

Get Hired Today

An expert guide to acing your next interview.

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Table of Contents

Introduction

You are the brand

Application Form

Working with an agent

How to source your own opportunities

Interview

Conclusion

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Introduction

I have a passion for the development and advancement of the human species. I love the sound of an elated voice that has just secured a new job and changed not only his life but that of his family's as well. I love being able to present opportunities to the thousands of candidates that register with our agency. In short I love to make a difference in peoples lives and recruitment allows me to fulfill that passion.

I have successfully owned and personally managed 2 recruitment agencies during the last 12 years, I presently own a very successful one called HR Corporation based out of Cape Town South Africa. I have done local, national and international recruitment

During this period I have had the wonderful opportunity to work with thousands of huge global clientele and have learnt much of their inherent staff requirements. This has enabled me to be able to present candidates at any stage, whether there is an available job or not based on what I know my clients will always hire. Almost always this turns into fabulous work opportunities.

In this E book I share with you the various strategies I have learnt from clients and candidates that will hopefully secure you that job of your dreams.

Many times after an interview I get to hear the client's view of what a candidate came across like in an interview, possibly something you may never really find out. This is the information I want to share with you, so that you can be aware of why you may not be securing the jobs you desire or even getting an interview.

My desire is to help you present your best possible package; equip you with the right tools, mainly a strong attitude and a professional CV.

On behalf of myself and my team who put this together.

We want to help you get hired today.

You are the Brand

My best advice to a candidate is to always assess yourself as 'the brand'. You are the product and as the product you should know ahead of any prospective meeting what your features and benefits are. Are you a low end product? Are you high maintenance? Are you a temporary solution? Are you a high-end investment-yielding product? Do you offer value for money? Are you overpriced? Are you the type of product that consumers purchase regardless of price as your value far exceeds your price?

These are the questions to ask yourself, what impression do you want to create? How is it that you see yourself and what is it that what you want your prospective employer to see. Step aside and take a good look at you 'the product'- would you sell you? Are there things that need refining? How will you brand and launch you?

The first step would be to work on your CV, as that is likely to be your first point of contact with any prospective employer or agent. Your CV should be as comprehensive as possible. Your full name, your area of residence, all your contact details, your current salary and your notice period, and your education details. Your work history should have the commencement date and the termination date, your reason for leaving, your full and comprehensive job description, what you did on a daily basis, the software program you used. Your monthly targets, the staff compliment you worked with or managed. Writing 3-4 lines of job description does not give the prospective employer a clear indication of the responsibilities, skills and capabilities you had in your previous job. Take the time to remember all aspects including your minor and major achievements, these are all worth mentioning. Remember the description is the branding of you as the product; this is where you are trying to convey the benefits of this product and what it has to offer. The dates of employment should be congruent, starting from the last or current employment to the first. You should also include all reference telephone numbers; make certain these are current numbers. If you were in sales, getting reports or commission statements of your past performance also helps a great deal. The CV is the start and the next step we move onto is appearance. First impressions are lasting and I couldn't write enough about

appearance. Start with being clean and smelling great, not like a perfume outlet though! Be certain to check everything, your hair should be tidy and cut (for guys); women should keep it well groomed and classy. Be certain not to have any piercings showing, this is just an absolute no-no. For guys this certainly includes earrings, this is not professional, and in the same category as tattoo's – unless of course you are applying for a job in a tattoo parlor. A gentleman should always wear a tie. If you are uncertain, rather dress up than dress down. Ladies should keep their skirts at knee length and not wear very revealing shirts showing too much cleavage; rather let your personality and experience do the talking. Make certain that finger nails are clean and tidy, nose hairs are trimmed. Deodorant is a must, sweaty armpits is not a sight that a prospective employer will relish. Check your teeth for last night's dinner. Keep your selected choice of clothing very professional. Do not smoke before an interview, if the prospective employer doesn't enjoy the smell, it could make or break the interview. Shine your shoes and be certain to clean your car, if a prospective employer does walk you to your car, be certain to have it in mint condition. It's a reflection of how you care for yourself and the things that you own and how you will care for his business.

