

# JOB HUNTING MADE EASY

*Recruiters share their top tips on how to find a job. By Wilma den Hartigh*

Finding a job can be a frustrating process for graduates and experienced professionals who are ready for change. However, with the right attitude and strategic thinking, you can get the job you want.

## BE CV SAVVY

A CV should be well-written and updated, so that it is always ready to send to a potential employer. Mosima Selekisho from job placement company Talent Africa, says a CV reflects a job seeker's personal brand. "It is the only thing that talks on your behalf and, if it is badly written, it might close doors for you," Mosima says.

CV wording should never be copied from online sources. Because interviewers generally assume that phrases are copied, you must be prepared to give examples. "If you say that you're a loyal person, have a scenario where you made a difficult decision based on your commitment to a person or cause," she adds.

According to Thumeka Mblane from Network Recruitment, if you have a perfect CV but still struggle to find

a job, you must be creative. "Don't sit idle. Do volunteer work, take an unpaid internship or become a tutor. This adds depth to your CV and may open doors for you," Thumeka explains.

## UPGRADE YOUR SKILLS

Nawal du Toit, manager at online educator Educate24, points out that job seekers must develop their employability by obtaining any new skill that will give them a competitive edge. "It shows initiative and that you are a go-getter wanting to improve yourself continuously," Nawal says.

## FLAUNT YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS

Make your application stand out. A good way to do this is through a portfolio, says Selene Shah from technology company Immedia. "Reflect on all the projects you've been part of, and describe your contribution. If you can add pictures of your projects or create a personal website, all the better," Selene says.

If you want to be a writer, start a blog. If you want to be a graphic designer, you can design your own

website or business cards. "You could even include projects, such as your little nephew's birthday party invitations. If you want to be a programmer, develop applications based on online tutorials," she explains.

If you work in administration or finance, a visual portfolio might not be a suitable platform. Selene says you can create a document of some of the more exciting projects you have worked on. Describe your individual contribution in bullet points.

## DON'T SELL YOURSELF SHORT

When you are looking for a job, it is tempting to take the first opportunity that comes your way. Lerato Phadi from online career portal Job Mail advises against this. "Settling for a job that is not worth your qualifications and experience is not smart, because you are actually taking a step back in your career," she says. If you are a sales manager, do not apply for a sales assistant position. The salary may be the same, or even higher than your current position, but the job may not be challenging enough.





### **DON'T SET THE BAR TOO HIGH**

According to Lerato, it is important to be realistic when looking for a job. "Try to match the job you want with your skills and experience," she explains. If you are a human resources administrator, and apply for a manager position, you may have administrative skills, but not the managerial skills to manage an entire department.

### **USE YOUR NETWORKS**

Networking your way into your next job might be easier than you think. According to Lerato, word of mouth is one of the most effective marketing techniques available.

"Talk to the people that you interact with every day, and spread the word that you are looking for a job in a particular industry," she advises. Follow companies that you aspire to work for on Twitter or LinkedIn, and be on the lookout for job opportunities there.

### **COUNTER OFFERS CAN BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE**

Thumeka says that it is not uncommon for companies to make generous

counter offers to prevent employees from leaving. "Should you find yourself in this position, you're better off following through with your original decision and leaving the company. Accepting and later rejecting counter offers could sour relations between you and your former employer," she explains. This could affect your credibility and chance to return to the company, should things not work out with your new employer.

### **APPROACH RECRUITMENT AGENCIES**

Choose a recruitment agency that focuses on your area of expertise, as it understands the dynamics of particular industries, and what employers are looking for. Recruiters sometimes also know about jobs that are not even advertised yet.

However, be aware of fraudulent recruitment agencies that ask candidates to pay to be listed on their databases.

"At no point should a candidate pay a recruitment agency. All recruitment services provided

by legitimate agencies to job hunters are free," she warns.

Some agencies offer additional services, such as assistance with compiling CVs or interview training, and will charge for these accordingly.

### **BE SURE ABOUT WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING FOR**

Selene advises that you be clear about your career aspirations as a job seeker. For example, do you want a higher salary or career advancement? "Figure out if you could make faster progress in one place, even if you start on a lower salary, instead of starting on a great salary in another environment where you'll grow more slowly and receive fewer performance rewards," she explains.

### **NEVER GIVE UP**

Looking for a job can be a difficult and emotional experience, but giving up should never be an option. "Be strong, maintain your individuality, find positive ways to stand out from the crowd and believe in your future," Selene advises. **B**