sustain professional and business relationships. LinkedIn is one such communication channel that facilitates a robust and authentic pool of talent. By employing LinkedIn profile writing services, professionals and businesses can support their claims in the most effectual manner. Still wondering why you should become a part of LinkedIn? Read on!

LinkedIn was created with the sole objective of promoting talents, skills, and products to millions of people around the globe. When you sign up for a LinkedIn profile, you become an exclusive part of a community that includes companies, recruiters, vendors, customers, and competitors. What makes LinkedIn unique and attractive to people is the fact that it fulfills their professional objectives, unlike other social networking sites where entertainment is the key focus. Here are some of those unique benefits that make LinkedIn worth every effort.

### 2.5.1 Gain Visibility for Unique Professional & Business Opportunities:

LinkedIn offers a search engine. When recruiters or companies are searching for specific talent to fill their vacant positions or when people are searching for specific products and services, LinkedIn search engine permits your profile to be populated. You can gain and enhance your profile's visibility, making it readily accessible to the targeted audiences by optimizing it with appropriate usage of keywords. It is recommended that you examine the keywords before constructing your profile.

### 2.5.2 Build Professional & Business Relationships:

The chief objective of marketing platforms like LinkedIn is to make connections. Through such podiums you gain the opportunity to meet the right companies or individuals that aptly fit with your set of business or professional requirements. Connecting with significant people in your industry strengthens your credibility and consolidates the position of your business.

Furthermore, recommendations play a vital role in improving your profile and its visibility. The more recommendations you're able to gather, the more appealing and credible your profile appears. It works like an endorsement for your skills, products, services or company and increases your trustworthiness. Recruiters or customers always prefer candidates, services or products that have been approved by others. So, always request your clients or colleagues to leave reviews on your profile.

### 2.5.3 Identify Business and Job Trends:

LinkedIn tools are highly effective in identifying new business trends and job opportunities in your industry. By knowing the current trends you will be able to formulate appropriate strategies that will carve your path to success. Job seekers and businesses that remain abreast with emerging trends stay coordinated with the professional and business requirements.

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### 2.5.4 Generate Job and Business Opportunities:

Marketing is a method designed to promote and sell skills, products and services, and the LinkedIn interface as a marketing tool just does that. By creating an impressive LinkedIn profile you effortlessly launch your skills and services into the market. However, leaving it unattended for months at a stretch will lead you to nowhere. In order to derive the optimum levels of benefits from this incredible marketing platform, you need to explore what it has to offer you – things like search tools, forums and direct ads.

If other social networking sites are able to facilitate emerging professionals and businesses to a large extent, then LinkedIn ought to be ahead in the competition as it is specially oriented to marketing professional skills and business products/services. The core advantage is that you build up a relevant network of professionals without wasting your precious time.

### 2.6 Your Facebook Account:

It is estimated that over 80% of employers conduct background checks on potential candidates that they are looking to hire, and some of these background checks now include social media checks on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter accounts. Almost everyone is on Facebook these days, and while it's great for your personal life and for keeping in contact with friends and acquaintances, I am finding that it is becoming more and more detrimental to candidates' job searches.



Companies conduct background checks in order to try to paint an accurate picture of who you really are and to avoid negligent hiring. They want to hire people they can trust to represent the company, and what better way to find out about “the real you” than through social media sites.

Facebook is an interesting (and free) way for employers to check up on you. Not only can they see your basic information, but they can also see your photos and what you discuss with other people on your wall. They can see what networks you belong to and even where you work. For the most part, companies don't care about how you spend your free time – as long as it's legal. What they are looking for are racist remarks (not only by you, but also by people who post on your page), sexually explicit photos or videos, and flagrant displays of illegal activity. Any signs of these will raise red flags to anyone performing your background check, and this can hinder your chances at securing your job.

You don't need to panic and start deleting all of your photos and wall posts right away...especially if you don't think you have anything to worry about. To start with, what you can do is check – and frequently recheck – your privacy settings on these sites. You might think that your privacy settings are all turned on, but the truth is that many social media sites update and reset these settings on a regular basis, and you might not even know that yours have accidentally been switched off.

The most important thing you can do is be more aware of what you have on your social media sites and go from there. Go through your photos (yes, even from those college days) as you never know what you might find. Are there “questionable” photos of you? Are there inappropriate remarks somewhere on your page that might be taken the wrong way? If you have to think about it, un-tag yourself or delete it...it's not worth the risk.

## 2.7 Set Realistic Job Expectations:

The best advice I give job seekers is to set realistic job expectations. Too many times candidates cause themselves heartache and misery because they have unrealistic expectations when applying for jobs. Yes, it's true you need to aim high, but aiming too high can just lead to a longer time of being unemployed. I recently met a candidate who told me they had applied to over 100 banking jobs, but had not received a single interview request.

The first thing I did was review his resume as a poorly written resume is usually the reason behind 90% of failed attempts at securing interviews. The resume is the first impression a hiring manager has, so if there's something fundamentally wrong with it, it doesn't matter how good your qualifications are if the resume is never going to be read.

This time, however, his resume was very well written. His achievements were highlighted and the resume was structured and well presented, so I was quite confused as to why he was not getting a single interview. As a job seeker with 2 years of relevant work experience there didn't seem to be a reasonable reason why this candidate should not be getting interviews or job offers.

The next thing we did was sit down together and analyse the jobs he had applied for, and there was the answer.



Within 60 seconds it became obvious why he wasn't getting any interview requests. With 2 years of experience and on a base salary of \$50,000, he was applying for senior roles with base salaries of \$80,000–\$120,000. With many of the jobs he didn't even tick the essential requirements on the job description such as minimum years in a manager position.

Not only was he wasting his own time by applying for these positions, but he was also causing unnecessary stress and anxiety in the meantime. I encourage candidates to strive for bigger and greater jobs and to seek out higher salaries, but just remember to be realistic in your job search. To be a manager or in a senior role takes experience and it is very unlikely that a company will hire an outside person to fulfil a role without the relevant experience. The more likely scenario is the company will promote within the company.

Go for gold and strive to succeed, but just remember to be realistic with your job expectations.

## 2.8 Dressing For The Job Interview:

*“Don't dress for the job you have, dress for the job you want to have”*

Does what you wear in an interview really going to make a difference in the hiring process? The answer is Yes! Depending on the job you are applying for dress does matter.

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Don't allow your appearance to damage your chances of being hired for a job. As the old phrase goes "dress for success" Walking into an interview room the first thing an interviewer does is look at you. No matter how many skills you have and how relevant your experience is, do not allow being incorrectly dressed place you in danger of not being employed.

Make no mistake dressing properly will not get you the job but dressing inappropriately can lose you the job.

Gaining employment is subject to numerous variables beyond your control and factors significantly unknown to you. You have no control over employer perceptions, personal preferences or the competitors for the job. You do however have control of your image and how you present yourself. How you look can send a powerful message to the interviewer and can portray a signal that you are a winner or a loser.

