

CV makeovers

Showcase your career with a Dynamic Power-CV!

Job Search Tips

This e-Book guides you through the job search process



Use online social media for career networking.

- How recruitment agencies operate.
- Where jobs are advertised
- Useful links to job portals.
- How to access 'hidden' jobs through networking.
- Valuable advice from HR Professionals.

For Graduates

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FOREWORD

Antoinette Tigar – Author

I have written more than 2000 CV's for a variety of clients at all levels, working in every type of profession here in South Africa and overseas. Many of these clients were graduates, who contacted me to give feedback on their progress. I realised that very few people actually understand how the recruitment and interview processes work, and find the job search experience highly stressful and frustrating. I decided to develop an eBook, which is divided into three sections, available as PDF downloads. The information in these guidelines is the result of intensive research with employers and recruiters. I also worked closely with two HR professionals, who have contributed with the latest information:

- ▶ **Sandy Smith** Sandy was the **Senior Manager: HR and Payroll** for a large financial services company in Durban until 2009. She is now working on a special career planning and placement project, which includes a work readiness programme, in collaboration with schools and universities. Her input is from the perspective of an in-house recruiter / employer.

- ▶ **Jenni Higgs** Jenni is a professional recruiter with over 20 years of experience in the field. She has worked for several large agencies in South Africa, and is the owner of **Accredited Candidates**, a generalist agency in Durban. She assists with Job Linkage Training and also provides Work Readiness Training to students as well as more senior job applicants wishing to re-enter the job market. Her advice to candidates is from the viewpoint of an independent recruiter working with a variety of corporate clients.

Visit the CV Makeovers website at www.cvmakeovers.co.za for more information. You are also invited to connect personally at www.facebook.com and www.linkedin.com.

1. IDENTIFY SUITABLE POSITIONS

You have a dynamic CV - what now? Where are the jobs? There is an enormous range of potential employers out there. After you've decided where you'd like to work (public or private sector; large corporate or small firm?), focus your job search in that sector. Many job seekers don't treat this process as seriously as it deserves. If you are at home, you should be spending eight hours a day doing research, contacting your network, sending off applications and going for interviews.

It is important to apply for the right jobs. Responding to each advertisement that vaguely resembles your capabilities, is not only a waste of your time, it is also emotionally draining. Rather identify those positions that suit you, in the following areas:

- Do you meet at least 70% of the criteria listed? Companies will advertise for their perfect candidate, but rarely will anyone meet 100% of their requirements. If you meet the most important criteria, go ahead and apply.
- Does the company suit your needs? If you live in Johannesburg and have no intention of relocating, don't apply for a job in Bloemfontein! Similarly, if you cannot travel or work long hours because of family commitments, don't apply if the job requires that.

Some advertisements will ask you to telephone for an application form. Don't get uptight because you are asked to fill in yet another form. When they are comparing candidates, recruiters need to have exactly the same information for each. Usually these forms give you the opportunity to write briefly about your motivation for the job and the relevant experience you have. This is similar to what you would say in a cover letter. Ensure that those points relate directly to the job being advertised.

2. THE APPLICATION PROCESS

In South Africa, there are usually many more applicants than jobs. For this reason, most agencies only accept CV's when sent in response to a particular advertisement they have placed. ***This is how they work:***

1. The recruiter places an advertisement, wanting to find a number of candidates suitable for short listing.
2. There is usually an avalanche of applications / CV's, sometimes several thousand.
3. In this first round, they want to "screen out" most applications so they skim them quickly to check whether or not they fit the brief – usually only spending 30 seconds on each!
4. Those that pass the first round, are read again to check details. Those that fit the job specifications most closely, are shortlisted – usually about 10 applicants.

CV and COVER LETTER

- For most positions, unless they specify otherwise, sending a concise CV with a cover letter is appropriate. Don't include letters, academic transcripts or copies of certificates. They will contact you for further details if they're interested.
- Ensure your CV reaches the correct person by phoning the agency/company to check the contact name (if not specified in advertisement).
- Keep your CV short and very clear, with abilities and skills right on the first page.
- Customise your cover letter, emphasizing your skills that match those specified in the job advertisement.

E-MAILED APPLICATIONS (preferred by recruiters)

- 1) Address your e-mail personally to the correct person.
- 2) Don't attach a separate cover letter as well as your CV - it's an extra document that has to be opened and read and many recruiters don't have the time. Type your "cover letter" into the e-mail - you can do a cut & paste to save time. Keep it short and emphasise your experience/skills related to those specified in the job advertisement.
- 3) Attach your CV, which should be in MS Word format.

