

The logo for Career Junction, featuring the text "Career Junction.co.za" in a blue sans-serif font, with a blue asterisk-like symbol to the right of "Junction". Below the main text is the tagline "Better jobs. More often." in a smaller, lighter blue font.

**Career  
Junction.co.za**  
Better jobs. More often.

The title "Graduate Kit" is written in a large, white, sans-serif font. The word "Graduate" is in a regular weight, while "Kit" is in a bolder weight. The text is positioned over a dark, high-contrast photograph of a person's face wearing glasses, which is partially obscured by the blue background on the left.

# GraduateKit

Your definitive guide to navigating the world of work.



The SA job market will soon be flooded with matriculants and graduates. Although there's a skills shortage, unemployment remains stubbornly high with entrants not having the right skills to fill those vacancies. If you are entering the job market in 2020, now is the best time to prepare yourself by using our definitive guide to navigating the world of work.

# WE D I S I N I

## Your Career Goals Start Here

Opportunities and advice for graduates.

### GETTING STARTED

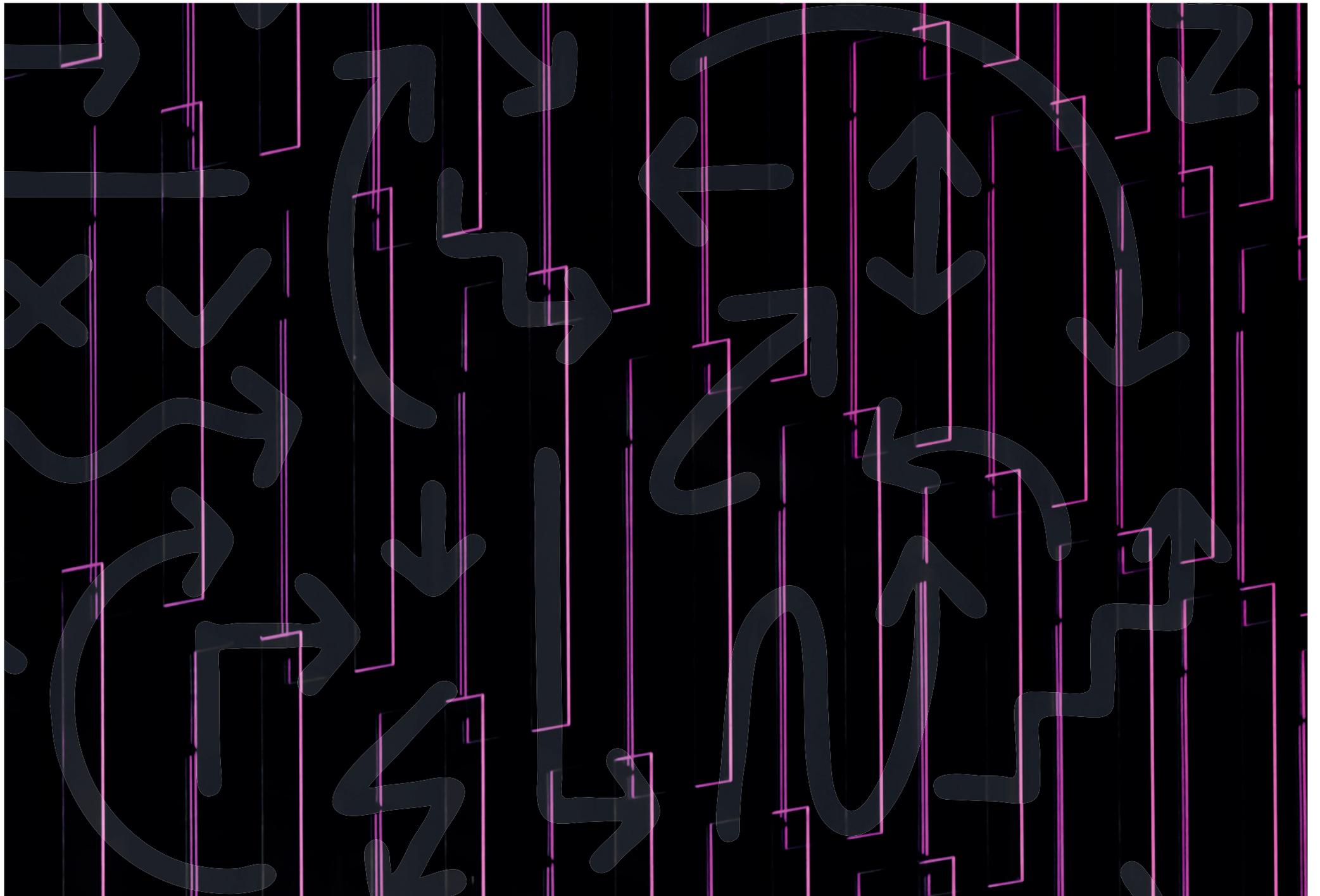
You have graduated or you're about to. What's Next?

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### WORKING LIFE

You have a new job... now what?

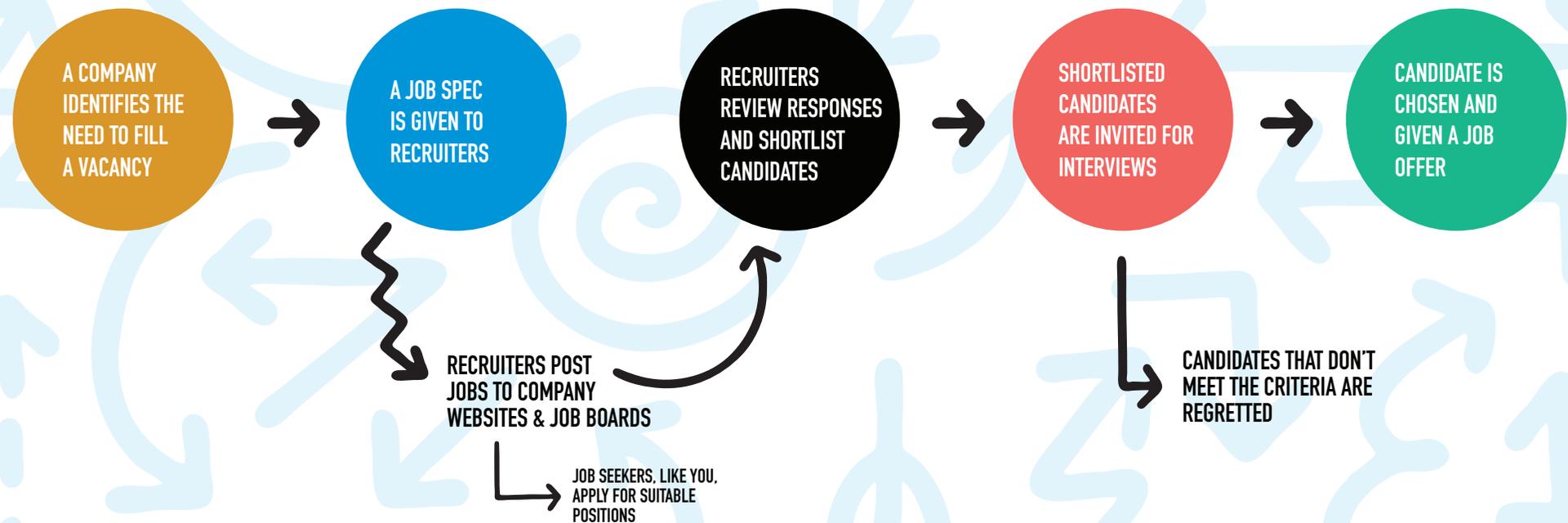
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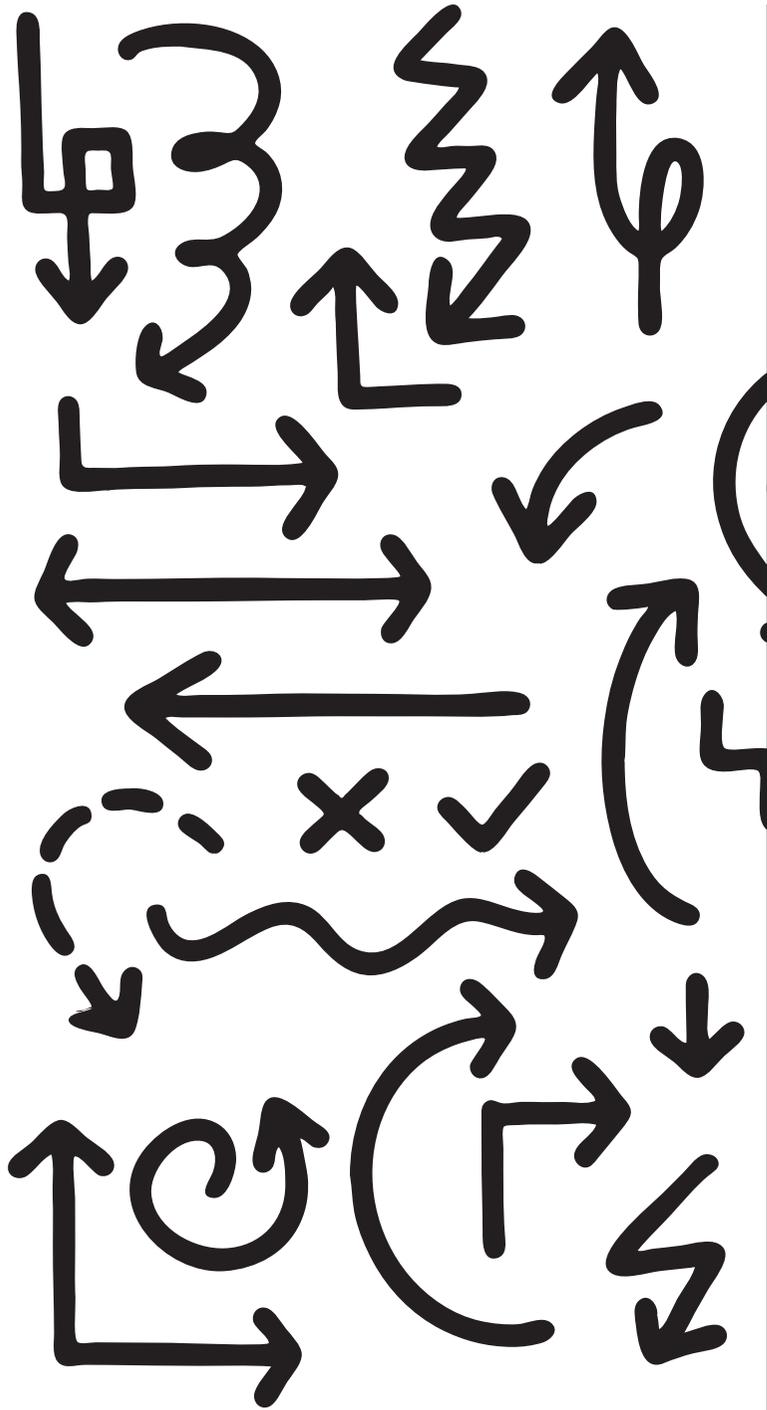


# HOW RECRUITMENT WORKS

**THE RECRUITMENT INDUSTRY IS QUITE COMPLEX BUT NAVIGATING IT AS A JOB SEEKER AND RECENT GRADUATE IS EASIER THAN YOU MIGHT THINK.**

There are lots of ways to find a job but for now we're focussing on the online aspect of going through a job board when finding a job. It's one of the easiest and most cost-effective way to apply for positions from the comfort of your phone or pc.





NEXT UP

YOUR CV



# CV GUIDE FOR SCHOOL LEAVERS

**WITH STIFF COMPETITION IN THE JOB MARKET, FITTING YOUR CV TO A SPECIFIC INDUSTRY CAN BE HELPFUL. CUSTOMISING IT EVEN FURTHER FOR A SPECIFIC ROLE CAN BE THE PUSH YOU NEED FOR YOUR RESUME TO LAND ON TOP OF THE PILE.**

Drafting an impeccable CV is your first step to gaining employment. There's enough information out there about what makes the ideal CV, however, one thing to consider is the fact that it can change depending on where you are career-wise.

If you are in search of a job for the very first time, you will be excused for thinking that building your recent school leaver CV might be a struggle while trying hard to secure a position in a company.

Follow the tips below when drafting your CV and it will be done in no time.

## TEMPLATE CV FOR SCHOOL LEAVERS

As a school leaver, [you can make use of the CV template on CareerJunction](#) and put in your details where applicable - it's very easy to use.

Below is an illustration of a student CV template for the first job.

Full Name  
Permanent Address  
Mobile Number  
Language  
Email

Unless required in an application, avoid including your date of birth (DOB), number of children, marital status, gender or other personal information that is unrelated to your capacity to carry out the job.



## PERSONAL STATEMENT

Give a short review of your soft and hard skills, as well as experience from either voluntary work or from temporary jobs you've had. Showcase your tasks and responsibilities, for instance, the fact that you were a member of the school debate club. Highlight skills gained such as communication skills from public speaking, teamwork, time management and so forth. Likewise, state the sort of jobs you are searching for and why you think you'd be great at it.

Example: Passionate, dedicated chair lady of the schools' debate team. Gained numerous numerical and literacy skills. Part-time work and voluntary roles have gained me needed experience. Looking forward to growing and building these skills and experiences full-time.