You have made it this far in the interview process. Do not let your appearance sabotage your opportunity to get the job.

So make sure you exude confidence and look successful.

### 2.8.1 The Psychology of Colour:

Different colours evoke different emotions and it is imperative when you're interviewing that you evoke the right emotions from the interviewer.

#### **Examples:**

**Blue:** Words that describe the colour blue include: trust, loyalty, wisdom, peaceful. These are exactly the type of feelings you want to be portraying in your interview. Blue is a calming colour (Think Ocean and sky) and sends out a signal to the interviewer that you are indeed honest and sincere. Studies have shown that wearing the colour blue to an interview will increase your chances of getting hired more than any other colour.

**Red:** In contrast to the colour blue, the colour red stirs emotions more than any other colour. Red is a strong colour, very emotional, an extreme colour that in an interview scenario can work against you. Unlike blue which has a calming effect, the colour red is a fiery colour (the colour of love and passion), and can be an intimidating colour for the interviewer.

**Orange:** Similar to red. A colour that stirs emotion and therefore a colour I would avoid wearing in a job interview. Although orange is not seen to be as aggressive as the colour red, it is still perceived as a colour that can evoke feelings of power and aggression.

**Grey:** My second favourite colour to wear after blue. Grey gives the look of sophistication and authority. In a corporate environment the colour grey is professional and portrays an individual as being confident without being intimidating.

**Purple:** The colour of “Royalty”. The colour symbolizes power, aristocracy, lavishness, and extravagance.

**Black:** Be careful when wearing just black to an interview. The colour black is seen as a power colour and can be viewed as threatening. Wearing black outfits can portray an individual as being powerful or even arrogant. Black is also associated with negative implications such as death, sin, and fear.

Just remember that first impressions count a lot when you go to interview. Know your audience and dress accordingly.

## 2.9 Staying Positive While Looking For A New Job:

Don't let the media and the news put you down. No matter how bad they say it is companies are always looking to hire the best available staff. If you have the right skills and passion, there will be a job waiting for right around the corner. You just need to remain upbeat and positive. Below is a list of things you need to do in order to help you through the job search process....

Keep a routine: Don't get into the bad habits of waking up late, sleeping in the afternoons or procrastinating around the house. Get up at your normal time, eat properly and get some exercise (walking is free)!

Volunteering at a church, hospital, homeless shelter or non-profit organization will open your eyes to people who are less off than you and give you a sense of contribution. There is no greater reward than helping people who are less fortunate than us.

Stay up to date with what's happening in your industry: Don't let yourself fall behind just because you're not working. The best approach is to learn more about your particular industry. This way you will be ahead of your competition when it comes time to interview.

Explore potential new careers: It's never too late to try to learn a foreign language or a new piece of computer software. I remember working with a senior archaeologist of 10 years experience who came to me wanting a change in his life direction. After 6 months of learning Spanish and then travelling through Spain for another 6 months, the senior archaeologist is now a junior English/Spanish translator!

Positive Thinking: Do not focus on the negatives – you need to be able to bounce back. Concentrate on the skills and knowledge you have. Sitting around saying “what if” all the time is only going to further depress you.

**Support Group:** You may feel as though you're the only person in your situation without a job, but guess what – you're not. Reach out to people for support. There are many groups that provide excellent assistance in the areas of resume writing, interviewing, and job hunting. Aside from the secular groups, there are also many faith groups ready to offer you a supporting hand. Don't feel ashamed or embarrassed to ask for help. Let people help you change your life.

**Avoid negative people!** Negative thinking is of no value to you. You need to be around positive people and people who can have a positive impact on your life.

**Network:** maintain contacts and stay in touch with people. Make sure you network with positive people!! Again, avoid negativity. Negative thinking does nothing to help your situation.

Last but not least – manage your expectations. Not every job you apply for will be a success. Don't be put off by this. Instead, concentrate on the positives and look at what you achieve each day. For example, you could have applied to 3 great jobs, connected with 2 people who are great resources or maybe you found a course or book that will help to improve your skills.

Don't give up! Jobs don't find you, you find them!

The advertisement features a dark blue background. On the left, there is a detailed illustration of a human brain, but instead of a natural brain, the interior is filled with a complex engine with various pipes, wires, and mechanical components. The McKinsey & Company logo is in the top left corner. The main headline 'Start your engines.' is in large, bold, yellow letters. Below it, the German text 'McKinsey sucht Ingenieure. Nutzen Sie Ihr Potenzial und starten Sie durch.' is written in white. At the bottom right, the URL 'Mehr auf mckinsey.de/ingenieure' is displayed in white.

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## 2.10 Listing Salary Requirements:

Some job advertisements ask you to include your desired salary, and if they ask for this, it usually means that you can't avoid doing so. Listing salary requirements is always tricky because it's hard to "guess" what the employer will think about your preference. Asking for too much can rule out your chances right away because you might appear unrealistic, but asking for too little can signal a red flag and tell the hiring manager that you don't value your skills and experience. So the question is – what do you say?

My advice is to always include a range because you give yourself a little bit of breathing room. A range not only eliminates you from this potential scrutiny, but it could also tell the hiring manager that you need a little more information before you give them a definite answer. In other words, you leave yourself some option, and you also put yourself in a good position to negotiate. Chances are that full details of the job haven't already been provided, so if you make it to the interview and hear more about the job's requirements, you can then argue why you are qualified to receive the higher end of your salary range.

So how do you determine this range? Try to search for similar positions and what they offer in terms of salary. Look up job search websites and try to ballpark a range that most of the positions fit into, and then use this range when you're writing your cover letter. The range you include is entirely dependent on what you find, but I would probably suggest not making it any larger than \$10,000 – it may be too general otherwise.

All in all, it's always best to keep your options open.



## 2.11 Switching Up Your Job Seeking Tactics:



Many times, job applications go entirely unnoticed. A friend of mine recently tried something new because she realized she wasn't getting any interview requests. Like most people, she would search through popular websites and apply for jobs straight away, always including a personalized cover letter and resume. Then she'd wait and "hope for the best." And nothing happened. It was at this point that she started re-applying for the same positions. And guess what? She received a couple of invitations to interview.

This is not the first time I've heard of this happening. In this age of emailed applications and very little personal contact, it's hard to figure out why the interview requests are not coming. Of course, this has a lot to do with the quality of your resume and cover letter, but sometimes it can also be just because of plain bad luck. In some cases, your application could have just gone unnoticed through no fault of your own. Below are some of the reasons for this:

### **Bad timing:**

You could have simply applied at the wrong time, literally. A hiring manager could have opened your email while in the middle of something and then simply forgotten about it a minute later. It does happen.

**Your application was accidentally deleted:**

Do you ever quickly go through your email list and hold your finger down on the delete button? You're not the only one. If a hiring manager is posting advertisements on job websites, the probability of their receiving spam emails is quite high. They could have accidentally deleted your application.