The next step is your body language, if your body language and your words aren't congruent, you will be conveying mixed messages. Using good posture instantly makes you appear more confident. Try not to cross your arms during any stage of the interview; it conveys anger or a lack of general openness. Don't play with your clothes, jewelry, hair or hands, this definitely says you're nervous or have something to hide. When greeting or exiting, give a firm (not hurtful and not limp) handshake and make eye contact and smile. Keep a good distance between you and the interviewer, some people don't like their space invaded, keep an interested look on your face at all times, sitting up straight and leaning forward slightly indicates admiration and interest. If there is more than 1 person at the interview, be sure to address both when communicating. The key aspect here is to remember that people want to feel special, yes even the interviewer, he wants to see and not just hear about your interest in his/her company, your expressions convey your enthusiasm, try not to gesture too much and but also don't appear to be too stiff, take a deep breathe and relax, remember that you are there to benefit them too. Practice in front of the mirror and assess where you look too nervous as you

answer questions, you may notice something you do quite unconsciously.

Honesty is an invaluable trait. Keep it sincere and be yourself, pretenses are just so much hard work and if you get a job based on pretenses, you will spend your time being miserable trying to be someone you're not. Answer honestly and tactfully. Use your discretion, don't think being honest means saying that your current boss is a pig because you believe that to be a truth. All that shows is that you're actually a negative individual and someone who sounds resentful. Keep it positive.

If you consider that major companies and even the smaller ones always have a vision statement for their companies, it makes sense that us as individual should have a vision statement for ourselves too. You want to live this vision statement. Represent yourself as the brand you envision. What do you want a person interviewing you to gather as an impression about you from the moment you walk in?

Your first impression could say...successful; ambitious, exciting, go getter, sincere, charming, lively, enthusiastic, humble, friendly, happy and positive, eager to learn, eager to produce results, driven or/and fun.

You shouldn't let it say...boring, untidy, fidgety, clock-watcher, boastful, knows it all, sad and negative, too loud or too soft, no sense of humor.

You get the idea, right? So if you were hiring, I think we both know you're more likely to pick out the successful candidate from the first list.

To recap, your end goal in refining your brand is to ensure that you get the type of position that you feel you truly deserve, in order to make this happen, you have to put your best foot forward, the prospective employer needs to meet you when you're feeling and looking your absolute best and that's not negotiable, its what will give you the results you desire.

Now we come to a truly enlightening part. THE CV. Many an excellent potential employee has been thrown by the wayside with a sloppy CV. If anything your CV is probably the first contact you

will have with a potential employer or agent. I write as an agent who receives hundreds of CV's every day. I scan CV's looking for those qualifications and most importantly the job descriptions that meet my current specs requirements. If the candidate doesn't take the time to write out his current and previous job descriptions, I will move on to the next CV, the work day doesn't allow for me to phone every applicant. In my humble opinion the worst crime committed with regards to a CV is an incomplete one. Dates are also important, when you started, months and year and when you ended that job. A reason for leaving is also important. Be sure to include all courses or degrees you completed or even started and haven't yet completed. Remember your CV is like your brochure for your brand, its got to have the potential to make people want to 'buy' your services. Include achievements, work related or sport related, include reference telephone numbers and reference letters if you have. Be certain to check your dates and credentials well, first impressions rarely accommodate mistakes.

To end this chapter, I highly recommend adding letters of recommendations to your CV. This could be from your ex employers but also from clients whom you have dealt with previously. You could email them telling them of your job search and ask them if they would please give you a written recommendation of their experience when dealing with you. Try to make certain that this is a client that did actually enjoy dealing with you!

Your cv should have clean lines, your full details, a professional photograph, head and shoulders and no bikini's and tattoo's, should have comprehensive job descriptions, correct work dates, reasons for leaving, education details and references and recommendations. It should not have nasty comments about ex employers, e.g. "I left because my boss was a racist"- whether this is true or not, this is a professional document and should not echo anything personal or negative about you.

Your first impression should be your best one, equip yourself with the very best preparation. You'll be guaranteed to succeed.

Application Form

In both Europe and the United States, and a growing trend in Africa is the removal of CV's and resumes from the selection process. This is due to a number of reasons but primarily it became necessary to qualify all candidates on an equal basis. It is now the practise in both Europe and the United States for even the directors and CEO's who are hired by a board to have to fill out an application form to submit to the human resource department.