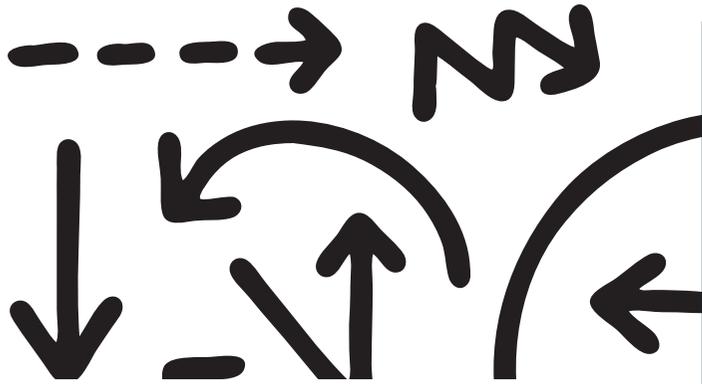
## EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

Highlight your educational background from the highest and most recent rank. Once you gain more work experience this section will come right after the work experience section.

Example: St Joseph's High School, Pietermaritzburg, Sept 2006 – June 2013. English, Xhosa, Maths, Biology, Science, Accounting and PC Studies.

## WORK EXPERIENCE

Begin with your most recent role first. Include part-time and voluntary work that you have done in the past, roles, skills, and experiences that you acquired. This will show that you are a hard-working individual and how the experience built up your skills such as



customer service and time management.

Example: Volunteer, Hope Centre for Kids Children's Home,  
June 2015 – present

Duties and Responsibilities:

Welcoming and serving visitors on arrival

Receiving, storing and keeping donated items

Assisted with sorting and distribution of donated items like  
shoes and clothes

#### **ADDITIONAL SKILLS**

Include achievements that are applicable to the job you are  
applying for and present it in a positive light.

Example: Admin: Control of switchboard, record keeping, diary  
management. Customer Service: Hospitality and Accommoda-  
tion IT skills: Capable use of Microsoft Office (Word, Power-  
Point, Basic HTML)

#### **INTERESTS AND HOBBIES**

In this section include interests that are relevant to the job you  
are looking for.

Example: Captain of neighbourhood hockey team (exhibits  
authority). Volunteering at the local animal show as guest usher  
(shows duty and service)

#### **REFERENCES**

This section should be put in if requested by the company.  
Avoid putting names and contacts of referees on your CV  
unless asked to do so.

NEXT UP

COVER LETTERS



# RECENT GRADUATE COVER LETTER

**AS A NEW GRADUATE, YOU HAVE A DECENT SHOT OF LANDING YOURSELF A JOB IF YOU ARE AGGRESSIVE IN YOUR SEARCH. A WELL-ROUNDED COVER LETTER SHOULD BE PART OF YOUR STRATEGY.**



## UNDERSTAND THE EMPLOYER AND COMPANY

Yes, sending the same cover letter to many companies saves you time in the short-term but decreases your chances of getting a job - customising your cover letter for each application will help you stand out from other applicants.

Do some background research of the company to learn about their business needs and company culture and highlight how you will meet those needs once hired. This approach will show that you care about the organisation and that you will fit well within the company.

Highlight your passions, knowledge, experience and personal interests to the hiring manager in relation to a specific role.

## SELL YOURSELF

Avoid the temptation of “begging” for the job or opportunity. Rather, explain why you’ll be an asset to the company if hired. Point out your attributes to the organisation, why your application should be considered and why you think you’re a perfect match.

## ADDRESS THE LETTER TO SOMEONE

Try and address the hiring manager by name instead of the usual ‘Dear Sir/Madam’ salutation.

Make an individual connection with the hiring manager in your letter (usually their name will be in their email address). If a name is not given on the job advert or email address, try calling the company and asking for their first name from the reception-

ist or their assistant. Google, Facebook, and LinkedIn are also great sources for finding a person’s name and surname so you can personalise your cover letter.

## SHOW PASSION AND ZEAL

Communicate that you’re really interested in the position and the type of work the company is doing. Illustrate how you have grown professionally in order for you to fulfil the role being advertised. For example, if you want an opportunity at a five-star hotel, highlight how you have worked part-time at a small boutique hotel over weekends while you were studying.

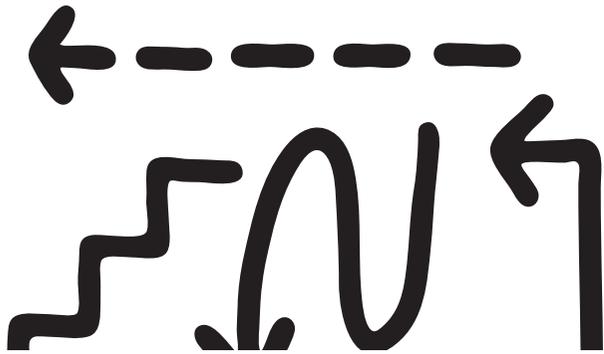
Your passion and inspiration will be a huge selling point. In your cover letter, elaborate on one or two real-life experiences, interests and passions indicating how your ideas are aligned with the company’s business goals and objectives.

## FOCUS ON ACTIVITIES, TASKS, AND RESPONSIBILITIES

While drafting your recent college graduate cover letter, you need to emphasise the abilities and skills that make you an ideal candidate. Avoid focusing on your grades. Rather, shed light on activities and duties (E.g. internships or leadership roles in the school). This will not only show that you are a competent student but will also illustrate that you have real-world working experience.

## EDIT, FORMAT AND PROOFREAD YOUR COVER LETTER

Read through your letter, fixing any mistakes or grammatical errors. Use simple language that is easy to understand. Your letter should be brief and to the point. Find a mentor or friend to



look at your cover letter (and CV) before submitting it.

A recent graduate cover letter should follow a formal business letter format. Start the letter with your name, address, phone number and email address on the upper right of the page together with the date that you sent the letter.

#### **UNCERTAIN OF YOUR PROFESSIONAL GOALS?**

Do some career research before drafting a recent graduate cover letter. Make it easy for employers to see your skills and abilities, upfront. It is your job to convince them that you are a good fit for the job. Remember to customise your cover letters for each job application.

**NEED TO CREATE A COVER LETTER FAST? WE'RE HERE TO HELP. BUILD ONE ONLINE!**

[CLICK HERE TO BUILD A COVER LETTER](#)

POWERED BY [RESUMEGENIUS.COM](#)

NEXT UP

JOB ADS



# DECODING A JOB ADVERT

**A LOT OF JOB SEEKERS APPLY FOR JOBS THAT THEY'RE NOT QUALIFIED FOR, BUT THERE ARE SMARTER WAYS TO INCREASE YOUR CHANCES OF GETTING A JOB.**

## LET'S HELP YOU DECODE A JOB ADVERTISEMENT

When looking for a job, one of the factors that affect our choice of applying is the description of the job. Some job adverts can be long and detailed. Others can be quite brief.

Regardless of their length, it is of utmost importance that you go through the job advert carefully before submitting your application.

Before looking at job adverts, it is important that you're fully aware of your level of experience and skills to best match yourself with the position being advertised.

If you think you are an 80% (and above) match, then the position is worth applying for. Be cautious though and read between the lines as some job adverts can appear to be broad or not specific enough.

Sending one job application after the other, even if you're not really qualified, is a waste of your precious time and that of the recruiter that will be reviewing your CV.

Rather adapt your strategy to a smarter method. Here are some tips to help you decode a job advertisement.

## EVALUATE THE JOB TITLE

The job title is most likely what attracted you to the advert in the first place. For instance, if you're looking for the position in relation to customer service, you will look out for titles such as call centre representative, customer care agent etc.



In addition, some job titles will highlight the different levels of a job, for example, chief executive, manager, supervisor, assistant and so on.

Note that these terms may differ from industry to industry; for example, an executive officer in one organisation may be referred to as a senior manager in another. Remember this when searching for jobs using a job board or search engine.

## STUDY THE QUALIFICATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This segment of the job description depicts the sort of professional requirements an applicant ought to have.

These may include one's educational background, soft and hard skills and previous experience.

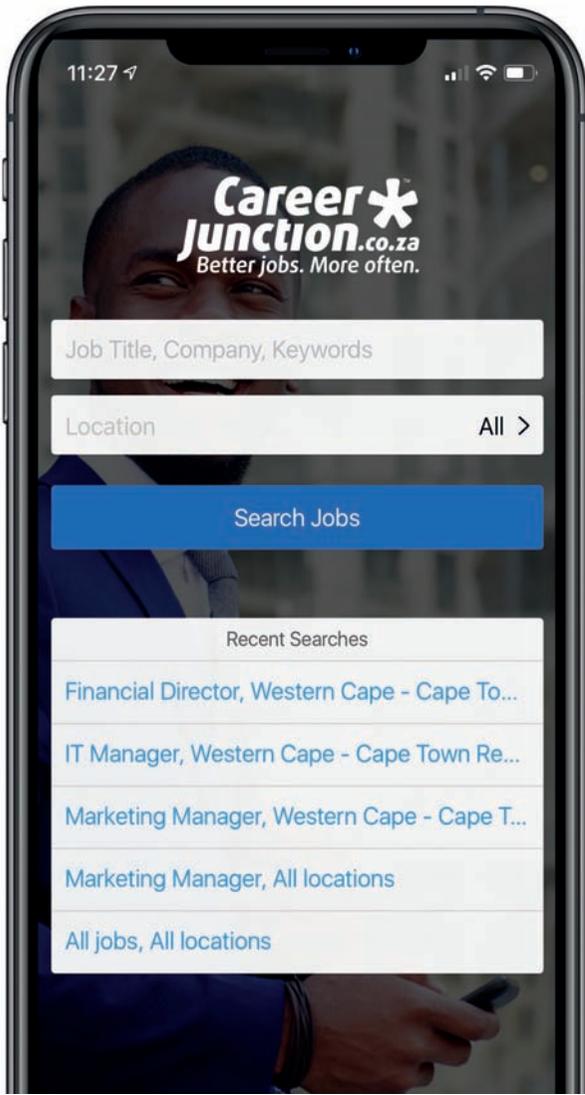
Now and again, you'll see requirements jotted under other sub-headings like: 'essential skills', which are must-have abilities. Sub-headings like 'employability skills' are additional skills which (if you have them) are an added advantage.

Question what the job advert is asking for. Keep an eye out for sneaky details. Employers will sometimes request a response to an unconventional question as a way to see which applicants took the time to read and follow instructions.

**SEARCH JOBS**



DOWNLOAD OUR FREE JOB APP



NEXT UP

INTERVIEWS



# HOW TO ACE ANY JOB INTERVIEW

**INTERVIEWS ARE TOUGH AND EXPECTATIONS FROM THE PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYER ARE HIGH. THERE'S NO WAY AROUND IT AND PREPARATION IS KEY. HERE ARE A FEW TIPS FOR STAYING ONE STEP AHEAD.**

## ELABORATE

Consider the purpose of a job interview. The valuable first impression made by your CV has secured you time with the prospective employer, so the job interview exists to delve deeper into your skills, experience and goals.

It's also important for an employer to determine if there is a cultural fit between you and the company.

This is your chance to show examples of your work and talk about your strengths and achievements.

## DO YOUR RESEARCH

Researching an employer is the best way to prepare for any job interview. Finding out as much as you can about the company is sure to impress them. Your starting point is their company website.

This will reveal what type of work they do, give insight into the company culture and you may even be able to learn about their employees.

Read through any press releases which will give insight into the company history and growth.

Make a note of what the company is currently working on. It's also valuable to investigate any company social media accounts - these include Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

Your best source of information is another employee. Try to

connect with someone who already works at the company.

This knowledge will help you to answer possible questions which may come up during the interview.

## PREPARE

Know your CV back to front and find ways to marry your experience and knowledge with the questions that are asked.

Be ready to reveal your strengths and weaknesses by providing considered responses to common questions such as 'Why did you apply for this particular position' and 'Why do you think you will be successful in this job?'

An interviewer may ask you to give an example of a time when you handled a major crisis, or of a time when you showed initiative.

## STAY CALM

Listen carefully and answer each question with confidence. There is a fine line between sounding confident and overconfident, so be friendly, courteous, concise and above all, honest.

Prepare a few questions for the interviewer by using your new-found knowledge of the company. Feel free to ask relevant and insightful questions regarding the company and position you have applied for.

This will help keep the interview relaxed and conversational and show you have a passion for the job.

## PRESENTATION

Your responses are one way of assessing your motivation and attitude. How you present yourself at the interview is of the utmost importance.

Dress smart. Arrive 10 minutes early. Know the name of the person who is conducting the interview. Remember to switch your mobile phone off before the interview.

These are just a few points which are indicative of how you conduct yourself in everyday life. The interviewer will take note of these and take them into account.

## FOLLOW UP

Once the interview is done, remember to send a thank you email the same day. If you're asked for other information, such as references or samples of your work, be prompt in supplying them.

Your note will improve the impression you left after the interview, making you stand out from other candidates.

In the end, you have much more to gain than to lose by writing a thank you note.

If you follow these steps, you will certainly make a lasting impression on the interviewer.

Even if you don't get the job, you may just be considered for the next available position.