**Too many applications:**

A lot of times, hiring managers will have a stopping point for accepting applications. They either received too many or they've already narrowed the list down to just a few candidates. Whatever the reason, they won't bother to delete the advertisement, and they might automatically delete your application. It is not uncommon, however, for them to become dissatisfied with their applicant pool. When this happens, they're not likely to review the same applicant pool from before – they'll focus on the new applicants.

My advice is to always try again because you never know what may happen. I am not suggesting that these scenarios happen all the time, but they do happen somewhat frequently, so give yourself the benefit of the doubt.



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## 2.12 Finding A Job Without Local Experience:

As a foreign job seeker trying to find work in Australia, not only are you competing against other foreign job seekers, but you're competing against domestic job seekers who share similar skills and experiences. After working with foreign job seekers from all over the world in every type of industry, I have found that the most common excuse these workers use to explain the lack of interview requests is the fact that they don't have "local experience".

It frustrates me so much when I hear this, and I know how depressing it can be to a foreign worker trying to get a foot in the door of their new country. Rather than being put off or depressed by not having "local experience" (and how hard must it be to put on a brave face and carry on), let's prepare strategies that can improve the chances of finding a job as a foreign visa holder.

### **Online Networking:**

With no local experience you need to become an expert in networking and become an expert ASAP. Use online networking websites such as LinkedIn to make contacts with as many people as you can. Talk to people in your industry and find out comparisons (and differences) between the role you performed in your country of origin and the types of roles you are applying for in your new country. This way you can incorporate this into your resume and interview preparation. The more you understand about your new country, the greater chance you can prepare yourself for finding a new job.

### **Think Outside the Square:**

There are many ways to search for job openings – don't get stuck with just applying for roles online. My advice is to seek out hiring managers and people in positions to help you. Don't be intimidated to approach these people directly. Although there may not be a current role open at their organisation, there is a possibility that they may know of other job openings or other areas within their business that is looking to hire. Finding the perfect job takes time and people appreciate pro-activeness. I have heard of stories of hiring managers keeping resumes in their database for over 12 months before positions come up.

### **Social Networking:**

Step away from the computer and begin to enjoy your new country! Again, the more you can learn about your new country, the more help you will have with your job seeking. No matter what your hobbies are, you can always find other people who share the same hobbies and interest. You can begin to gain local experience by participating in extracurricular activities or even by volunteering. This is a great way to begin to gain local experience.

**Patience:**

One of the least favourite words a job seeker likes to hear. Patience. Unfortunately, job seeking takes time. Do not get despondent if you can't find immediate success. Moving abroad takes a lot of guts, determination and courage. Be proud of your efforts in doing something that many people wish they could do but never try. Finding success may take time but will definitely be worth it in the long run.

**2.13 Selecting The Best Job Recruitment Agent:**

Every job market is unique and in order to gain the most out of your job search, working alongside a specialised recruiter can be your ticket to success. Just as you may use a mechanic to help you with your car or a plumber to help stop your leaking tap, an expert recruiter can help you find a new job that matches your requirements. Best of all, it's completely free for you to use. Even if they find you a job, you will never have to pay a cent. The employer fits this bill.

In order to find the best recruiters, the first thing you need to do is spend some time researching recruiters in your industry. For example, if you are a senior accountant, you need to align yourself with accounting recruiters who specialise in senior management accounting positions. There is no point in wasting time speaking to accounting recruiters who only specialise in graduate recruitment. To further maximise your research, do some investigating into the recruiter company's clients. Many times, recruiters will work with the same set of clients. If you wish to work for a large multinational company, you will need to find recruiters who have these contacts. A small boutique recruitment firm is more likely to work with smaller clients as they don't have the size to be able to recruit for larger organisations.

**How can I begin to find a job recruiter who can help me?**

Creating a LinkedIn profile and networking would be my number one piece of advice to job seekers. Once you have a professional LinkedIn profile that highlights your experience, achievements, skills and expertise, you can begin to network and research recruiters in your field. Typically, most recruitment firms are listed on LinkedIn and you can search within their company profiles to find individual recruiters.

**How do I know if a certain recruitment agent is right for me?**

Building up trust and rapport with your recruiter is vital to finding success. Many people send their resume blindly to a recruitment company and wonder why no one calls them back. In order to have the recruiter searching for jobs on your behalf (remember recruiters don't get paid until they place you) they need to know that you're serious about the job search. Go and meet your recruiter face to face. Be upfront with your recruiter and tell them the types of roles you require and the companies you wish to work for. If you can provide a recruiter with all the information that they require they will be able to work as best as they can on your behalf.

**Final thought:**

Finding the right recruiter can certainly help you in your job search. Having someone with inside knowledge will increase your odds of finding a new job. However, just because you have a recruiter working on your behalf don't think that you can just sit back and relax. Finding the right recruiter is only one aspect of job seeking. In the competitive job environment, you need to be constantly networking to ensure that you are ready when the opportunity presents itself.

A pink advertisement for Telekom Germany. In the top left, a blue tilted box contains the text 'START UP - MEHR ALS EIN TRAINEE-PROGRAMM. JETZT BEWERBEN!'. In the top right, the numbers '42' are displayed in a large, white, stylized font. The center text reads 'Die Antwort auf fast alles. Antworten auf Ihre Karrierefragen finden Sie hier: [www.telekom.com/absolventen](http://www.telekom.com/absolventen)'. Below this, it says 'Jetzt bewerben!'. In the bottom left is the Telekom logo (a stylized 'T' followed by three dots). In the bottom right, the slogan 'ERLEBEN, WAS VERBINDET.' is written in white. The background features faint, large, 3D numbers '123456789'.

## 3 Job Interviewing

### 3.1 Job Interview Preparation

#### 3.1.1 Rule number 1: Research:

Congratulations! You have been invited for the interview. Now what do you do?

The first step is beginning to research the company. Once you have done this you will be ready to prep for the interview questions, learn how to improve your interviewing skills and begin to think about what you're going to wear to the interview.

In order to succeed in the interview you need to do your homework on the company. There is no set of rules to how to do your research but preparing yourself as much as possible will greatly enhance your chances of getting hired.

Make sure you use every available resource to help you with your preparation. By doing a basic Google on the company you can easily learn important facts about the company. Publically listed companies are easier to prepare your background research than privately listed companies as public companies are legally required to make certain information available. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century the Internet has made a lot of the pre interview research more available and easier to find. Don't forget that you can also use other sources of information like public libraries or bookstores. Many magazines and journals can provide important and up to date information on your company and also provide you with information that your competitors who are also applying for the same job won't know.

A true story...

A candidate of mine was applying for a job at one of the large investment banks. Out of 150 candidates the hiring manager had selected the top 10 best resumes to perform first round interviews. Every interview was 15–20 minutes long. The final question the hiring manager asked to each of the candidates was “Tell me something about the company.” Nine out of ten of the candidates rattled off information they had read from the company's “about us page”, but one candidate stood out. After reading about the company's strategic purchase of a new acquisition, the candidate was able to impress the hiring manager with his (somewhat different) knowledge.