Most of the time you write or send an email to the company and ask for an application, you may consider following up with a phone call as well. Look at the advertisement for the deadline for the application to be in as it may not appear on the application itself. If you decide to call and follow up from there also ask when that deadline is. From that point your objective is to get that application back to the company or Recruitment Company two days prior to the deadline. A recruitment company will always check your application to make sure it is filled out correctly, which is a major benefit to working through an agent, so attempt to go through one when possible.

When you receive the application read the entire form first. Look at the language the form is written in; make sure you understand the abbreviations and business related terms. Don't worry about filling it out just yet, what you want to do is start your thinking process in the language of the business. When you start filling the application out you want to fill it out like you are already in the job. Read the job description and make sure you know exactly what the job entails before you write anything down. The internet is a fantastic resource for looking up jobs; remember before you write anything you have to see yourself in the role.

There is usually an addition to the application with the job description, essential qualifications, and experience required. There is also sometimes the addition of "desired qualifications and experience" so make sure you are on top of that as well. Read that entire document and picture the job, make sure you can account for the minimum qualifications and experience. Look at the desired qualifications and experience, and picture how you fit that role. There may be one additional part about called something like key performance areas. Take each one of those points and picture

how you have accomplished those points, or how you will fulfil them.

Once you are in the role, start the application. Fill out every section as many evaluations are sent to a scoring department which is as technical as checking off how you fit the qualifications, experience, and key performance areas, and that's it. They will take none of your statements or answers to the questions and actually spend any time on them at all. Remember this department has to evaluate hundreds of applications a day, so to make the first cut you need to hit the basics.

The next group to evaluate your application will probably be the manager or the personal assistant to the manager, and they will see if you are a fit for their organization. Make sure the answers to your questions are clear and well written. Make sure you do not whine or complain about your past employment, never. It will throw up the simple red flag that you are a complainer. Keep your answers positive at all time, talk about how you will hit the key performance areas through what qualifications and knowledge you have.

To sum up the application process:

- Get application and check when it is due
- Have it to a recruiter or the company two days before due
- Read the entire application
- Know the job, be in the role
- Fill it out in its entirety

Be positive- always.

Working with an agent

There are thousands of agents in the International market, some are generalists and some are specialists. Which agent or agents you choose will depend on your field of expertise.

It would be wise to target the agents that specialize in your field of expertise. You could also be applying for a specific advertisement and get onto an agency's database.

Having been a recruitment agent for over a decade I will give you following points that matter most to me when I take the time to enlist a candidate and market him or her.

- Have a comprehensive CV for the agent, proper job descriptions, not one-liners. Have the correct dates or approximates that you started and ended your different jobs.
- Include your education details, degrees; date attained, short courses, training workshops, computer literacy and software capabilities.
- Include the languages you speak
- Supply credible reference telephone numbers
- Include any type of marketing material regarding you or your accomplishments that will help the agent market you to their clients

After you have supplied that CV to the agent, the next step would be to make contact and introduce yourself telephonically and then hopefully through an interview. If it is just telephonic contact be certain to make your best impression. Speak with clarity, eliminate stuttering and know which advertisement you are applying for. Express your keenness to get employed immediately. To get results from an agent, you have to invest in the relationship. Be sure to keep weekly contact, either by email or telephone. Remember that out of sight is out of mind. The more present you are in the agents mind, the better the likelihood of her mentioning you to a prospective employer. Keep the agent updated if there are any new additions to the CV.

Most agents enjoy long and rewarding relationships with their clients and so when they present a candidate, that CV holds a certain amount of credibility already. The advantages of being marketed by a professional are numerous. They will ensure you

get enough exposure by marketing you to a range of clients; sometimes it's not even to a particular vacancy. Agents recognize what their client's preferences are and even if there is no vacancy, they may choose to market you as a 'potential' employee, which almost always turns out sooner rather than later. I have had great success personally by marketing potential candidates, as I know how to match client's needs to candidate's experience.

Another substantial benefit to using an agent is when it comes to negotiating around an offer. An agent will almost always be able to get you a higher salary than you would get yourself. An agent can ask for a higher package without the emotion of greed coming into play. An agent could also advise the client that a salary is not exactly market related and thereby negotiate far better for the candidate.