FAXED OR POSTED APPLICATIONS

Send a formal cover letter as well as your CV, with the letterhead matching that of your CV in terms of style / font.

FOLLOW UP

Phone the recruiter to check if they have received your CV. Smile when you speak – the person on the other side will respond positively to a friendly voice.

“Hello, this is John Smith. I wonder if you can assist me? I responded to the Sales Consultant position yesterday. I realize you must be under a lot of pressure, but would you check whether you received my application?”

- Have your certificates and references ready to fax / e-mail through to the recruiter.
- A few days after the closing date, you can also phone to ask the following "Has the short list been finalised yet?"

TOP TIP: Keep a record of your applications

‘This will help you to keep track, so that when you get a call from a recruiter, you know what it’s about and don’t seem lost and unsure.’

Jenni Higgs, Accredited Candidates

RECORD OF APPLICATIONS

Create a table with columns containing the following information:

Position Advertised	Company / Recruiter	Name of Contact	Telephone / E-mail	Date CV submitted	Date followed up	Outcome
<i>Bookkeeper</i>	<i>XYZ company</i>	<i>Jill Smith</i>	<i>(031) 0001000 jillsmith@xyz.co.za</i>	<i>22/03/2011</i>	<i>25/03/2011</i>	<i>Interview 29/03/2011</i>
<i>Admin Manager</i>	<i>ABC company</i>	<i>Kevin Ward</i>	<i>(031) 0033002 kevinw@abc.co.za</i>	<i>24/03/2011</i>	<i>I phoned 28/03/2011</i>	<i>Not shortlisted</i>

3. THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

Organisations recruit new staff members to get the services and expertise they **need** to achieve departmental and company objectives. There are several ways that they recruit:

1. Outsourcing to a **recruitment agency** (who will advertise in public media) or a **Headhunter** (who personally approaches individual candidates);
2. Advertising the position themselves, externally or **in-house**;
3. Contacting the **Professional Associations** related to their field, and
4. Word of mouth / Temporary Placements (**not formally advertised**).

3.1 RECRUITMENT AGENCIES

Companies may contact several recruitment agencies to fill a position. Agencies work on commission - if their candidate is appointed, they are paid with a percentage of the person's annual salary package. The commission scale ranges from 15% to 35% of the CTC (Cost to Company) annual package. The agency that sends the shortlisted CV's to the client first, usually fills the position - that is why they are under pressure to source, screen and present suitable candidates as quickly as possible.

There are hundreds of agencies around the country, which range from small one-person operations to national organisations. There is no legal accreditation for recruitment agencies in South Africa, but the professional ones are members of APSO (Association of Personnel Services Organisation). This registration is a safeguard for you (the candidate), so check if the one you are dealing with, is a registered member.

NOTE: It is not a good idea to send your CV to lots of different agencies in the hope that they will find a job for you. They generally do not work this way. The agency will advertise a specific position, which they are under pressure to fill as soon as possible. It is up to you to find the advertised posts and apply for each one individually.

TYPES OF AGENCIES

Generalist

These agencies recruit across the board from a wide variety of client companies in many different industries, from junior to senior positions. For example:

Kelly	www.kelly.co.za
Adcorp	www.adcorptalent.co.za
Drake	www.drakeintl.com

NOTE:
Most agencies
advertise in Job
Portals such as PNet

Specialists

These agencies deal with a specific industry. For example:

I.T.:	Career Web: www.careerweb.co.za
Medical:	Medsearch: www.medsearch.co.za
Hospitality (hotels):	Hotel staff: www.hotel-staff.co.za

There are
some unusual
agencies!

www.soccermom.co.za fills the gap between **Au Pair** and **Transport Shuttle Services**. The transport provided is on a one-on-one basis and is tailored around each child's needs and schedules. If you are a responsible student with a Driver's License, who is looking for a job that matches your timetable and needs, then you can be a Soccer Mom.

WHERE DO THEY ADVERTISE?

Newspapers

Check the Sunday Times for national and international jobs, and regional newspapers for province-specific positions (although they often include national and international positions too). Many newspapers also advertise online, such as:

Sunday Times www.careerjunction.co.za.