The hiring manager later offered this candidate the role not because he was the smartest candidate, but because he showed his dedication by going the extra step in his interview preparation.

Your research for the job interview preparation should give you a better insight on:

- The history of the business
- How old the business is
- The types of services the business offers
- The hierarchy structure
- How many offices/locations the business has
- Number of employees
- Career progression
- The business culture
- Competitors
- Benefits

Check out the Competitors websites as well – they are also a good source of information for your job preparation.

### 3.2 Making The Best First Impression:

Making the right impression in your job interview is one of the most important steps in your future career. Many people don't know this, but job interviews require careful planning and research, otherwise you will significantly reduce the chance of getting the job. In the current economic climate it is very hard to land yourself a job, thus planning your interview before is the key to success

The first (and often the most important) thing to prepare for is your attire. Don't wait until the last minute to find something to wear – you should prepare for it days in advance and get it properly cleaned and ironed. Remember that you should always dress to fit the context of a job. If you're applying for a casual gardening company, a suit might not be ideal, but if you're applying for a position as an accountant or a banker, then a full suit would be the required minimum. Despite what people say, first impressions are everything.

Conducting research about the job and company you're applying for is imperative. Consider doing a web search and learn as many facts about the company as you can. You can subtly include these facts during the interview (when appropriate) to show the interviewer that you have done your homework on the company. Don't overdo it though – you don't want to sound like you're repeating their whole website!

Non-verbal messages are often more important than words, so make sure that you greet your interviewer with a firm handshake. Maintaining correct posture and eye contact are also two very important non-verbal messages as they make you appear more confident and presentable. These are two big qualities that hiring managers will be looking for.

You should also be able to recite your resume off by heart. As a general rule, you should not need to consult your resume. The interviewer will already have a copy of your resume, and they will ask you questions about it, so don't try to make up an answer as there is a big chance that you will get it wrong. Highlight your achievements and the value added skills you can bring to the job and back up your statements with examples.

As preparation is the key to a successful job interview, consider doing a short role-play with a friend or family member. Ask them to question you on your resume and the job to fully prepare you for the interview. The more you are prepared the greater your chances of success. Following the interview, thank the interviewer for his or her time and ask when they expect to make a final decision and don't feel discouraged to follow up with them if you haven't heard back within a few days.

### 3.3 The Telephone Interview:

Phone interviews are becoming increasingly popular as a means of narrowing down candidates for a more traditional face to face interview. In the ultra-competitive society we now live, a job advertisement can attract hundreds of resumes from candidates with similar set of skills and backgrounds. The recruitment process is all about finding the one perfect candidate among the basket full of candidates. The phone interview has become a popular, flexible, inexpensive and speedy way of finding that one person.



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### 3.3.1 Preparing for a Telephone Interview

Before you begin your phone interview make sure that you are confident in your understanding of the position you are applying for and the company you are applying with. Do extra homework on the company's history and research recent company news. Preparation is the key and will make a great impression on your interviewers.

Prepare your Interview location. Make sure you're in a comfortable place with no distractions. Keep your resume in clear view, have a pen and pad to take notes and a glass of water sitting close by. Minimise any outside distractions that could potentially take your mind off the interview (HOT TIP: Disable call waiting on your phone). Dress the part so you feel and sound professional. The more professional you feel the more professional you will come across on the telephone.

Most importantly – Practice Interviewing. Rehearse and Practice. There are many ways to help you prepare for the telephone interview. Have a friend/ family member conduct an interview. Ideally, rehearse with someone from the same industry. The best way to hear how you sound is to tape yourself. Remember the more preparation you put into the interview the better prepared you will be.

Preparation is the key! Write down answers to questions you believe are going to be asked. Have questions ready to go so when the interviewer says "Do you have any questions to ask us" you're ready and prepared.

#### **What to do during the phone interview:**

- Remember to Smile. Experts say that smiling puts you in a better state of mind and will project a positive image to the listener
- Speak in a steady voice. Don't rush what you're trying to say. Ensure that you sound enthusiastic and passionate.
- Don't forget to breathe. It will help you stay calm and sound more relaxed.
- LISTEN – Answer the questions which are being asked. Do not make the mistake of telling the interviewer what you want to tell them. Give them the answers to their questions.
- Keep a glass of water handy – Nothing is worse than having a dry mouth
- Address the interviewer in the appropriate way. Do not shorten people's name. They are your potential employer not your "mate"
- Take your time – Don't rush the interview. This is your time to shine. If you're feeling nervous take a moment or two to collect your thoughts
- "Cheat Notes" Prepare beforehand with notes to help drive you through the interview. If the interview is going to be technical than have notes ready to prompt yourself if needed
- Don't forget to ask questions.



**What NOT to do during the interview:**

- Don't eat, drink, chew gum
- DO NOT SMOKE
- Don't interrupt the interviewer.
- Don't answer with just a "yes" and "no" – elaborate your answers, provide examples if applicable
- Don't be too Casual/informal
- Long winded answers to questions

**3.4 Job Interview Killers:**

When it comes to your job interview, you want to leave it with nothing but positive energy. You want to leave the interviewer thinking that you will most certainly be a positive addition to his or her company. The last thing you want to do is to kill your chances with a simple mistake or two. While there are a number of ways to prepare for a successful interview, there are also a number of ways to quickly end your chances of getting hired. Below are some simple things to avoid during an interview:

**Showing up late:**

This is not only rude, but it also reflects poorly on your work ethic. Do you routinely show up late? Are you someone who can't be counted on? Don't disqualify yourself before even meeting the interviewer.

**Forgetting to turn your cell phone off (or keeping it on silent):**

Having a cell phone ring during an interview is not only disruptive – it's also disrespectful. While it may not be an automatic interview-killer, it certainly won't improve your chances.

**Chewing gum:**

This looks/sounds unprofessional and tacky. No employer appreciates someone talking to them with a mouthful of gum. It's even worse if you're someone who chews loudly without even realising.

**Using "I don't know" as a response to questions:**

The purpose of an interview is to provide the interviewer with more information about you. The more you give them, the better.

**Using slang or profanity:**

This is never a positive in the workplace. Speak professionally.

**Bringing up personal problems:**

An interview is about the job in question and about your specific qualifications, not about your personal life. While you will almost always be asked to talk a little bit about yourself, try to keep the personal talk to a minimum. Certainly don't bring up any "issues" that will raise red flags.

These "killers" may seem a little obvious, but they happen all the time. Avoid these mistakes and you're already ahead of a large part of the competition.

### 3.5 Traditional Job Interview Questions Part 1:

#### 3.5.1 What are General Interview Job Questions?

Best to prepare answers to these types of questions, but do not try to memorize exact answers word for word. It will sound scripted and will be easily picked up. What you need to do is have your answers planned, but be ready to adapt or change your answers depending on how well the interview is going.

There are literally thousands of "general interview questions". We have selected the most frequently asked questions and have given you examples of how best to answer these questions.