# OVERCOME ANXIETY BEFORE AN INTERVIEW

**YOU HAVE BEEN CALLED FOR A JOB INTERVIEW. YOU HAVE ALWAYS DREAMT OF WORKING FOR THIS COMPANY. THIS COULD BE IT, BUT YOU ARE A NERVOUS WRECK.**

Anxiety is common for many people, especially in the face of something potentially life-changing, like a new job. A panel of strangers examining your reputation, appearance and your expression can intimidate even the most confident person.

Unfortunately, your anxiety may actually interfere with your performance on the day of the interview. It can contribute to serious blunders such as blurting, sweating, fidgeting and blanking out. This can lead to the interviewer being distracted resulting in him forgetting your qualifications and strengths.

How can you manage the anxiety?

## BE PREPARED

You should know how to deal with interview anxiety. The best way to deal with job interview anxiety is through preparation. Some level of anxiety in nerve-racking situations is healthy. A little anticipation and nervousness may help you perform better in the interview.

Preparing for your interview will give you a lot of confidence which will help you use your nervous energy in a positive way. It will also eliminate nervous habits and enable positive body language. How do you prepare yourself?

## EMPHASISE THE POSITIVE

It always pays off to be positive. The job search can be discouraging, and good candidates sometimes end up being rejected. These experiences can leave you bitter, but no employer wants to employ someone with that kind of attitude.



Focus on projecting confidence. It is not possible to control the employer's final decision, but you can present your strengths in a manner that will put you ahead of the competition.

Remember that they liked your CV and you made a positive impression during the screening process. This shows that things are already working in your favour and is a reason to be confident in your abilities.

## RELAX AND BOOST YOUR CONFIDENCE

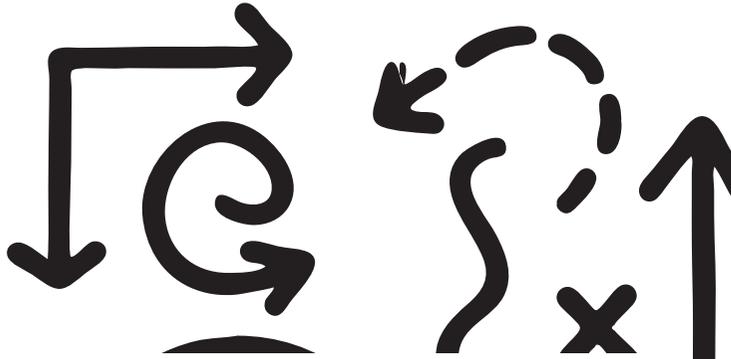
Anti-anxiety techniques such as breathing exercises and mental imagery, work for some people. Some techniques that may help you relax are:

**Power Posing:** a 2-minute posing trick can immediately boost your confidence, improving how you present yourself in the interview. Simply pose like superman or wonder woman for two minutes before leaving your house. You can also stand tall, hands on your hips and legs, shoulder-width apart.

To understand the science behind the success of this technique, learn more it online!

A recently concluded study has proved that the power pose leads to a significant increase of testosterone levels (dominance hormone) and reduction of cortisol (stress hormone). It alters your hormones, boosting your confidence.

A follow-up study found that power posers were overwhelmingly seen by the interviewers as being more eligible candidates.



To beat the competition, you must prepare and practice with a positive attitude.

Mentally, remind yourself that you are ready. Listen to upbeat music, meditation tapes or motivational speakers. You can even playback your own pep talk.

Always put these away before you get to the interview. A candidate with headphones on (anywhere on the premises, even the lobby) looks distracted. Unfamiliar environments can also add to the uncertainty. Career professionals recommend a quick under-cover visit to the interview location beforehand.

This reduces the risk of getting stuck in traffic or getting lost and rushing into the interview late, confused and sweaty. Allow yourself some time to freshen up, re-hydrate and familiarise.

#### **DO NOT SUCCUMB TO DESPAIR**

Even if you desperately need this job, keep in mind that it is just a single opportunity out of many. Your future is not reliant on getting that one role. There will be many other opportunities.

Looking at it from the interviewer's perspective, excitement is acceptable, overexcitement, however, is a little bit awkward.

Whichever way the interview goes, you will come out of it with experience that makes you a better job candidate and a more professional employee in future.

NEXT UP

EXPERIENCE



# WRITING A CV WITH NO WORK EXPERIENCE

**APPLYING FOR A JOB CAN BE A DAUNTING TASK AND WHEN YOU HAVE NO WORK EXPERIENCE IT CAN FEEL EVEN WORSE.**

If you find yourself in this position, don't worry, you are not the only one. There are some useful ways to write a CV to highlight your strengths and qualifications which will make you the ideal candidate for the position you are applying for.

## WRITING A CV WITH NO EXPERIENCE

The best way to start writing your CV is with a short summary, which consists of 3-4 sentences that describe who you are and what you can bring to the company if employed, highlighting your skills and qualifications.

The sentences should be short and concise and not simply a repetition of your cover letter. Have a look at the job description and try to find the skills and qualifications they are looking for and include these in your summary.

Then you should list the qualifications that you have. As you have no or very limited work experience, it is important that you lead with what you do have. Always start with your most recent qualifications and then in descending chronological order.

## THE EXPERIENCE SECTION ON YOUR CV

Following this comes the part that you may find the most challenging; the experience section.

When writing your CV the lack of direct work experience may make this section seem redundant; however, you can still try to draw on different life experiences with the view to highlighting any direct and transferable skills that you have. Group your experience under sub-headings; Research skills, Time

management skills, Teamwork, Project management etc. Explain how you have gained these skills, using situations from internships, voluntary work and extracurricular activities.

## ADDITIONAL SKILLS AS LIFE EXPERIENCES ON YOUR CV

Use the interests and additional skills section to link the skills and knowledge you have that are important for this role.

For example, if you may have been a captain of a sports team (leadership skills), if you have travelled (cultural awareness), maybe you were an editor or worked on a school paper/magazine (able to meet deadlines in pressured environments) etc. Any positive life experience is a benefit to your CV.

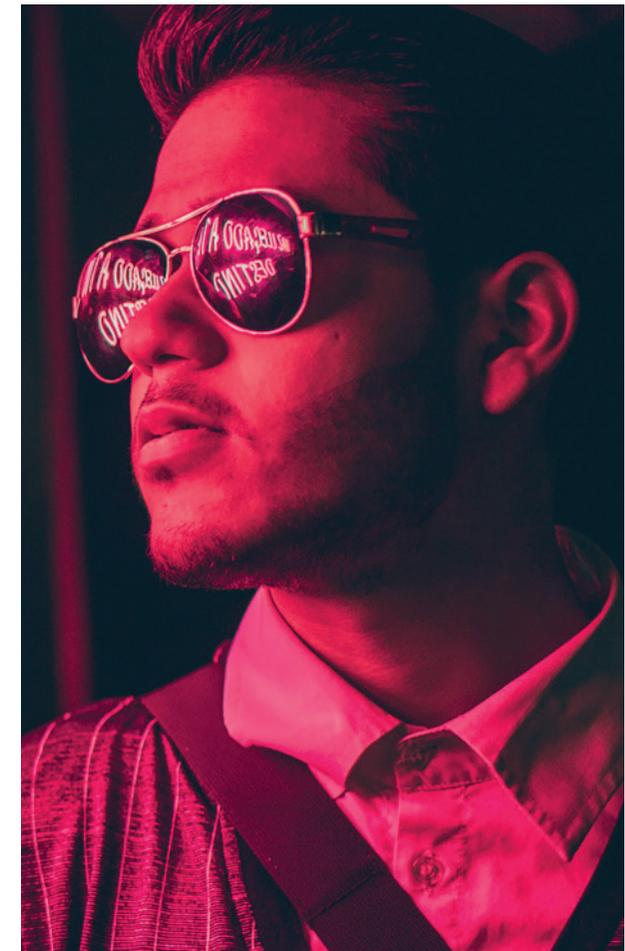
The last thing you need to think about is the layout or "flashiness".

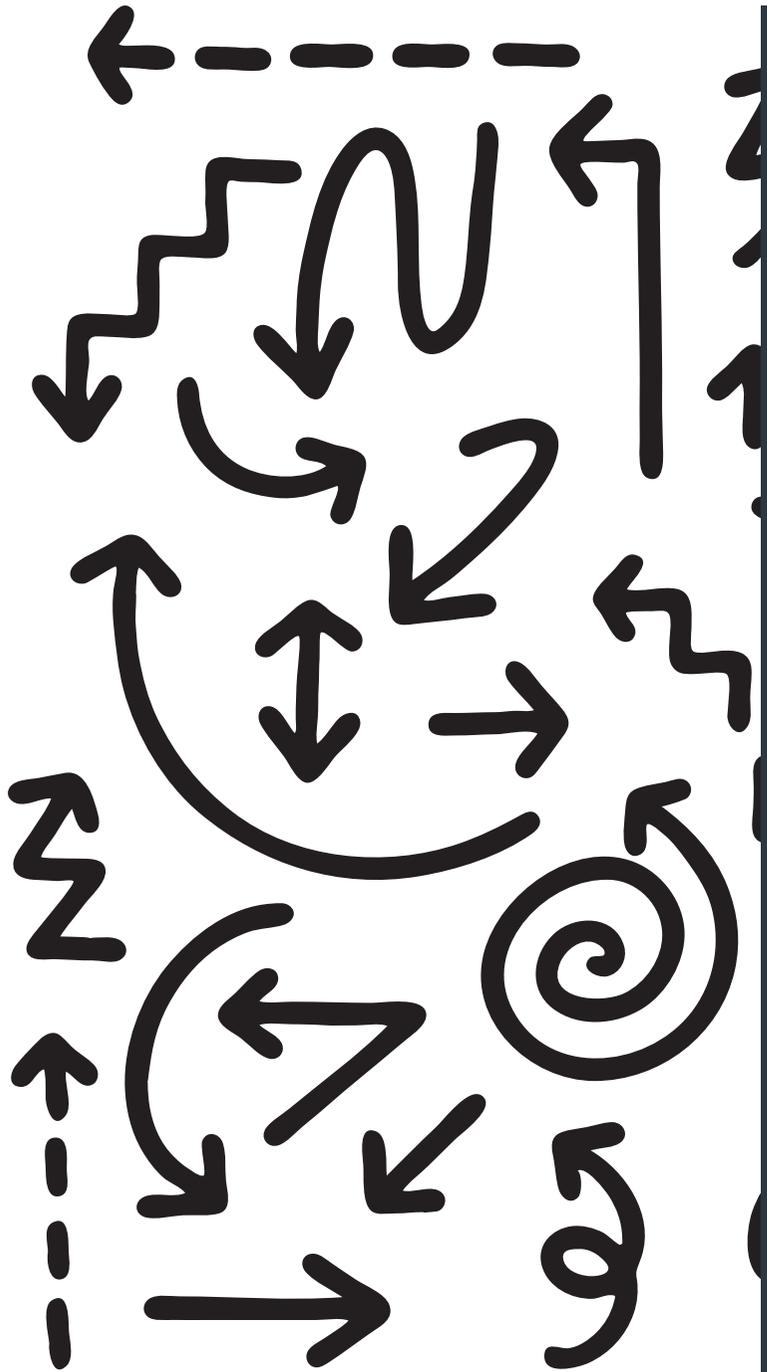
We live in a world with limited employment; you need to make sure that your CV stands out from the crowd.

This doesn't mean that you have to put it on luminous paper and cover it in glitter; it must remain professional and be in-line with the type of job you are applying for.

You can play around with the format, colours etc., and it is important to make sure that everything is easy to read, not too crowded and the information is clear.

This article is brought to you by [digiSchool](#).





NEXT UP

SOCIAL MEDIA



# CLEAN UP YOUR ACT

## THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE THAT RECRUITERS ARE COMBING THROUGH YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS AS WE SPEAK.

Social media plays a significant role in recruitment nowadays - and it can be terrifying to think that potential employers might be looking at the less-than-wholesome photos of you in the midst of some massive house party.

It is a well-known fact that almost all recruiters will look at candidates' social media profiles before or after an interview, but certainly before making an offer.

This makes it important to keep your social profile as clean and responsible as possible.

First off, make sure to use good language and keep it clean. Having every other word be a swear word or using appalling grammar would put anyone off, and it gives your potential employer a bad impression of what your emails might look like if they hire you.

Show instead that you innately know how to present yourself well in writing. Your entire catalogue of photos should not be of you looking bleary-eyed and holding a drink as many recruiters think negatively of this.

Show who you are as a person, what your hobbies are, etc. If your photos show you as a happy, well-rounded person, recruiters will probably see you that way and feel more inclined to want you to come onboard with them.

If you have ever posted anything negative about a former or even your current job, this will be a point of concern for

recruiters. It shows that you are not necessarily loyal to the company that has hired you and could make it seem like you will complain a lot.

If you have any negative thoughts about old or current employers, keep them to yourself or conversations with friends and family to ensure that they won't hinder you from getting new work.

Other content that could hold you back is strong political opinions. It might not seem right but firm opinions either way on the political spectrum can make recruiters think twice about hiring you. You also should not publicise any crimes you may have committed in the past as this can turn recruiters off instantly before you have had a chance to present yourself objectively.

In the end, social media is meant to be fun, accessible, and an efficient way of keeping in contact with friends and family as well as connecting with new people. However, it is important to remember that no matter what privacy settings you put on your account, what you publish on there is for all intents and purposes, public.