Mail & Guardian www.mg.co.za/mg/work/

Independent Newspapers www.iol.co.za/html/frame_careers.php

Job Portals and Websites

Job advertisements on websites are posted by recruitment agencies or companies, in which you send your CV in response to a specific job vacancy. Most South African 'job sites' include a CV Database (Resumé Bank) which can be searched by corporate recruiters and headhunters. These have blank CV / resumé templates for you to fill in. If you can, rather cut and paste sections from your existing CV – it is faster and prevents errors from creeping in.

NOTE: Web administrators remove existing CV's from the databases regularly (usually 3 to 6 months) to keep the information current and prevent overload, so check the Web storage policies and make a note to re-send your application.

Try these South African Job Portals and websites

South African online student career and lifestyle guide www.gradx.net

Career Junction www.careerjunction.co.za

Careers24: www.careers24.co.za

Job Navigator: www.job.co.za

Personnel Net: www.pnet.co.za

The Job Index: www.thejobindex.co.za

TOP TIP:

Most sites offer an "ALERT" service where you are e-mailed jobs that suit you – you just need to sign up for this service, specifying keywords, job titles, salary range, etc. Sign up for the e-mailed newsletters too – they are free, and often contain useful information.

3.2 IN-HOUSE ADVERTISING

Many companies advertise in-house before they go to the bother and expense of external advertising. This is usually because of company policy to offer existing employees the opportunity to apply first, and also because it saves the company time and money.

NOTE: Research is essential

Target the companies you are interested in working for, and access their company websites on a regular basis. Many have a 'career' section where they post vacancies. Network by using your personal contacts; phone them up and ask if they know anyone who works in the company you have targeted.

3.3 PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Many professions have corresponding official bodies, such as:

IMM Institute of Marketing Management (Graduate School of Marketing) www.imm.co.za

ICSA Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators www.icsa.co.za

SAICA South African Institute of Chartered Accountants www.saica.co.za

PRISA Public Relations Institute of South Africa www.prisa.co.za

IPM Institute of People Management www.ipm.co.za

Society for Professional Engineers www.professionalengineers.co.za

Some of them now offer a recruitment facility as an additional service to members, and in fact several employers ask them for lists of qualified applicants, instead of advertising. In order to join such an organisation, you must have the official diploma or degree, which is recognised by that body. Ensure your membership is kept up to date, send them your CV and let them know that you're in the job market. Visit their website on a regular basis to check for updates.

3.4 NOT FORMALLY ADVERTISED

There are thousands of 'hidden' jobs out there, which are not advertised through the normal channels. These may be temporary or permanent positions.

TEMPORARY PLACEMENTS

Temporary placements (also known as Temp Contracts or Project Staffing) are gaining popularity in South Africa as it allows companies more flexibility to hire staff only when needed, such as:

- When replacement staff are needed to fill in for permanent staff on leave.
- When extra staff are needed for special projects such as marketing campaigns, planned maintenance shutdowns or IT systems conversions.

This is an excellent way for job seekers to 'get a foot in the door' as many temporary positions can lead to a permanent placement (called contract-to-perm) – a method used by employers to evaluate a candidate's performance before making a hiring commitment. It also gives the job seeker a good overview of the market and different companies, enabling them to earn a salary whilst waiting for the right opportunity.

Almost every type of job can be on a temporary basis, and many temporary agencies specialize in a particular profession or field of business, such as accounting, secretarial, health care or technical.

How it works

- The temporary placement agency employs staff members directly and then contracts them out to their clients.
- The employee signs a Temporary Contract of Employment with the employment agency. When the assignment is completed, this contract is automatically terminated and the Employment agency and Temporary employee then enter into a new Temporary Contract of Employment for each new assignment.

- The employee stays on the agency's database and will be re-allocated to new positions when they become available.
- The client pays the employment agency and the agency pays the temporary employee. The employment agency charges a far higher rate (salary) to the client than it pays the temporary employee, which is how it makes its money.

Try these:

www.brick7.co.za/q-temporary-jobs

www.manpower.co.za

www.careerjet.co.za/temporary-jobs

REFERRALS / WORD OF MOUTH

Many jobs are not advertised at all, usually because they access the right candidate by word of mouth or referrals. This is especially true of smaller companies and contractors. So how do you find out about these positions? This is where networking is useful. Many people are nervous about this but remember that this is not only accepted, it is **expected** in a business environment.

NETWORKING is such a huge topic that it could be a book on its own! We've described the basics in the chapter that follows.