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**(1) Tell Me About Yourself?**

This is the most common question to begin the interview. It is so important that you are prepared for this question so you can give a good solid first impression before the interviewer moves onto the more challenging questions. Be careful to not to give the interviewer your life story or provide “too much information”. I have had candidates who have told me how they have a criminal past or how they despised their family, and this is not something you need to voluntarily bring up in an interview. Relevant facts about education and your career is all you need to be speaking about.

Tip: Remember to tailor your answers toward the job you are applying for. If you’re applying for a role as a fashion editor for a magazine, tell the interviewer how from an early age you have always had a love for fashion and writing, and provide examples about how your passion has brought you to that interview.

**(2) Why Did You Decide To Leave Your Last Job?**

Be careful!!! Do NOT (and I can’t stress this enough) bad mouth your old employer. Present yourself in a positive way. It is extremely unprofessional to talk badly about your previous company, boss or peers, no matter what the reason. You also don’t know if this new hiring manager knows people from your old company. The best way to answer this question is to tell them that you are looking for career advancement and you see this new company being the right career choice for you.

**3.5.2 How to answer this question if you were fired:**

TIP: If you were fired from your last job do not try to lie about it or cover it up in the interview. More than likely the company will do a background check on you anyway, so it is best to be upfront and honest. Trust me, you are not the first person to be fired. The best way to answer the question is to keep it brief and ensure the interview keeps flowing forward. Turn the negative into a positive by letting the interviewer know how you learnt from the experience and are now ready to move on.

Example: “The job was going in a different direction to where I wanted to be going. My boss and I both thought it was best to move on to a job where I could be of greater value and offer my skills in the most maximising way.”

**(3) Where Else Have You Been Interviewing?**

Don’t be afraid to answer this question. The key to answering this correctly is to prove to the hiring manager that you are serious about finding a new job. This being said, you only want to mention a couple of places you’ve applied to rather than going into major details. If you’ve applied to many jobs, don’t admit this as you don’t want to come across as desperate. The aim of this question is to see if you really are seriously looking for a new job. There is nothing wrong with showing the employer that you are serious to find a new role.

**(4) What's Your Greatest Strength?**

This is one of the easier interview questions, but to get the most out of your answer the best response needs to be related to the job you are applying for. If you're an accountant and applying for an accountancy role, the best response you can give for your greatest strength is your ability with numbers, your computer skills and your attention to detail. How about if you're a dancer applying for a role? Your greatest strengths need to be balance, team work, dedication etc.

Rather than using generic clichéd answers such as “hard-working” and “loyal”, use this question to show the value you can add to the organisation.

**(5) What's Your Biggest Weakness?**

Without doubt one of the hardest questions to answer. Being too honest can severely affect your interview. Everyone has something they can work on, so saying you have no weaknesses makes you sound arrogant. The best way to approach this is to think of a weakness that won't impact your getting the job. Remember that this question is a work-related question, so don't say that your biggest weakness is not helping enough around the house or, the worst answer I ever heard, “chocolate cake.”

Tips:

- Do not mention a weakness that will prevent you from being hired. If you're going for a job as a telemarketer, don't say your greatest weakness is speaking on the telephone!
- No clichéd responses. “My greatest weakness is that I am a perfectionist.”
- Do not avoid the question. The interviewer has asked you this question and you need to answer it.

My advice is to provide a real work-related weakness and follow it up with examples of how you are fixing the problem.

Example:

If you're asked this question, give a small, work-related flaw that you're working hard to improve. Example: “I've been told that I occasionally focus on details and miss the bigger picture, so I've been spending time laying out the complete project every day to see my overall progress.”

Admitting a real weakness and then following up with what you're doing to improve yourself is preferable. “My presentation skills are not as strong as I'd like, so I signed up for weekend presentation skills classes and also joined a Toastmasters club.” Remember that the specific job you are interviewing for will help to determine how you answer the question.

### (6) Why Have You Applied For This Job?

This is a fairly innocent question and easy enough to answer. To answer this question successfully you need to show your motivation for this role, but also your desire to work for the company. Through your research into the company provide further examples why this job is the job for you.

Tip: Never say “money”!

### (7) Where Do You See Yourself In Five Years Time?

This type of question is seeing the extent of your ambition. Be careful when answering this question not to make it seem as though this job is a stepping stone in your career (even if it is). For example, if you are applying for an accounting job at an accounting firm, don't tell the interviewer that your long term goal is to work at an investment bank. This is not what the interviewer is going to want to hear. The last thing an employer wants to do is employ you, train you and then see you leave the firm. The best answer you can offer is to demonstrate that your 5 year goals are suitable and match the position you are applying for.



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### 3.6 Traditional Job Interview Questions Part 2:

#### (1) Why Should We Hire You For This Job?

The reason they should hire you is because you're best person for the job because of your skills and competence and also because of the enthusiasm you will bring to the role. You can be assured that 90% of the candidates will start pitching their skills and achievements, but what makes you stand out more is your enthusiasm and passion for the role. When describing your skills and achievements, relate them to the job description and give reasons why you would add value to the business. When pitching yourself, remember the importance of body language. Sit up in your chair and be positive.

Tip: Prepare for the interview by taking the job description and write down the skills you bring to each description and examples of accomplishments and achievements. Having examples ready to go can really help you when answering this question.

Example answer: (applying for a sales position)

"With my 5 years of work experience I have developed, maintained and expanded customer relationships, positioned new products to drive sales growth and developed new marketing strategies to ensure sales targets are exceeded and market share increased. I have expertise in the implementation of account strategies, tactical sales and marketing plans. As you can see my sales records speak for themselves, and in my previous role I was awarded for consistently exceeding sales and profit targets. Most importantly, I am extremely passionate about what I do and have a love for sales."

#### (2) Do You Work Well Under Pressure?

This is an easy question to answer if you have done your research and prepared for this question. (Tip – telling the employer that you crumble under pressure and burst into tears is not going to help you get the job). Although this is a closed question and can be answered with a one word answer, always provide an example of a time where you worked under pressure and how you rose above the pressure to succeed.

Tip: It may seem obvious, but keep the example work-related. I have interviewed a young man who told me that he kicked the winning goal with only one minute left on the clock. It may have been an example of working well under pressure, but what I was really asking for was a work-related answer.

#### (3) How Do You Handle Change?

This is a classic interview question that always makes a candidate think! It is incredible the amount of times a candidate will say "I handle change well" before an awkward silence as they try to think about an example. Change is natural part of life and it is about adapting to change that makes you a stronger person. Choosing to embrace change is an opportunity for personal growth.

The best answer is that you embrace change rather than opposing change out of fear or routine.

No matter what the job throws at you, you're able to handle it. Provide an example of where you were able to handle change and come out stronger as a result.

#### **(4) Briefly Describe Your Ideal Job?**

This is a "curve ball" question. My ideal job would be earning a million dollars a week and only working about 3–4 hours a day. Perhaps my ideal job is playing first base for the New York Yankees. Either way, neither of these answers is right. The right answer to this question is to keep it in line with the characteristics of the job and company you are interviewing with.