Make sure that you don't lose your dream job because you forgot to untag yourself from innocent but unflattering photos and that you show your best side to the public. Remember the golden rule of social media: if you write it, it will be seen.

Article by [milkround.com](http://milkround.com).

## TOP 5 TIPS

### CHOOSE A GOOD PHOTO

Avoid using a photo that is offensive or puts you in a compromising position.

### THINK BEFORE YOU SHARE

Everything you like, tweet, share and post will be seen by respective recruiters.

### POSTING 9-5

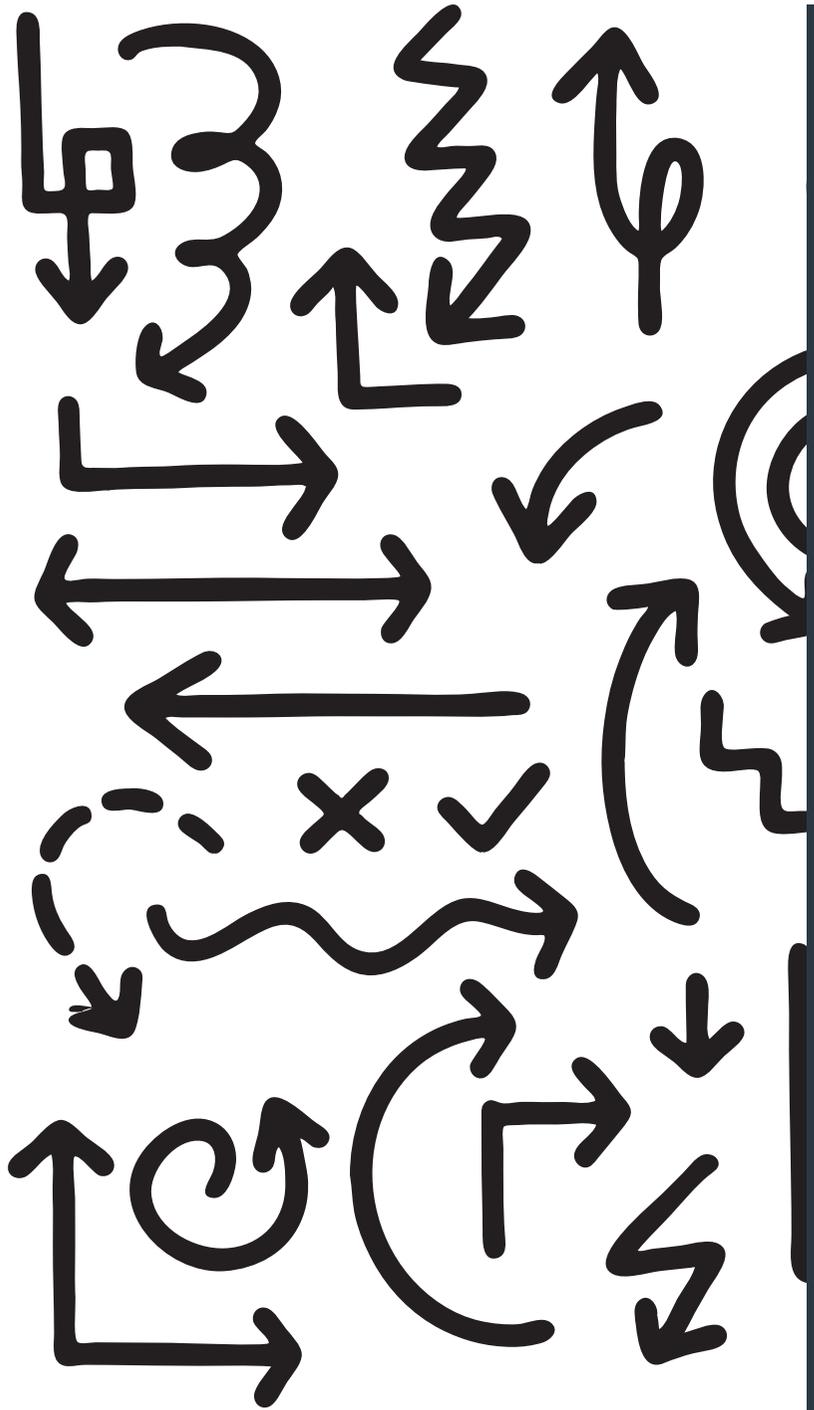
Being very active on social media during working hours shows recruiters you don't have boundaries.

### BE OFFENSIVE

Be it personal views, photos or memes, do not share them on social platforms for everyone to see.

### SAY NO TO BEING NEGATIVE

Work is not always fun and we like to share what we feel but don't voice on social media that you hate your job or your boss/colleagues.



NEXT UP

BAD RESULTS



# OVERCOMING BAD EXAM RESULTS

## BAD EXAM RESULTS DON'T HAVE TO MEAN THE END TO A PROMISING CAREER – TOP TIPS TO HELP

Be it your matric or any competitive exam, students are already suffering from the exam fever, and all of a sudden, the situation becomes worse if they fail in one or more subjects. Sometimes, even if you have prepared well for an exam, the results unexpectedly turn out to be bad.

This is really depressing for any student and if not dealt sincerely, this may even affect their performance in future. Students need not stress over their bad result and keep in mind that there is always a way to reverse the same. Students should analyse the situation and prepare themselves effectively so that it does not happen again.

Here, we discuss top tips to deal with exam stress and mention suggestions that can help students who failed in exams to get over the trauma and be more determined to pass their exams on their next attempt. Remember, even if you have failed a subject or an exam, one or two or three times, don't stop trying and keep attempting to get good marks.

Read below the 6 essential tips to deal with the bad result or score in an exam and prepare well in future:

### 1. ANALYSE THE REASONS BEHIND FAILURE

Instead of getting depressed and grieving the failure, the most important thing is to look at your failure with an analytical view so as to determine the reasons behind it. Why did you fail? What might have produced a better result? What could you learn from this so that it doesn't happen in future? Try to find answers to all these questions so that you can improve your

result for the next time.

### 2. CHANGE YOUR APPROACH

This is the next important thing to do after experiencing a bad result day. Tell yourself that next time, you'll be prepared effectively and would not let this happen again. For this, study harder and learn as much as you can, leaving no stone unturned. Work on the mistakes you made in the previous exam other than the subject knowledge. The mistakes could be your poor time management, lack of prioritisation, wrong selection of concepts/questions, attempting to write a paper when to nervous, etc. So, identify your mistakes and change your approach towards your exams.

### 3. BE POSITIVE FOR YOUR NEXT ATTEMPT

This is what can help you rise above the depressing situation. Do not just keep thinking about the failure. Bring out the positivity inside you that can help you move ahead with a wide view to success. Just think that it was only a bad day that will not be repeated in future. But always remember, "Being positive is not ignoring the negative. Being positive means overcoming the negative."

### 4. STOP FRETTING ABOUT YOUR FAILURE

You failed an exam, sure you are depressed and want to talk it out with someone. Do it, discuss your issues and thoughts about exam failure - it will help you get a better understanding of the situation so that you can begin your preparation again. But, don't stick to negative thoughts related to your exam as holding on to such thoughts is not going to help you in your next

attempt for the exam. Instead, it will increase your anxiety. So, if you are still worried about the bad exam result, stop right now! Rather take action to achieve success in your next exams.

### 5. FOLLOW A DIFFERENT STRATEGY FOR THE NEXT EXAM

Don't be stressed and instead, take the syllabus for the subject/exam you failed and start your preparation topic by topic.

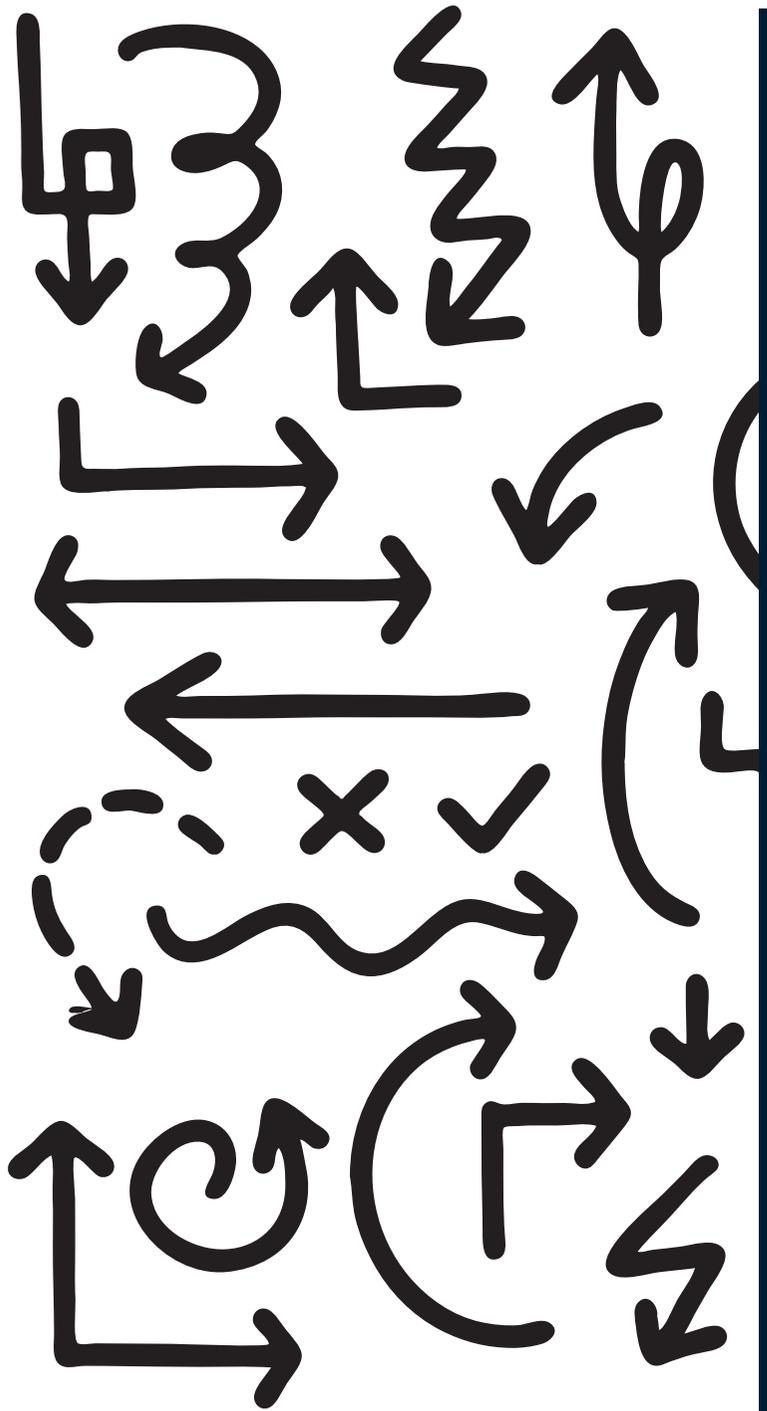
Also, if you feel that there are some topics which you already know, revise them as well. Do not leave any topic uncovered mentioned in the syllabus. Cover your entire syllabus, gain clarity on every topic, practice thoroughly and arrive at your next exam ready to achieve good results.

### 6. GIVE YOUR BEST

Sometimes, even when you have prepared well enough for an exam, you may do badly because you were stressed about the exam result.

Fear of poor results makes us feel stressed and anxious. Instead of being depressed or worried about the exam, be prepared and confident to appear for the exam and wait for the result to reflect your hard work and dedication. Remember, failure is not the end of life.

Failing an exam doesn't make you any less intelligent or less capable of achieving success in life than those who got better results. The failure you had in exams was just another step towards success. Have the courage and strength to overcome this failure and move on.



NEXT UP

SURVIVE WORK



# SURVIVING YOUR FIRST DAY/WEEK AT WORK

## SHARING AN OFFICE SPACE IS NOT EASY FOR EVERYONE.

Depending on your personality type, there are certain things that can really ruin the experience. This is different for everyone, which is why it is important to be courteous towards your work colleagues and stay aware of their possible pain points.

To avoid stepping on your colleagues' toes, here are a few unwritten rules to follow (in no particular order of importance – they're all important!):

### **RULE #1: BE TIME CONSCIOUS**

Time is priceless. A full-time job leaves very little time for family or self which is why no one likes to work late. Be mindful of this and always try to make the most of your colleagues' time.

Keep to meeting times, especially if you are the one who scheduled the meeting. Don't let other colleagues wait while you hog their time in the boardroom or meeting room.

### **RULE #2: NO STICKY FINGERS**

No matter how well you know your colleagues, don't take their food from the fridge. Always ask first, even if it's just a drop of sauce or a sliver of cheese that you want to use. Also, remember to remove your old food from the fridge. Furry green food is a no-no in the office fridge and can be considered a health hazard.

### **RULE #3: DIAL IT BACK**

Your ringtone might be catchy, but after hearing it play 100's of times, the novelty will wear off very quickly. Don't change your favourite tune, however, switch your phone to vibrate, or at the

very least, turn down the volume, especially if you step away from your desk or attend a meeting.

### **RULE #4: KEEP IT CLASSY**

As tempting as it might be to purchase noisy office figurines or line your wall with funny memes, try to keep your office space professional. Some colleagues may find it amusing but others may take offence to it or get really annoyed by it.