Always be upfront with the agent so that he or she will be prepared at the negotiating stage. Know exactly what is the bottom line for you; know what benefits are not negotiable for you. Honesty is invaluable, play open cards if you have other offers through other agents, he or she may be able to use that as leverage to negotiate a much better for you.

To maintain a successful relationship between you and the agent, remember to keep total confidentiality. If the agent calls you with a spec, keep it confidential so that you don't jeopardize your chances of securing the job by alerting other agents who will just use the information to market their own candidates for the spec.

Be transparent and honest and this will guarantee you a successful relationship with the agent who in turn will bring you some excellent opportunities. I know from personal experience, that I value the candidates I trust and go out of my way to bring them opportunities year after year.

How to source your own opportunities

The first way many people look for a new job is by going to where new jobs are being advertised and submitting. While this is the most straightforward approach- a company has a need, they advertise the need, and you submit your details to see if you fit that need, it is by no means the only way to get a job. You have heard of the “unadvertised positions” that a good recruiter is aware of, or the CEO or Director has been considering a new venture and your details are marketed to that niche and a position appears.

If you are brand new to the job market this is not for you, your education is very important, but it is the combination of experience and education that will establish a market for you in this venue.

In the other chapters you have established a decent CV or Resume, to this go the step of deciding- who am I? Are you a sales person, or a Director, or do you write law, or are you a technician. Then make the next three choices.

1. Broadly who are you and where do you see yourself.
2. What type of industry ideally would you like to be in. (but don't completely limit yourself here, so pick two or three related industries)
3. Pick out three to four companies in each of those industries.

At this point it is taken for granted you have access to the Internet, as you have purchased this book, and most of the positions, although sometimes still advertised in newspapers are primarily advertised somewhere on the Internet. Most companies advertise their services on the Internet, and most company's details can be found on the Internet.

So to start, work backwards. Get onto the Internet and look up your industry, and start your list. Then look up your alternatives. Have a look at each website for the companies on your list. If they are looking for staff that is an option to simply submit your details, but don't. If you submit your details immediately your CV will lock into what the database sections you at. Write down those details and add them to your list.

To this list, have a look at the job portals, or where companies advertise jobs. Have a look at your industry, and see what else or what other companies are advertising. If a company believes it is similar to one of your companies chances are they are, and add this to your list. On a note, be careful what details you put on even the largest job portal as these details are relatively public after you put them on the web.

From here the most logical thing to do is talk to your recruiter about this list. If you have chosen the right recruiter they will spend some time marketing you. Most recruiters know the person who hires for companies, and most deal with managers or directors and can ask if the respected company is looking for something else.

The object of this exercise is to market you in the best light to prospective employers for your ideal job. Make sure you know what you want to do, make sure you can present a case for how you can do it, and have a look around for which companies would like you to be part of their team. From there it is a bit of marketing and who knows what and who in the industry, so work with a recruiter to market you, and ideally get that next position

Interview

The company has scheduled you for an interview, congratulations, you have been shortlisted. So it is time to get ready, It is a funny concept that so many professionals think this aspect of the hiring process is beneath them, they show up chewing gum, wearing jeans, smelling of alcohol. Things that would be in a great deal common sense to most polite people get dismissed because that person already believes the job is theirs.

So first and foremost, do your research. Know what the company does, who it provides services or goods to, who are its competitors. From there research the position, if you are going for a sales job know the product you will be selling, or a service job know the service you will be providing according to the company. It is common knowledge that all companies have their own language- so do a bit of research and know what they mean by "quality assurance." Have a look to see if the company is part of a larger group, who owns the company, and if you can find it a reporting structure.

Getting as much information from the agent as possible. Your agent has been doing business with the company, so they will be aware of who is who and what is what outside of the published information provided in the library and website. As it is in the best interest for you to get the job your agent will help you out as much as possible. They can tell you about the format of the interview, what sort of questions or forms, and if there are any sort of tests. (many companies use a standardized profile test to ascertain your specific aptitude)

Your CV, and what is on it. Time to go through your CV and remember to the best of your ability some of the details that you will be asked about. Most information will come back to you when being questioned about it, and most people have the easiest of times talking about themselves, but go over it a few times just to get ready.