Concentrate on your strengths and what you best bring to the job. A sample answer would be along the lines of, "My ideal job is where I can utilize my key strengths including X, Y, and Z and as a valued member of the team make a positive and significant contribution."

#### **(5) What Makes You Want To Work Hard?**

This is a good question from the interviewer's perspective, but also an easy question to answer if you're prepared. If we were to answer this question in a court room under oath a large percentage of people (myself included) would naturally say material rewards, higher salary, big bonus, perks etc. Luckily we are not in a court room. Focus more on being part of a successful team, adding value to the organisation and the satisfaction you derive from it.

#### **(6) How Would Your Co-Workers Describe You?**

This is a time for you to show off the attributes that make you unique and further convince the interviewer that you are the right person for their organization. This question is designed for you to put forward your strengths, but remember there is a difference between pride in how you believe you're perceived and arrogance. Answers such as "My co-workers think I am wonderful" or "They think that I am the greatest thing since sliced bread" do not go down well in interviews. As per every good answer, provide examples of accomplishments you have achieved.

#### **(7) What Motivates You?**

This is a great interview question and a question that every potential job seeker should ask themselves while preparing for the interview. The right answer is providing a mixture of what motivates you as a person and what motivates you about the job you are applying for. Remember to be specific and tailor your answer to the job you are applying for.

Question: Do you mention money or not?



Typically saying that money or benefits motivates you is not the response a hiring manager is looking for. But as per always, the rules change depending on what industry you are applying for. For example, if you are applying for a sales role that offers high commission, being motivated to succeed and earn greater commission is definitely a motivation. Rather than just saying money motivates me (which is not advised), tell the interviewer that you are motivated to sell and succeed and enjoy working in an environment where the more you put in, the more you can gain in return.

### **(8) What Are Your Salary Expectations?**

It goes without saying that everyone wants to make as much money as possible. The best way to answer this question is by researching the market value of the job you are applying for. Honesty is the best policy when it comes to salary expectations because if you are looking for a role that pays 60,000 but the role will only pay 40,000, it won't be long before you begin to lose interest in the role and start searching all over again for a new job. Show the hiring manager that you have thoroughly researched the role and have an understanding of how much the role pays. Many people try to avoid giving the interviewer a straight answer when answering this question as not to "rock the boat".

### The Worst Answer is a “Desperate Answer”.

Example Question: What are your salary expectations for this job?

Example Answer: “I’m easy – whatever you guys are willing to pay.”

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**A Good Answer is a “Researched Answer”**

Example Question: What are your salary expectations for this job?

Example Answer: “From my research, I know that the salary range for this position is between \$60,000 and \$70,000 – having worked in the industry for 5 years I feel that my value would fit into this range”.

**3.7 Ice Breaking Job Interview Questions:**

When you first enter the interview, the opening question is always designed to introduce yourself so you feel comfortable in the surroundings before the questions become more specific. Generally speaking, “ice breaking questions” are broad, yet they can be so important with how they impact the rest of your interview. Just like in a sports game, the opening minutes of the game are not where the game can be won, but where it can potentially be lost. The same goes for the interview – you are not going to get the job because of the answer you provide, but you can lose the job with your answer. Although the ice breaking question will be a general question about yourself or how your day is going, remember this is the hiring manager’s first impression of you. Giving off the wrong first impression can severely affect the outcome of the interview.

**Examples:**

- Tell me a little about yourself...
- Were there any problems finding our office today?
- Have you visited our location before?
- If there is a major sporting event like the Olympics going on the hiring manager may ask something along the lines of “Have you been following the Olympics?”
- Would you like some coffee or a glass of water?
- Are you enjoying this weather?
- Why have you applied for this role? (Trickier ice breaker question)

The most important aspect of answering an ice breaking question is to build early rapport with the interviewer. As I mentioned, you are not going to get the job just because you answer the ice breaking question in a brilliant way, but answering the question the wrong way can give off the wrong first impression.

**Tips:**

Keep the answer related to the question and be brief and polite. This is not the time to tell the interviewer your life story

Use proper English – If you are asked how you are doing the correct answer would be “Very well thank you, and how are you?” or “Fine thank you, how are you today?” – Using slang or lazy English can create an unprofessional or even careless impression.

**How to blow the ice breaking question:**

A colleague of mine was interviewing candidates for a new role. As a polite introduction he would ask the candidate if they found the company building ok. Most of the candidates smiled and said yes to this question. One candidate, however, told the interviewer how it took him a long time to find the building and how his train was late. He rambled on for 2 minutes about the difficulty in finding the building. Before the interview had formally even begun he had already created a negative impression on the interviewer. He had lost the job before the interview had even started.

### 3.8 Open Ended & Closed Ended Interview Questions:

**Open-Ended Job Interview Questions:**

The one thing to keep in mind with an open-ended question is that you need to give the interviewer more than a yes or no answer. If you do the research beforehand, you will be in a position to adequately open-ended question.

**Closed-Ended Job Interview Questions:**

There are times when an interviewer will need to know a specific piece of information and only require a brief response. My tip is to always answer the question directly in a brief, but complete sentence – never just in a one word answer.

**Examples:**

Q: Have you finished your bachelor degree?

A: Yes I did – I have a Bachelor of Commerce degree, majoring in Finance, from the University of XYZ.

Q: How many years of experience do you have as a truck driver?

A: This is my 6th year as a qualified truck driver with company XYZ.

Q: Are you proficient in using Microsoft Excel?

A: I am an advanced Microsoft Excel user and am also proficient in all Microsoft programs including Word and PowerPoint.

### 3.9 Behaviour Job Interview Questions:

“Past behaviour is a better predictor of future behaviour”

It is estimated that 80% of the interview is made up of behavioural questions. In order to understand how to answer behaviour questions we need to first define what a behavioural question is.

This type of interviewing is based on the philosophy that your past actions and behaviours will be a good indicator of your future behaviours. Therefore, how you acted to certain circumstances in your previous job is a reliable indicator of how you will act in your new job. As there are literally thousands of behaviour type questions, you can best prepare for this type of questioning by researching the culture of the company to get an understanding of the behavioural traits that are essential to working at that particular organisation.

Behavioural questions differ to standard interview questions as they focus more on experiences, behaviours, knowledge, skills and abilities. Rather than the standard question of “Do you have leadership skills” a behavioural question is more likely to be “Give me an example of your previous role when you displayed leadership abilities.” As the interviewer has already determined which skills are necessary for the role it is important that you are prepared for these questions.

The best way to begin studying for these questions is to look at the job description! The list of skills that they require are the skills they will more than likely focus on. When the job description mentions they require a person with good teamwork skills or negotiation skills, it is more than likely that this will be turned into a behavioural question to see if you really do possess these skills.

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In good news, behavioural questions are not to be feared. When prepared properly, these questions can be easily answered.