Consider your cubicle a small little piece of office real estate; keep it tidy and pleasant to look at. A photo of your beloved and a pot plant will do just fine. Save your funny memes for a private moment.

### **RULE #5: BE A NICE HUMAN**

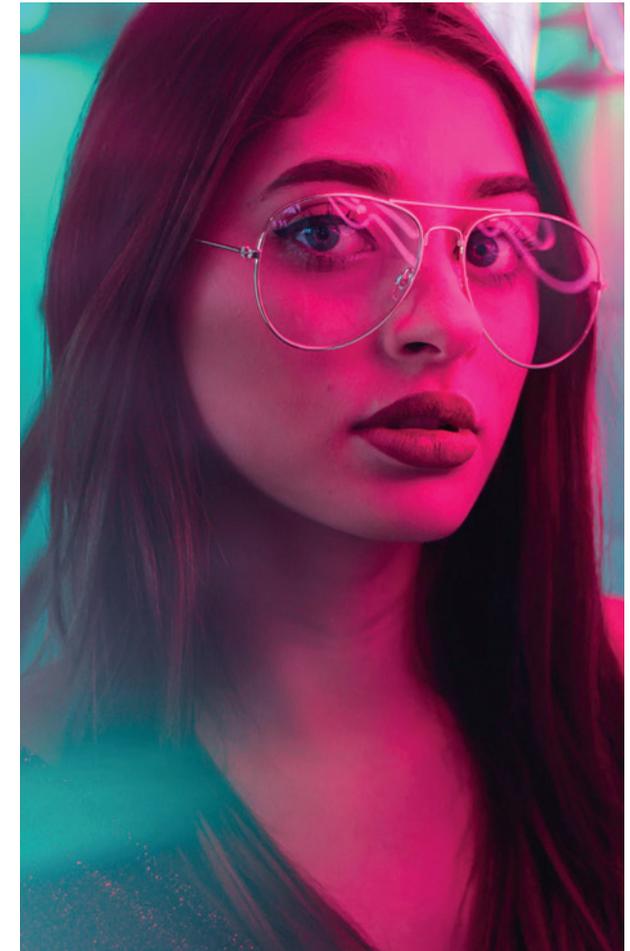
If you are really sick, stay home. There's no point in going to work and sharing the stomach bug you've been bravely battling since last night. Rest up and get well, your colleagues will thank you for it later.

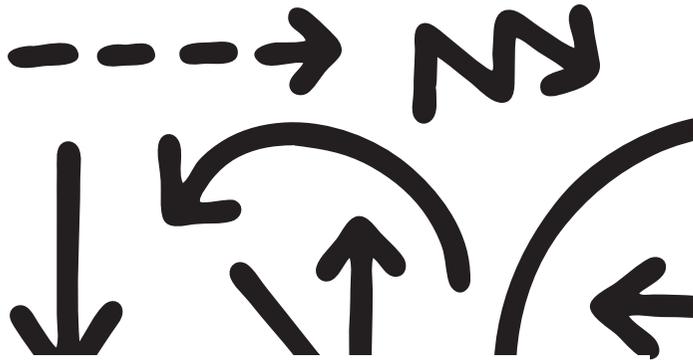
### **RULE #6: TURN DOWN THE VOLUME**

Are you in a sales job or call centre position and spend a lot of time on the phone? Yes, it might be part of your job but remember the office is a communal space, so keep the volume of your conversations at an acceptable level. It can be difficult for some colleagues to concentrate, especially if their roles are of a more technical nature.

### **RULE #7: KEEP YOUR PRIVATE LIFE PRIVATE**

It's not uncommon for colleagues to become close friends,





especially given the amount of time spent together. However, some conversations are better to have outside of the workplace.

You will get personal phone calls during office hours from time to time. Try not to have these conversations at your desk, rather take a short walk to a more private area. If, for some reason you are unable to step away from your desk, keep it short.

**RULE #8: EAT AWAY FROM YOUR DESK**

Unless you have no choice, try not to eat your lunch at your desk. The strong aroma of your food will either be met with hangry eyes or pinched noses. Be mindful of the fact that your colleagues may be sensitive to the mixed smells of food or might actually also be hungry but not have the time to eat at that moment.

**THE AVERAGE SOUTH AFRICAN WORKS A TOTAL OF 2,2 YEARS OVERTIME DURING THEIR LIFETIME DUE TO UNUSED LUNCH BREAKS.**

Although ignoring these basic courtesies at work won't mean breaking any real labour laws or a call to Human Resources, it will most certainly leave a bad taste in the mouths of those you work with and reflect badly on you as a member of their team.

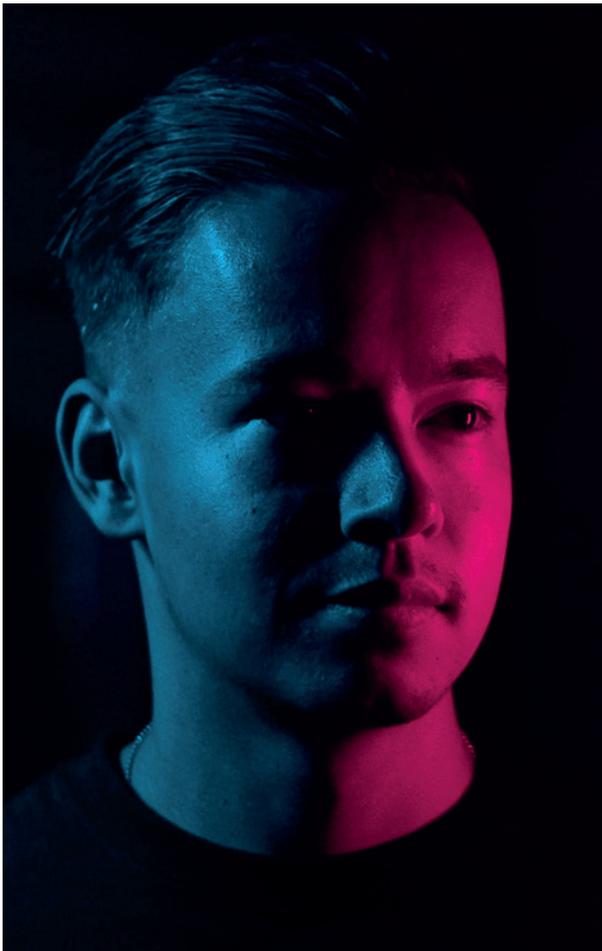
NEXT UP

SKILLS



# STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL CAREER CHANGE

**THE WORLD AROUND YOU IS ALWAYS EVOLVING – AND SO SHOULD YOU.**



Can you afford to change your job/career direction? You wouldn't have admitted it to your classmates at the time but the truth is that you enjoyed school. Okay, so the additional language you studied for six years has only enabled you to order food in a restaurant, but most other subjects came easily to you. You went on to study business, continued to do well in your studies and you were hired by a prestigious multinational straight out of university.

Ten years down the line and you have a management position, a reasonable mortgage on a nice house and a happy marriage. You host great dinner parties. Your parents are proud of you. And yet...something doesn't sit right. You never really mentioned it at the time, but you chose to study business because you didn't know what else to do. You spend every Sunday thinking about how you don't want to go in on Monday.

You secretly harbour thoughts of entering a completely different field, industry or even starting your own business but when you think of all the upheaval it would cause you wonder if it is really worth even bringing up the topic at home? Well, time goes quickly, in the end we regret the things we don't do more than those we do. So, whether or not you will act on these feelings in the future it is definitely worth talking about to the right person in your life.

## **AN AGE OF UNPRECEDENTED TRANSPARENCY**

The age of the internet brings with it access to career and life information on an unprecedented scale. So, if you are thinking about a career change do your research. Find out what the

expected pay scale is likely to be in your new career. Find out the day to day reality of working in the industry. Gain access to people who are contemplating or have gone through a similar career change.

## **BEWARE OF 'ALL OR NOTHING' THINKING**

People tend to have an attraction to all-or-nothing thinking. It is true that there is a certain glamour attached to the notion of immediately surrendering to a new passion or dream and pursuing it completely and this type of thinking does have its place.

However, when it comes to you and your family's financial future discretion, at least initially, is the better form of valour.

So, instead of immediately forming an 'either/or' paradigm when thinking of your possible career change, imagine how you might combine them, initially, to test the water without completely relinquishing the lifeboat of your established career. Perhaps it is feasible to begin your new career as a side venture, train in new skills part-time or volunteer.

Remember whatever small steps you can take towards your new destination will never be a waste of time as at the very least they will help you make a more informed decision about a life changing moment.

How much is your career change worth to you?

Sometimes the most exclusive hotel can seem like a prison and the most expensive food seems tasteless if you are not where

you should be. However, as true as that statement is, so are the old sayings 'the grass isn't always greener on the other side' and 'you don't know what you've got 'till it's gone'. A decision as large as leaving behind a career you have worked hard to achieve and starting again from scratch should be tempered with both sides of that argument. So, go deep. Discuss your feelings with your partner, your family, a sympathetic boss if appropriate. It may be worthwhile to seek out a trained professional: a life coach or psychologist. After all, perhaps what you are seeking is not a new career at all and if that is the case it would be better to find out sooner rather than later.

### **WHAT ARE THE TRANSITION COSTS GOING TO BE?**

While the psychological costs of staying or going will be your greatest challenge, estimating the financial costs will be altogether more accessible and should not be shied away from. Do your homework. Put down in black and white what your income is going to be, err on the negative side, and budget accordingly. Don't forget to investigate how your tax will change. Will you enjoy greater tax relief making your proposed change more feasible than you thought? Or do you stand to lose benefits that will have the opposite effect? Whatever the reality of your situation is to be estimate it as accurately as you can, prepare for it and go into it with eyes wide open.

### **ADJUST YOUR SPENDING NOW**

Once you have made a budget for your future financial situation impose it, as much as is possible, immediately.

This will not only permit you to save for the future but will also act as a reality call as to what your proposed future holds. To help track, and curb your spending, try using apps which will enable you to keep a greater track on your outgoings: you might be amazed by how much you are spending in certain areas.

Making a career change can be a terrifying prospect. It forces us to face ourselves and ask what our true values are and who we are as people. However, even within a framework as pivotal as leaving behind the career path we have forged and starting out on a different path, there remain many opportunities to approach our new direction astutely, gradually and with complete awareness of what we are taking on.

NEXT UP

MENTORING



# HOW TO FIND A MENTOR

**FINDING A GREAT MENTOR CAN GIVE YOU THE BOOST YOU NEED TO NAVIGATE YOUR CAREER MORE CONFIDENTLY.**

A business mentor is an experienced professional who offers advice and direction to a person who is starting out on, or at a much more primary stage of, their career journey. The phrase has entered the business lexicon to describe the natural act of seniors giving advice, and even the “taking under their wing”, of promising junior employees with whom they share a rapport.

## WHY DO MENTORS DO IT?

The general understanding of the phrase mentor is that it is a free of charge, altruistic service offered by a successful person in their field to a promising, more junior employee. So, the question may be reasonably asked, “what’s in it for the mentor?”, and the answer is that it is human nature to want to help those in whom we see promise and, perhaps, an earlier version of ourselves.

To be asked to act as somebody’s mentor is a form of flattery which means that the mentee holds you in high regard and it is natural to respond well to such appreciation.

## FINDING A MENTOR

A lot of business writers say that you should define the type of mentor you want and then try to find someone who ticks those boxes but I have often found that the people who come into our lives as mentors are often the result of a chance piece of networking, a local business person who we met at a neighbourhood event or a more senior employee with whom we work, albeit briefly, on a project with. The common denominator is that we respect, admire and share a certain chemistry with them. Enough that makes going to them for advice or picking their



brains about certain business topics seem like a natural progression rather than a forced request. Obviously at times we will need to be more forthright about our intentions to meet again if there is a danger of losing contact but in general what we are seeking is an authentic rapport with someone in a position to guide us on our path. Therefore, keep your mind and your eyes open and remember you can have more than one mentor in your life: most very successful people do.

## FINDING A MENTOR ON THE NET

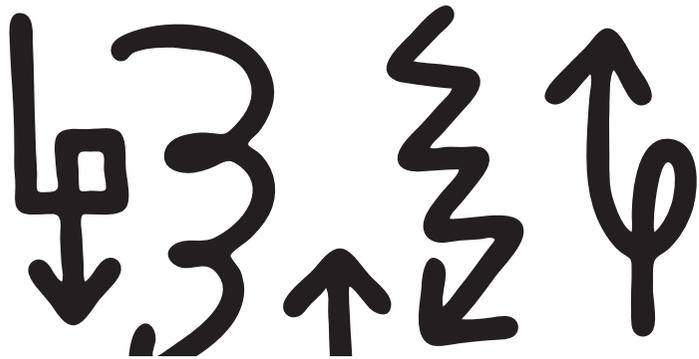
Just as the internet has changed every other aspect of doing business so too has it increased the range of people who we can reach out to as potential career mentors.

Of course, if the person in question is geographically far away it will be difficult to create the same type of close relationship inherent in the best mentor/mentee relationships, but it does provide us with the opportunity for contact with people who previously would have remained outside our remit.

Having a great LinkedIn page and a strong digital presence are fundamental to creating the right impression with a possible mentor. As is observing good social etiquette.