Possible interview Questions

Tell me about yourself. Recent graduate, strategic thinker, dynamic

Where do you work now? In what capacity? unemployed

Do you have targets? How often do you achieve them? The client will ask for proof, can you provide some sort?

Why do you want to change your working conditions?

What unique qualities or abilities would you bring to this job?

What are your major strengths and weaknesses?

How long do you plan to stay at our company? Where do you see yourself in five years?

Tell me about a time that you failed at something, and what you did afterwards.

Describe a time when you worked on a team project. What was your relative position on the team? Were you satisfied with your contribution? How could it have been better?

Why did you choose your school and course of study?

Think back to a situation in which you had to resolve a conflict. Tell me how you did it.

Tell me about a project that you had either at work or school. Describe in detail how you managed it and what was the outcome.

What do you do in your spare time?

What salary are you expecting?

What other types of jobs or companies are you considering?

Have you ever been accused of any drug and alcohol problems?

Have you any questions for us?

Interview yourself, go through the questions above, and beside for the job specific question- what type of molecular division machine have you previously used, these are very typical questions. So even if they are worded a bit different when you hear them be ready. Now go through your answers, long pauses filled with uuuuhm, or similar type noises are no good. Have answers for the questions. Have a friend or agent go through this with you and get some constructive feedback.

Remember a few points along the way in this exercise

Never badmouth your current employer or anybody else-ever. The very simple rational is the type of person who will badmouth somebody will do it again. You will not get on anyone's hire list by badmouthing somebody else. You will get on it by being positive about yourself.

Rehearse your smile- body language is 90% of the communication, and every person believes a smile to be a positive form of non-verbal communication.

The best outfit is by far 'your attitude' – a smile is most probably your best accessory. Be sure to greet everyone from the receptionist to the tea lady to the actual interviewer with a warm and humble smile. The best interview are those that start and end with a positive vibe, keep resentful conversations about ex employers or present employers non-existent. Nothing ruins an interview quicker than a negative moaning 'victim' attitude. Consider that if you were the interviewer, would you want to hire you. People are attracted to high-energy positive individuals, people who will be a return on their investment, who will be a pleasure to have around, who will be an inspiration to their team.

So try and smile as much as possible.

Rehearse without hand gestures they are distracting and unprofessional. So in this exercise practice talking like the professional you are.

Have your clothes ironed and ready; make sure there are no spots on your tie, or stains on your skirt. And yes, it is time to take out the nose and lip and tongue and eyebrow piercings, cover up your tattoos, and SHINE YOUR SHOES. You will be going to this

interview in as formal attire as you have, even if the dress code is non-existent in the office no person has ever been penalized for over dressing- you will on the other hand be immediately judged for underdressing. Last on the aspect of appearance is clean your car- inside and out. Many tentative employers out of a sign of respect will walk you to your car. As this is one of the last things they will remember about you that day have your car in as best shape as possible.

Finally, remember it is not cute to be late, there may be one or two people who have scheduled their day to see you, so get there early and buy yourself a cup of coffee. It will automatic marks against you if you are late, so it is never worth it to be. So know where you are going, and who you are going to see when you get there. The last thing to remember when you walk into that interview is most people will forget what you say, but they will not forget the type of attitude you display- so have your best attitude out.



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Conclusion

Never try never to discuss salaries in the first interview unless brought up by the employer. Retain this question for the 2nd interview or the agent who could give you an idea as well. Its my personal experience that it is to your advantage to negotiate through your agent. A good agent should always be able to get you a better package than you could negotiate for yourself. Where you could possibly be afraid to ask for certain benefits for fear of coming across as greedy, the agent could do this with ease, as there is no personal involvement.

After the interview be sure to thank the interviewer and the panel for their time, at which stage you now have every opportunity to indicate that you are extremely interested in the position and look forward to hearing from them as you would ne honored to work for their company. Humble and professional is always more preferable to arrogant and nonchalant.

No interview is ever a waste of time, every connection in the business world is an opportunity to network, even if you are not interested in working for that specific company at this time, there may a time in the future, so use this as a learning experience, that will have either have immediate rewards or ones to make a more lucrative future.

All that aside, now we wait for that offer.