### 3.9.1 How to Answer Behaviour Job Interview Questions:

The best way to answer a behavioural question is to use the **STAR Format**.



#### **Situation:**

The interviewer wants you to present a recent challenge and situation in which you found yourself.

#### **Task:**

What did you have to achieve? The interviewer will be looking to see what you were trying to achieve from the situation.

#### **Action:**

What did you do? The interviewer will be looking for information on what you did, why you did it and what were the alternatives.

#### **Results:**

What were the outcomes of your actions? What did you achieve through your actions and did you meet your objectives. What did you learn from this experience and have you used this learning since?



### 3.10 50 Popular Behaviour Job Interview Questions:

- Describe a time when you were faced with a stressful situation and how you overcame the situation
- Tell me about a difficult decision you've made in the last year
- Give an example of a time when a project you were on failed
- Provide an example of when you showed initiative and took the lead
- Tell me about a situation where you have had to speak with an unhappy customer
- Give me an example of a time when you motivated others and how this led to a positive outcome
- Give an example of a goal you set and how you reached it
- Describe a decision you made that was unpopular with your co-workers and how you handled this
- Describe a situation in which you were able to use negotiation to successfully change a person's opinion
- Describe an instance when you had to think on your feet to make a split second decision
- Describe a situation where you knew your boss wrong – how did you handle it?
- Give an example of a time when you used good judgment in solving a problem
- Describe a major change or adjustment to your job and your reactions to the change
- Describe a situation where the situation changed and you forced to adjust to the changes – how did you handle this adjustment?
- Describe a time when you were able to effectively communicate an error to your supervisor
- Tell me about a time when you encountered conflict in the workplace and how you handled the conflict?
- What was your most difficult decision in the last 6 months? What made it difficult?
- Provide an example of when you had to go above and beyond your normal duties in order to get the job done
- Describe a time when you put the needs of your workmates before your own when completing a task
- Tell me about a time when your knowledge or skills significantly enhanced an outcome or decision
- Provide an example of a problem you had with a co-worker or boss and how you resolved it
- Give an example of a pressure situation you faced and how you reacted to the pressure
- Provide an example of a time when you felt you were able to motivate
- Describe a situation when you were able to have a positive influence on others
- Describe a time when you did not put in 100% into your job or performance and what you did about it
- Tell me about a time when you had to solve a problem with very little guidance or direction
- Tell me about a time when you were successful in a team environment?
- Tell us about a time that you were able to adapt to a culturally different environment

- Give an example of a situation that you have gone out of your way to make someone feel comfortable in the working environment
- Tell us about the most effective contribution you have made as part of a task group or special project team
- Describe a team experience you found rewarding
- Describe a team experience you found disappointing
- What was the most stressful situation you have faced? How did you deal with it?
- Have you ever had difficulty getting others to accept your ideas? What was your approach?
- Have you ever had to deal with conflicting deadlines? How did you decide which task to complete?
- Explain a complex problem you recently encountered
- What have you done in the past to contribute toward a teamwork environment?
- Provide an example of an annoying or unpopular co-worker and how you deal with that person
- Tell me about a time when you went overtime on a deadline
- Describe a time where you were wrong in your decision making – what did you do to fix it
- Describe a time where you had to delegate tasks
- Provide an example where you were unsure what to do but afraid to ask for guidance
- Give an example of when you had to use different management styles for different people
- Provide an example of how you were able to promote morale



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- What is the biggest contribution you made in your current role?
- What are you most proud of in your working career?
- Have you ever had to “go the extra mile” for a customer? What did you do?
- When was the last time a supervisor gave you constructive criticism – how did you react?
- Discuss a setback you have overcome in the last 12 months
- Give me an example of a time when you felt that someone wasn’t being honest with you in the workplace and how confronted it

### 3.11 Situational Job Interview Questions:

Situational interview questions, more commonly known as “hypothetical interview questions” are questions an interviewer uses to find out how you would approach certain problems if they were to arise. This type of questioning is designed to help the interviewer with determining how you would handle a certain situation. Unlike behavioural interviews which you are required to provide examples of how you handled a certain situation, situational questions ask you to envisage and hypothesise how you would handle a particular situation if it were to arise.

#### Examples of Situational Questions:

- If you found out an employee was stealing from the business how would you approach this employee?
- What would you do if your supervisor asked you to do something that you felt was unethical?
- Imagine you have a deadline and you are running out of time. What would you do?
- How would you handle an employee that is disrupting the work environment?
- In a position of management, how would you handle a heavy workload if you were short staffed?
- If your supervisor makes a decision you do not agree with how would you handle this?
- How would you react if a team member was not contributing towards a project?
- As a leader what would you do to build team spirit?

#### Keys to answering situational interview questions:

Remember that situational interview questions deal with hypothetical situations and not necessarily past experiences – while a hypothetical question may seem daunting to answer, the best way to prepare yourself is similar to the steps involved a problem solving exercise.

**Rule 1:** Be prepared and have a definite understanding of the role and the position that you are applying for. By understanding the position, you can already second guess the questions that an interviewer might ask. For example, if you are applying for a managerial position, it is more than likely that the situation questions will be about how you would handle certain scenarios as a manager.

Example: “How would you react if a team member was not contributing toward a project?” By researching the type of organisation and hierarchy you are in a better position to answer this question.

**Rule 2:** During your research, make a list of events that happened in your previous role or in your past that led to a positive outcome. If you’re a recent graduate or entry level, draw on other areas such as volunteer work or memberships you belong to.

**Rule 3:** Develop a few short stories about specific examples where you solved the problem and how you solved the problem. Most important is to have a clear understanding of how you resolved the issues.

**Rule 4:** Apply these examples to the questions.

### **Sample questions and excellent answers:**

**Question 1:** How would you react if a team member was not contributing towards a project?

**Answer:** Unfortunately, I have been in this situation before where one team member was not contributing, and it caused a detrimental effect on the whole team. I would handle this situation with honest communication at the very beginning. What I have found is that the more you ignore the problem, the worse it can get. Speaking with the team member in a non-confrontational way is the best approach. Often the reason for a team member not contributing is that they don’t understand the work or what is expected of them. By communicating with the individual, I am at least able to find out what the cause of the problem and then be able to work toward a solution.

**TIP:** As you can see from my answer I have drawn upon my experience, listed the event that occurred and presented a positive solution to the problem.

**Question 2:** If you believed your supervisor was wrong how would you handle the situation?

**Answer:** I would present my reasons to the supervisor and provide an alternate solution. In my experiences I find that telling someone they are wrong without providing facts or examples is the wrong way to go about it. I would ensure that I was fully prepared and had analysed the situation before speaking to the supervisor. Most importantly, I would discuss my reasons in private, in a one on one situation, not in front of other team members.

**Question 3:** How would you react if a project you had been working on suddenly changed or the deadline had been changed?

**Answer:** My first response would be to speak with the supervisors to get an understanding why the project had been changed and ensure that I had all the facts and answers before approaching the rest of the team. As soon as I had the answers I would notify the team to let them know things had changed. Once everyone was aware of the changes I would want to sit down with the team to develop a new strategy to move forward with the project.