## HONESTY ABOVE ALL ELSE

As someone who you respect and whose opinion you value you should be ready to accept hearing uncomfortable truths about yourself from your mentor. Give them your encouragement to be honest and direct with you. If you have chosen a good mentor, it is very likely that this feedback will be accurate and that you will need to hear it.



At the same time don't fall into the trap about making the conversation about yourself all the time. This should only be a small aspect of your interaction with your mentor, however, it is important that you encourage the intimacy which permits your mentor to speak frankly about you and the impression you give.

Most people enjoy having an avid listener hang on their every word so offer that to your mentor. Ask them about themselves. Their lives. The greatest challenges they have overcome and what they are proud of. Don't limit these questions to the working world (at the same time use your common sense regarding what is appropriate and inappropriate but in general, open questions such as 'what motivates you?' or 'what is your advice on combining family and professional life? work well).

#### **ONE LAST THING**

Another question you might want to ask your mentor is 'what can I do for you?' to repay him/her for the help they give you.

A great mentor is worth his/her weight in gold so even if you don't possess the currency, and that would probably be inappropriate, always make sure to show your gratitude.



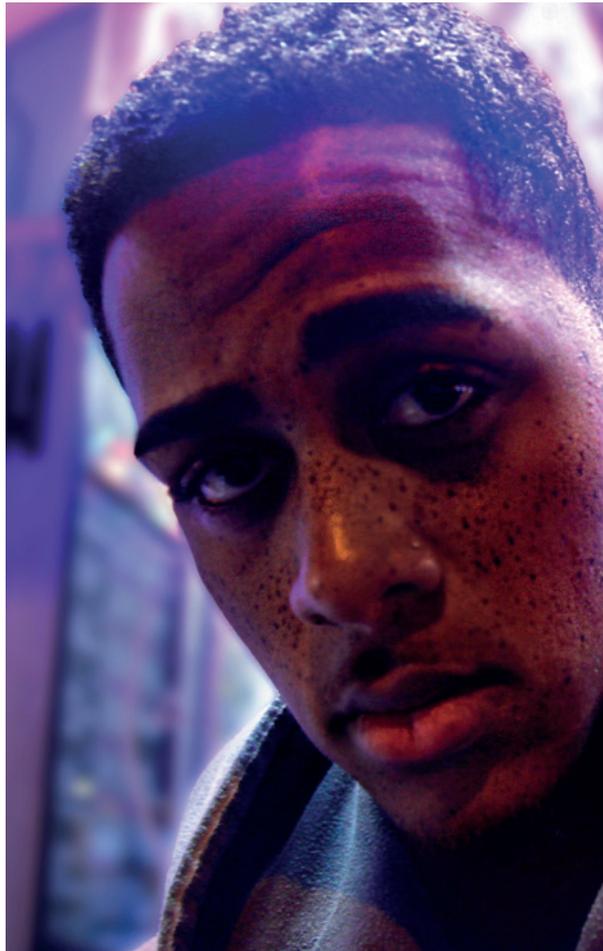
NEXT UP

RELAX



# STAY RELAXED AND MOTIVATED DURING WORK

**STRESS CAN BE A MOTIVATOR TO GET STUFF DONE BUT IF IT BECOMES A PROBLEM, IT CAN IMPACT YOUR JOB AND LIFE OUTSIDE THE OFFICE.**



## CHANGE YOUR PERCEPTION OF STRESS

Feeling stressed is a perfectly normal human reaction to situations that seem overwhelming. It is not a sign of personal weakness or anything to feel embarrassed by.

So, accept that you are feeling stressed, recognise it for what it is and then put in place a plan of action to help you overcome those feelings.

## FACING YOUR FEARS AND WRITING THEM DOWN

Once you have acknowledged the stress you are feeling it is then time to acknowledge the source of that stress. Proactivity meeting problems head on is a powerful antidote to the feelings of helplessness and being overwhelmed that are the primary causes of stress in the workplace.

Try sitting down alone in a quiet room and writing down how you are feeling and why you are feeling that way. Then write down what you have to do to resolve the situations that are causing you this stress.

The causes might be workload related or they might be caused by a difficult colleague or boss, however, seeing them written down in black and white will prevent the issue growing in your imagination into something it is not.

## CHUNKING

Chunking is a psychological technique used to make large tasks appear more achievable by breaking them down into smaller components or chunks.

Now you might think that it is just common sense and the answer would be, 'Yes, it is', but that is the thing about stress; it can often cause us to make mountains out of molehills.

Purposely applying the chunking technique can allow us to break up the large tasks that loom before us into smaller, scalable hurdles and as we overcome each hurdle and tick it off our list, we will receive a feeling of progress and control essential to combatting stress and staying motivated. Learn more about chunking on the internet.

## TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

As previously mentioned, acknowledging that you are stressed is a powerful first step towards being able to handle it.

Once you have recognised that you are feeling stressed and organised a plan of action to face the causes of your stress, the next step is to take particular care of yourself until you feel more relaxed.

It can often be the case that those of us who suffer hugely from stress tend to be 'people pleasers' who are prone to doing things they don't want to do out of fear of letting other people down.

If you find that you fall into this category, reflect on the duty you have to look after yourself first.

Stress is an insidious enemy. It can go unnoticed and then suddenly knock you sideways.



### **MENS SANA IN CORPORE SANO**

The above Latin phrase is usually translated as 'a healthy mind in a healthy body' and it remains as true today as it was then. Exercise is a powerful stress reliever and when combined with a healthy diet and quality sleep can build strong internal resilience against external stress factors. And remember, any exercise you take will release endorphins. So, whether you're a natural marathon runner or a pleasant stroller, every little bit helps.

### **GET ORGANISED**

This comes easier to some than to others but let's face it, no matter how much you tend towards the messy, artistic type, a tidy desk can still make a big difference. In periods of stress it's a great idea to prioritise organisation. Something as simple as a tidy office space and getting up twenty minutes earlier so you arrive feeling calm and centred can set the tone for the day.

### **WORK ON YOUR EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE (EQ)**

We live in an age of constant up-skilling so that we are at the forefront of our industries, however, rarely do we pay attention to improving one of the most important skills for our work, and personal lives; our emotional intelligence.

Developing an understanding of our own emotions can help us to understand and manage our own emotions and therefore make better decisions in work and elsewhere. You can find a lot of information available today about emotional intelligence on the internet.

### **CHOOSE YOUR BATTLES**

Conflict can be very stressful in itself and in moments of high stress we can all be triggered by things which wouldn't normally trouble us. So, if you find yourself on the verge of conflict, take a breath and ask yourself if it's worth it. There are moments when we have to fight a point and moments when discretion is the better form of valour. Try to recognise which is which.

Be kind to others but most of all be kind to yourself.

NEXT UP

HEALTH



# HEALTHY WORKPLACE HABITS

**WE COULD ALL BENEFIT BY MAKING OUR WORKPLACE A LITTLE HEALTHIER SO HERE ARE SOME TIPS TO MAKE IT HAPPEN.**

## YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT

Sure, we all love to visit Willy Wonka's Chocolate factory every now and again but if you find that your working diet is more sweet tooth centred than nourishment based then maybe it's time to rethink your office eating habits.

It has been widely proven that sugar-based snacks like biscuits, chocolate and soft drinks provide an inefficient sugar high followed by an even worse sugar crash.

So, if you find the wait between breakfast and lunch to be a bridge too far there are many other options open to you:

Bring your own lunch if healthy options are not available. If you get the nibbles there are always other options than biscuits. Hummus eaten with celery or carrots is a delicious healthy alternative. We also function much better when fully hydrated. So, drink plenty of water.

## FINISH WHAT YOU START

In the modern world of office multi-tasking, it may seem that embracing your inner caveman/woman and focusing on one thing at a time might be luxury you cannot afford; however, recent research suggests that many employees work most effectively when absorbed in one task exclusively.

If your job simply does not permit this, the key is to finish what you have started. Finishing an individual task and knowing that we can mentally compartmentalise it in the 'done file' gives us a dopamine high and increases our motivation and concentration

for the tasks to come.

## BE COMPUTER SMART

"To err is human, but to really foul things up requires a computer". The above quote is attributed to the American scientist Paul Ehrlich. It is true that computers occupy a strange position in our modern lives; they are our inseparable companions and our greatest sources of frustration when they don't do what we need them to do as quickly as we want them to.

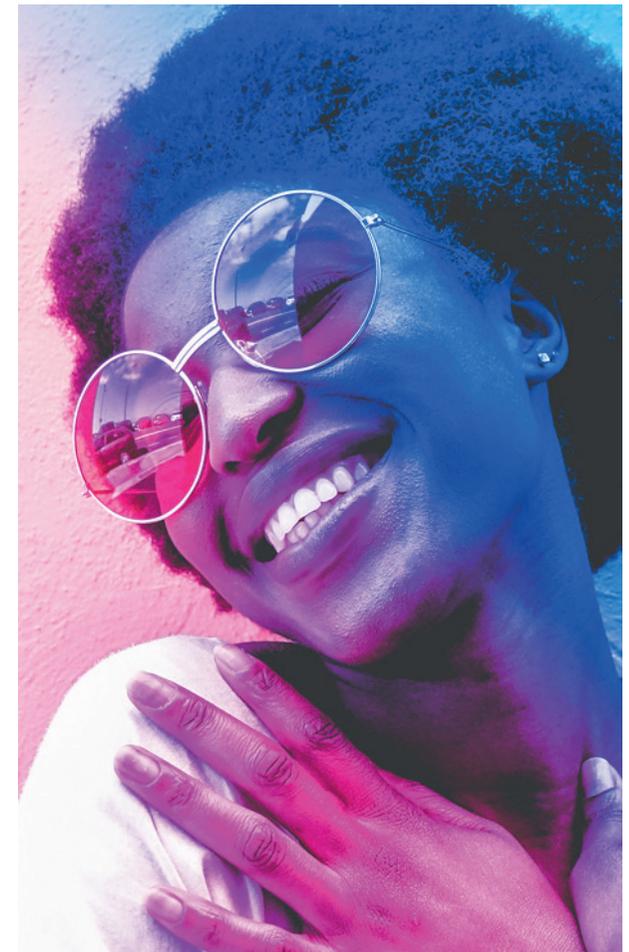
So, it is worthwhile taking stock and respecting the powerful role computers have in our lives; and the effect they can have on our eyes, our postures and our nerves. Therefore:

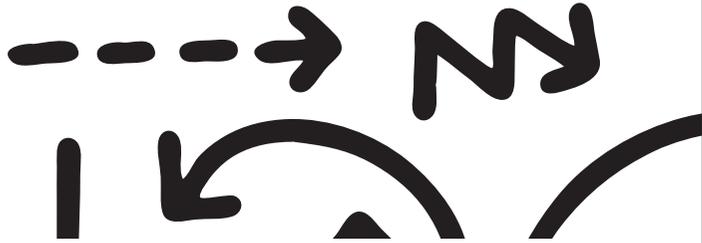
Check your seating position and the chair you are using. If you are working in a company which provides ergonomic best practice advice computer use, follow the advice, because chairs can be changed but backs cannot. Turn down the brightness on your computer and if they help use eye drops. Often you don't realise the damage that your computer screen is doing until you see an optometrist.

Get up. Stand up! Human bodies were not designed to sit at a desk all day so. After completing a task, stand up and stretch out.

## WORK IT OUT IF YOU CAN!

It depends on your office culture but with exercise's stress busting effects it is no surprise that many modern companies include gyms as part of their office amenities. If you are not





lucky enough to have a workplace that encourages midday exercise, try to improvise. Sometimes a brisk lunchtime walk can be enough to get the blood flowing and to view the tasks ahead of you in a more positive light.

### **BREATHE**

Yeah, I hear you. This is quite an obvious one because if we forget to breathe those reports due today really won't be all that important after all.

However, what we really want to emphasise here is the importance of conscious attention to our breath. In moments of high stress one of the most effective methods of calming our bodies and minds is to concentrate and to slow down and deepen our breathing.

There are many techniques available and if you wish to learn more about the practice of mediation and mindfulness [this website is a good first port of call](#).

A simple technique however is to take a few moments to yourself and listen to your breathing. Then consciously deepen your breathing and as you exhale gradually add the word relax and as you do this imagine your entire mind and body relaxing. You might just be amazed by the effect this can have and, on the other hand, what have you got to lose.

### **A LITTLE BIT OF EVERYTHING AND NOTHING IN EXCESS**

As in life in general our professional lives work best when we have a sense of balance. It's good to introduce healthy eating habits but don't be too hard on yourself if you break them. It's fun to hear a bit of office gossip but don't be the person who is always providing it. Work hard when you need to but remember to take leave. Take your work seriously and yourself less so.

NEXT UP

SAVING



# SAVING FOR RETIREMENT: NON-NEGOTIABLE

## THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO SAVE FOR RETIREMENT!

It is hard to convey to a young person just how quickly the years pass. One moment your idea of fun is a packed nightclub then, almost imperceptibly it becomes a cosy bar where, all importantly, you can get a seat, and then, suddenly, you find yourself in your pyjamas on a Saturday night watching Netflix. Sometimes I honestly feel like I popped out for some milk in my twenties and came back fifteen years later.

However, while time might go as quickly as ever, it is also true that 'older' people are, more and more, challenging the perception of what it means to be in the twilight years.

Life expectancy and people's expectations of that life are growing continuously. However, while this is just as true for South Africa as many other parts of the world, the reality is that most South Africans' financial preparation for their retirement makes for more sombre reading.

This [article from The South African newspaper](#) is representative of many grim journalistic evaluations of the situation and is bluntly titled 'Can the majority of South Africans ever afford to retire?'

The article states the oft-repeated economic statistic that you should have saved seventeen times your final annual salary in a retirement fund by the time you are sixty if you wish to maintain your standard of living.

An amount that the majority of South Africans will find it very difficult to arrive at.

The same aspirational statistic is cited and, this time, attributed to Jeanette Marais, the head of distribution and client services at investment firm Allan Gray, in a similarly fatalistically titled ['Retirement? Just forget about it'](#) article from the Mail & Guardian business section, which, despite its title, does at least offer a more achievable breakdown of retirement fund milestones:

### After working for 10 years:

That saved capital sum should equal two years' salary. After working for 20 years: You should have saved five times your annual salary.

### After working for 30 years:

You should have saved 10 times your annual salary. After working for 40 years: You should have saved 17 times your annual salary. (Holmes, Thalia. 10/10/2018).

While this breakdown will make the figures appear more achievable to some, for many they will remain aspirational.

In this case South Africans whose working lives do not permit them the luxury of a private retirement fund and who possess assets less than R 1 115 400 if single and R 2 230 800 if married are eligible for the older persons' government grant from the age of sixty years.

Further information can be obtained from the government website. If you do find yourself in a position to provide yourself with a private retirement fund however there is a strong

consensus on what the most important piece of advice is from the experts.

### START YOUNG

The benefits of starting to build your nest egg from your very first pay cheque cannot be overstated and despite this seeming like very obvious advice, it is only when you see the long-term accumulative effects of compound interest on your savings that it brings the message home.

The graph and financial example by Ron Lieber in [this article for the New York Times](#) provides us with a powerful image of the 'magic' of compound interest.

In it, two retirement funds are depicted: one investor starting at age 22 and saving \$5,000 per year at a rate of 6% per annum who will end up with a retirement fund of \$1,063,717.57 and another investor who saves the same amount at the same rate but starts ten years later at the age of 32 who will come out with \$557,173.80 on retirement at the same age.

The difference of \$500,000 is remarkable.

### TO PUT THIS IN A SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

If you were to save R 5000 at 6% per annum starting at age 25 you would have over R7 million by the time you were 60. Whereas if you started at 35 you would only arrive at R 3.46 million by 60 years of age.

To arrive at a similar amount, you would have to save R 10 000

# SAVING FOR RETIREMENT: NON-NEGOTIABLE

## CONTINUED...

per year. It does not take a financial mastermind to see the benefits of starting early.

### SAVING IS A HABIT

Another positive reason to start a retirement fund from your first pay cheque is that saving, like a lot of good or bad routines we form, becomes a habit. Starting straight away means that it is just one other thing that you do and after a while you will stop to noticing it.

It won't feel like a hardship and yet all the time your money will be working away for you, compounding its interest and laying a strong base for your future.

### STANDARD RETIREMENT FUNDS

The world of retirement funds can be a financial whirlwind capable of confusing the most numerical of minds. There are many different options, some riskier but more rewarding than others, some plainer and steadier.

While an in-depth study of the many varied schemes is beyond the scope of this article it is possible to provide an introduction to three of the more standard forms of retirement savings funds.

### A COMPANY PENSION FUND

A company pension fund is, as the name implies, a pension fund provided by the company you work for that in most cases is obligatory to opt into. What may be optional is the amount you decide to pay in each month or week.

When you do retire you must then convert at least two thirds into an annuity.

An annuity is a cash reserve from which you will be paid a fixed sum of money at regular intervals usually until the end of your life.

On retirement you are also eligible to take a lump sum of up to one third of your savings which in South Africa can be as much as R 500,000 tax free

### A PROVIDENT FUND

A provident fund releases you from the obligation of having to invest two thirds of your retirement fund into an annuity and instead pays you a lump sum when you retire.

This option is ideally for someone with a good financial grasp of investing and the discipline not fritter away all their savings. For spendthrifts it should definitely be avoided.

You should also consider that most lump sum payments will be subject to tax.

A basic breakdown would be:

Up to R 500,000 tax free

R 500,001 to R 700,000 18% tax

R 700,001 to R 1,050,000 – R 36,000 and 27% of taxable income above R 700,000

R 1,050,001 – R 1,300,500 and 36% of taxable income above R 1,050,000

### A RETIREMENT ANNUITY

A retirement annuity is a retirement fund that is taken out independent of an employer, therefore it is usually frequently made use of by the self-employed, as an additional retirement funding by employees.

You can currently claim 15% in non-pensionable taxes towards this form of retirement plan.

Unlike a company pension or a provident fund, you cannot cash in a retirement annuity before retirement at the minimum age of 55 and like a pension fund you must use at least two thirds to purchase an annuity on retirement.

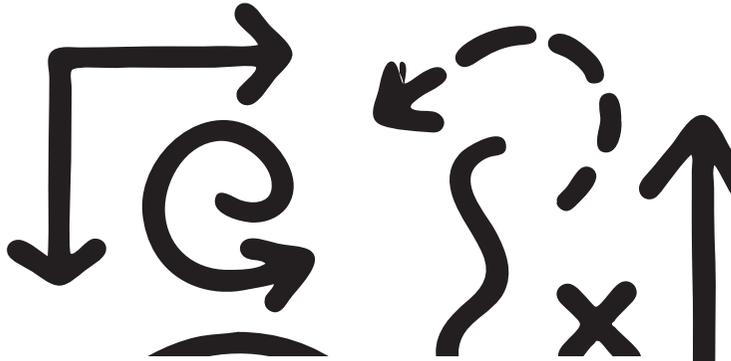
### DETERMINE YOUR RETIREMENT GOALS

If you are committed to creating a strong fund, it is worthwhile considering what goals you have for your retirement.

These might include what age you see yourself retiring at, how much you will need to spend on your basic living expenses, whether or not you intend to be mortgage free by the time you retire, what you intend to have for discretionary spending, what you intend to leave behind to your next of kin.

You may also want to factor in contingency savings in the case of unforeseen financial problems that may arise or, indeed, personal goals that you want to realise such as travel or specific life experiences.

People will have different perceptions of what retirement means to



them, so if you can, tailor your pension fund towards your ideal.

### UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU ARE PAYING IN FEES

When it comes to retirement funds, many people choose to employ the services of financial advisers. While this can be a smart move in getting the most out of your money, make sure you are aware of how much you are paying in fees. Any reputable company with an interest in providing a long-term quality service will be clear regarding their costs and if the firm you are with is not, it's a sign you should move your business to a more transparent partner.

### TIME

It's a cliché but it's true; life goes fast. It may not seem so at times but as David Bowie described it in his song of the same name Time is 'a sniper in the dark'. It comes creeping. So, if you can, start young and be prepared to give yourself the best financial situation when it arrives. Who knows? They might become the happiest days of your life.

### DISCLAIMER

The information contained in this article is general use only and intended as a guide. You or anyone else must not rely on this information to make a financial or investment decision. Before making any decision, we recommend you consult a financial planner/advisor to discuss your financial situation, investment objectives, and individual financial needs.

NEXT UP

SALARIES



# HOW TO NEGOTIATE YOUR SALARY

## ASKING FOR MORE PAY IS ALWAYS AWKWARD, BUT IT DOES NOT HAVE TO BE.

Have you ever seen the program ‘Gordon Ramsey’s Kitchen Nightmares’? Have you ever noticed how many times the person keeping the restaurant from completely going under is rarely the arrogant Head Chef/Owner or the extroverted front of house with a talent for talking but not managing?

Often, the employee who is holding things together and who is signalled out by Ramsey as the most competent, is a previously overlooked supporting staff member.

The humble sous chef who simply gets things done and who, without Ramsey’s expertise, would have continued to go unnoticed.

The corporate world, like most environments, tends to favour those who are not afraid of a little self-promotion. So, if you find yourself in the role of the quietly competent sous chef at risk of being undervalued, this article is for you.

### MAKE THE CASE

So can this be summarised as a case of the squeaky wheel always getting the grease?

No. The word ‘squeaky’ conjures up images of shrill, annoying complaining when what we want to be is empowered, calm and reasonable. To do this we need to prepare the case that we will present to the decision makers. Therefore...

### KEEP A RECORD OF YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS

A simple word document is enough. From day one in a new job,

note down your accomplishments and successes. Not only will this serve as a powerful tool to help you negotiate a raise but regularly reminding yourself of the successes you are bringing to your workplace will encourage you to adopt a positive outlook towards it.

### CAN YOU QUANTIFY YOUR CONTRIBUTION?

The phrase ‘add value to a company’ is by now a regular in the business speak world. Now, like it or loathe it, these phrases stick around if they express a concept accurately.

So, if ‘how will you add value to this company’ is by now an interview staple, then it holds to reason that ‘how have you added value to this company?’ is a very reasonable question to ask someone who is looking for an improvement in their conditions.

Now, while you may well have a knack for raising morale, and you might even be the worker who always has a smile on their face on a Monday, your strongest argument will be made with facts: numbers based evidence of how your work has improved the company’s financial position.

So, if you are handling a company’s social media account the onus is on you to use Google analytics to demonstrate how your contribution has improved the company’s conversion rate and resulted in SALES. If you are a salesperson, the bottom line is the bottom line.

Use nuts and bolts, numbers and figures to make an evidence-

based argument that the decision makers are better off with you and that you are worth the extra money - it will make it very hard for them to say no.

### HOW MUCH WILL IT COST TO REPLACE YOU?

Part of knowing your worth in the market place is knowing how much it would cost to replace you.

Now where are not suggesting you should land a job in which the company is obliged to train you and as soon as they have done this you should immediately use this as leverage to gain a higher wage.

That type of Machiavellianism will only harm your long term prospects at a company.

However if you have been with a company for a period, you have performed and added value to that company and you think you are not getting what your worth then it may be time to think in these terms.

One fool proof way of doing it is to apply for another position with increased benefits and be truly willing to leave if you don’t get what you believe you should.

It is a very strong position from which to enter negotiations and in some cases will be the necessary wake-up call to your company for how much they stand to lose.

# HOW TO NEGOTIATE YOUR SALARY

## CONTINUED...

### IT'S NOT PERSONAL. IT'S STRICTLY BUSINESS

So many of us identify so strongly with our work and how much we are paid that we can enter into a pay rise negotiation from a highly emotional perspective.

Remember it's not you versus them. See this instead as an opportunity for you to show your employers how much you are worth in the marketplace.

If you personalise the issue too much and confuse it with your own estimations of self-worth you run the risk of saying things which might negatively affect your relationship with your employers.

The reality is that if you are worth what you think you are someone else will pay it if your own company refuse to.

Remember 'it's not personal. It's strictly business'.

### ENJOY THE SILENCE

Every actor knows that silence is more powerful than noise. So, don't be too quick to fill those silences.

If an offer is made, listen intently. Take your time to consider it. If you are making an offer to them, say it plainly and clearly.

Don't be too quick to follow it with further commentary explaining why you feel that figure is reasonable. If they want that information, they will ask.

### TIMING IS KEY

It's human nature to be more open to requests when things are going well. So, think about your timing. Just after you've won a new contract for the company.

Just after you have been instrumental in helping a deal come together under time pressure. Both good times. You get the picture.

### DON'T GIVE ULTIMATUMS

Ultimatums are not your friend in a negotiation situation, particularly ultimatums you are not prepared to carry out. They make people feel anxious and they personalise a request.

Even if your ultimatum is successful and you do get the pay rise you wanted, the chances are high that you may damage your reputation with your hardball techniques.

Instead of saying if you don't pay me this, I will leave, try the previously mentioned technique of applying elsewhere and, if possible, receiving an offer which matches your evaluation. In that case, your company really can't deny what the market is willing to pay you.

### FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE

The reality may be that you are doing two people's jobs or that you are constantly having to solve last minute problems due to your colleague's ineptitude but don't phrase it like that. A little wordplay can put a positive spin on any situation,

so spin, spin, spin and accentuate the positive.

Finally, prepare well. Know your worth but be realistic about it too. Be calm and open to offers but persistent in looking for what you deserve.

Don't be a squeaky wheel but be calm, cool and collected in presenting your convincing argument. Leave any emotional baggage at the door.

### Salaries in SA - A review of CareerJunction's top 10 sectors

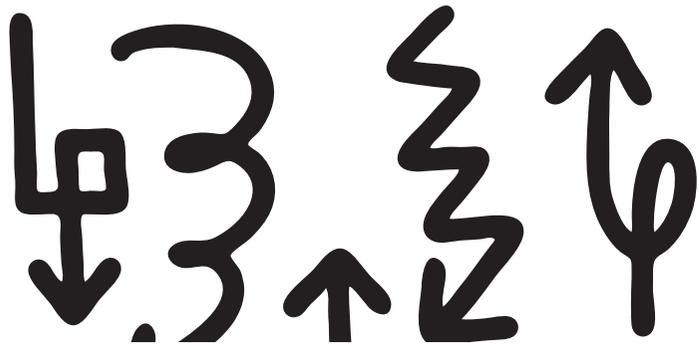
This Salary Review has been compiled exclusively for South African job seekers and the HR/Recruitment industry to give a true representation of cost-to-company salary packages in South Africa.