### 3.12 Employer Interview Questions:

With the current economic climate and changing job market, employers have now started to alter the types of questions they ask in interviews. With hundreds of Internet pages dedicated to types of interview questions and all listing the same “general” type questions (what are your strengths, where do you see yourself in 10 years, etc.), employers are now steering away from these types of questions and introducing a new set of questions that test your creativity and flair. Below is a list of questions which you may not have thought about previously. Think about how you would answer these questions if faced with one of these in an interview:

- If you had the option, would you change your college career?
- How do you go about deciding what to do first when given a project?
- What are the most important rewards you expect in your business career?
- Provide an example of how you are a risk taker.
- If you could have any job in the world, what would it be?
- Why do you want to work for us and not for our competitor?
- What did you think of your previous manager/supervisor?
- What did you do in your last job to increase value?
- What are some of the things that bother you?
- Tell me about the last time you felt anger on the job.
- Do you need other people around to stimulate you or are you self-motivated?



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- What management style gets the best results out of you?
- How can our company offer you what your previous company could not offer?
- How long do you think it would take before you were making a significant contribution to our business?
- How ambitious are you? Would you compete for my job?
- What do you like and dislike about the job we are discussing?
- Why did you choose a career in...?
- What do you think is the most important dilemma facing our business today?
- How much does your last job resemble the one you are applying for? What are the differences?
- Why did you decide to join your previous company? Did the job live up to your expectations? Why are you leaving now?
- Explain the organisational structure and hierarchy in your last company and how you fitted into it. Did this suit you?
- Do you prefer to work in a small, medium or large company?
- What interests you about our company, product or service?
- You have not done this sort of job before. How will you cope/succeed?
- Do you consider yourself successful in your career to date?
- What was your greatest success in your professional career? How did you achieve it?
- What has been your biggest failure in your professional career?
- Did you feel you advanced and progressed in your last job?
- How do you handle criticism?
- What would you like to avoid in your next job?
- How did you get on with your previous manager, supervisor, co-workers and subordinates?
- What will your referees say about you?
- Fantasy questions – What would you do if you won the Lottery? Would you come to work tomorrow?

### 3.13 Questions You Can Ask In The Job Interview:

As a job candidate what is the best question to ask in an interview? At some point in the interview (typically at the end) the hiring manager will turn to you and ask “Do you have any questions which you would like to ask me?”

There are two main benefits in asking the right questions. Firstly don't forget the number one rule from chapter one. The interview is a two way process and you need to ensure that this organization is the right fit for you. If you are uncertain about certain aspects of the role or need greater clarification, than this is the time to ask those questions. Don't be shy or intimidated. Secondly by asking clever questions will not just help you in deciding if this job is right for you but will impress the interviewer and leave a positive image as someone who comprehensive and professional.

**What you need to do:**

- Prioritise your questions based on the interview situation – Is this the first interview or the second interview?
- The best questions you can ask are open ended questions
- Have 3–5 questions prepared (The more the better)
- Only ask questions that you are interested in knowing the answer!
- Only ask questions that are relevant to the job, department, management and organization

**Sample 15 Job Interview Questions to ask:**

- How will my leadership responsibilities and performance be measured?
- Do you provide any sort of professional development or training?
- How do you measure performance and how often is it reviewed?
- Who was in this job before and why did they leave?
- Is this a new position? How long has this position existed?
- Could you explain your organizational structure?
- How many people work in this office/department?
- How much travel is expected?
- What's the makeup of the team as far as experience?
- With whom will I be working most closely?
- Why do you enjoy working for this company?
- How will my leadership responsibilities and performance be measured?
- Can you describe the company's management style?
- What would be the goals of the department in the coming year?
- What are the traits and skills of people who are the most successful within the organization?

**Types of Job Interview Questions NOT to ask:**

- Salary and benefits
- Questions that are clearly stated on the website
- Generic / Obvious questions
- Questions that the interviewer is unable to answer. Do not try to “outsmart the interviewer”  
Asking questions that appear to be challenging the interviewer or a question that the interviewer is unlikely to know will only create a negative vibe between you and the interviewer. Remember you are trying to build rapport with the interviewer not challenge the interviewer.
- Questions that are irrelevant to the job or organization

**Sample 15 Job Interview Questions NOT to ask:**

- How many sick days and holiday days do I get?
- Do I still get paid for a sick day?
- If I start next week how long until I will get a pay rise?
- How long is the lunch break?
- What is it that your company does?
- Are the working hours flexible?
- Am I able to have my own office?
- Who are the “coolest” people on my team?
- How many warnings do you get before you are fired?
- Are there many coffee shops close by?
- How financially sound is this company?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- Will I be given an employee handbook?
- What is the company policy on internet use?
- Can I use Facebook?

### Gemeinsam nachhaltig zum Erfolg.

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### 3.14 Following Up After The Job Interview:

The final stage of nailing the interview is the follow up. After doing all the hard work of preparing for the interview, dressing correctly and being able to answer all the questions which the interviewer asks, the final stage is to follow up from the interview.

Find below a list of the best follow up tactics to use to continue to show your enthusiasm for the role.

Follow up with a letter or email thanking the interviewer for their time and re-expressing your desire for the role and because of your skills and experience you are the right person for the role. A thank you letter not only reiterates your desire, but continues the rapport you already built during the interview.

Rules to follow:

When writing a thank you letter always remember to correctly use their right title and spell their name correctly. Nothing is worse than receiving an email with the persons name spelt incorrectly.

Send your thank you email that evening. You want the interviewer to receive the email in the morning so that they continue to remember who you are and you stay in the forefront of their mind.

Don't be afraid to follow up with a phone call 3–5 days after the interview. Ideally it is best to ask the interviewer in the interview when they expect to make a decision, but a follow up call is great way to further reiterate your desire for the job.

Do not burn any bridges. You may have felt the interview did not go well or that the role was not for you. That's ok. Continue your professionalism until the very end. You just never know what else can potentially come from that interview. I have seen cases where the interviewer was impressed with a candidate and although they did not have the right skills for that particular job they created a new position for that candidate.

The big misconception from candidates is that the interviewer does not want to be disturbed with follow up. THIS IS WRONG. Many hiring managers will observe the candidates who do follow up. Stand out from other potential candidates by making sure you follow through to the end.

#### **Example thank you email**

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name:

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to interview for the position of XYZ. It was a pleasure to meet you, and I appreciate your time and consideration in interviewing me for this position.



Following our discussion I consider that I have all the skills and requirements to fulfil your job. Having been a manager for 3 years and a project manager for 2 years, I have the desire to lead the team in a positive and productive way.

In addition to my technical skills I bring enthusiasm and energy into everything I do in order to get the job done in an efficient and timely manner.

I am very keen on this role and working for company ABC. If you require any further information from me please contact me anytime on XXX XXX XXXX.

Thank you again for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

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