It contains up-to-date salary information as well as regional differences in monthly remuneration using actual salary offerings on our website (17 000+ jobs monthly) for the latest measurable period (May to November 2018).

### ABOUT THE SALARY DATA

The salary ranges in this report are based on the actual salaries offered to intermediate and senior level candidates, by companies that posted jobs on CareerJunction during the latest measurable period.

These salary ranges represent monthly 'cost to company' remuneration and only serve as an indication of the average salary offerings for each occupation.



#### DID YOU KNOW?

Salary offerings for the same job sometimes differ between provinces. In most cases, earning potential is closely linked to supply (job seekers) and demand (jobs) trends for certain skill sets.

For example, when candidates are highly sought after in an area, but candidate availability is limited, higher salaries are offered to make the role more attractive.

#### SKILL LEVELS

Skill levels covered in our report include intermediate level and senior level skills. Intermediate? You have more skills than a beginner but you're not quite an expert yet. Senior? You have more skills and experience compared to a person with intermediate skills.

[REVIEW OUR SALARY LEVELS](#)



NEXT UP

DECLINE OFFER



# HOW TO DECLINE A JOB OFFER

**It's a great feeling to be given a job offer but it's not always in your best interest to accept it.**

Knowing when to say 'no' and saying it diplomatically and clearly can be one of the most important life and career skills we can learn. It can save us and those around us time, resentment and the creation of future problems. So, if you have gone through the job application process, done the interview(s) and received the job offer, but somewhere during the process your willingness to take the position has changed from yes to a no, how do you go about delivering the message?

## SHOW YOUR APPRECIATION FOR THE JOB OFFER

The recruitment process can be a time-consuming, frustrating process. Most of the time, the interviewers know quite quickly that a candidate is not who they are looking for and yet, fair play dictates that the interview is carried out in full.

It can also be a repetitive process, so if a company has made you an offer you intend to reject, show your appreciation for the time and effort that have been put into the process, and for considering you a worthwhile future colleague. Whether you are communicating by phone, email or letter, always start by saying that you appreciate the offer they are making, how it was a difficult decision to make and thank them for the time they took to interview you and respond to your questions.

## BE BRIEF

In the professional world, time is a commodity. There is no need to give a long-winded explanation as to why you are not taking the job. Be polite. Be brief. Be straight to the point. Once you have shown your appreciation for the offer as mentioned above, a simple 'I have decided to take another offer' or 'I have

decided that now is not the right time for me to leave my current position' is sufficient. If you wish to give any more information as to the reasoning behind your decision as a means of opening further dialogue, or merely as a matter of courtesy, that is your decision but whatever you reveal, keep it short.

## BE DIPLOMATIC

There are many ways of saying any one thing. Yes, the real reason you may not want to take the job is because you think the boss is an idiot and can't imagine working for him or her, however a simple 'I have decided to explore other avenues' will suffice.

### 1. Don't bang the door on your way out

This another way of saying leave the door open for future contact. Most industries, even in big cities, are communities in their own right, so smooth the path for future meetings by acknowledging the possibility now. A simple, 'It was very nice to meet you and I look forward to crossing paths again in the future', or 'Thank you again for your time and consideration I wish you all the best for the future', is all that is needed.

### 2. As soon as possible

As the old adage goes, 'Time is money'. Yes, and it's also quality time spent with our families, friends or doing the things we love. So, as soon as you know for sure: let them know.

This gives recruiters more time to offer your position to the other candidates in contention and to finish their workload in time.

### 3. Make contact by phone initially

Remember ASAP. That's the reason you let the interviewer know that you are turning down their offer by phone initially. It's the quickest route from 'A' to 'B' and allows them to get back to finding your alternative immediately.

It also avoids possible problems such as unread emails or lost mail. You can, and should, subsequently let the interviewers know in writing but the phone call comes first.

### 4. Make contact with everyone who interviewed you, if possible

It is always a nice mark of respect to communicate your decision to everyone who was involved in interviewing you, if possible. Not only is it nice to be nice and gives us a feel-good factor to do the right thing, but you never know when and where you might see these people again.

## GOOD REASONS TO DECLINE A JOB OFFER

Before you say no, remember you are crossing the Rubicon. Once said, it can't be unsaid and it is very unlikely that you will be given the job should you change your mind. So, before you do that, make sure it's for the right reason(s). With that in mind, sometimes no is the right answer.

The salary is too low: Ultimately, we go to work to get paid for our industry and talent and if you are not offered a wage which you feel is reasonable, then you should walk. However, before you do, remember a first offer is rarely a last offer and if you are prepared to reject the offer because the wage is too low, you

# HOW TO DECLINE A JOB OFFER

## CONTINUED...

are in a powerful bargaining position.

The job offered is different from the one advertised: It is always a good idea to get a job description in writing before starting because sometimes jobs can change over the course of the recruitment process. If you feel the job you are being offered is very different from what was advertised and you are unhappy with your proposed responsibilities, then that is a good reason to say no.

Negative information about the company:

During the application process you may become aware of some negative information about the company. For example, they may be struggling financially and may not be a financially solvent much longer or perhaps there are negative reports from ex-employees.

It is up to you to decide how true these claims are, however, if you feel they hold water then it would be wise not to ignore them.

A bad feeling in your gut: Sometimes it can be something altogether more ambiguous that lets us know that we are not the right fit for the company.

Although this isn't exactly scientific, sometimes our subconscious picks up on more clues than we realise and if you really can't avoid that sinking feeling, perhaps you should listen to what it is telling you.

### BAD REASONS TO DECLINE A JOB OFFER

You dislike someone you will be working with: Unless this person is your direct boss and you think you will find it really difficult to work for him/her, then this is not a good reason to turn down a job opportunity.

We don't get to choose who we work with and part of any successful career is learning how to work with people who you otherwise wouldn't choose to spend time with.

You are waiting on another offer: It is never wise to say no while waiting on another preferred option.

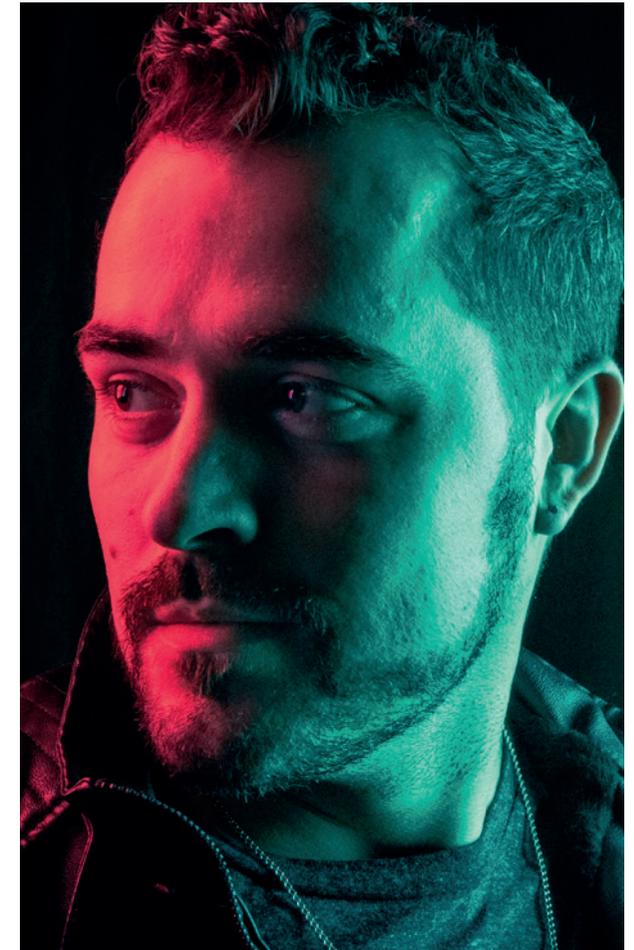
Instead, try buying yourself some time by thanking the employer for the offer and saying that you need a little time to discuss it with your partner or family and agree on an offer window (the time between the job offer and your acceptance or refusal).

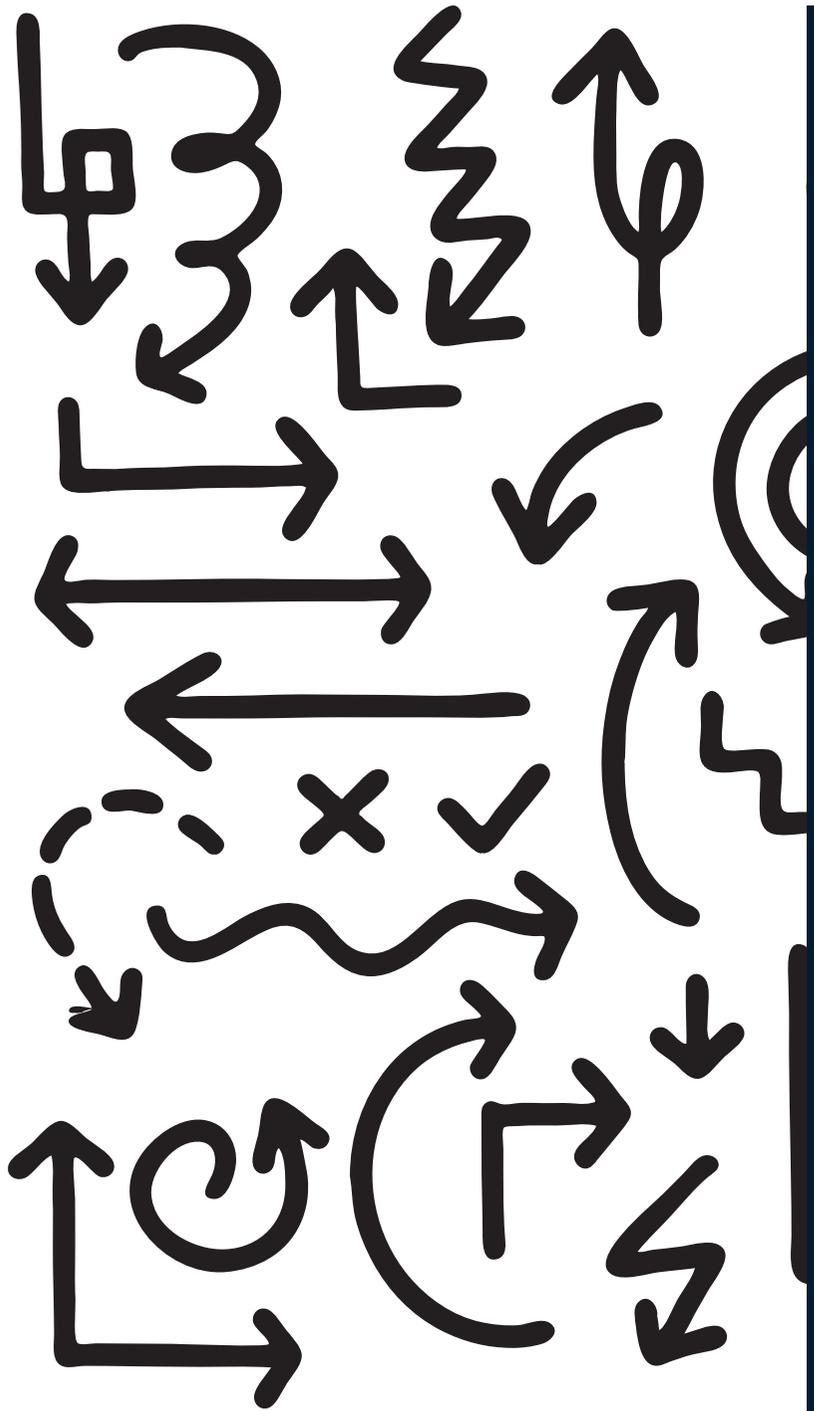
Depending on your position, you may then be able to contact the other employer and ask if they could let you know within that time period.

Remember, until you receive a written job offer, the employer can rescind any verbal offer previously made.

In the end, the only person who can make the decision is you. However, if you are sure you want to reject a job offer. Be polite. Be brief. Call first. Write or email second and be diplomatic.

You never know when you might cross paths with them again.





NEXT UP

MOVING ON



# HOW TO KNOW WHEN IT'S TIME TO MOVE JOBS

## PEOPLE INVEST A LOT OF TIME AND MONEY INTO THEIR CAREERS, YET MANY LAND UP IN DEAD-END JOBS.

If you are no longer happy or growing in your job, it might be time to consider a new one. Here are a few tell-tale signs that will help you decide.

If many of signs look familiar, it's maybe time to move on! Whatever you decide, just make sure you have a new job secured before quitting your current one.

### YOUR COMPANY IS NOT INVESTED IN YOU

Does your company value your input and the work you do? Do they provide positive feedback and rely on you to do your bit towards company growth?

If you don't think your absence will have much of an impact on the company, you are either not fulfilling your role or your company is not invested in you.

Being a valued employee gives purpose to your life goals and will help you go places. If you are not valued, move on.

### YOU ARE NOT APPLYING YOUR SKILLS

There is nothing wrong with going the extra mile to prove your capabilities, however if you spend more time doing work that does not encompass your core skill set, you are wasting your time. Again, your career is an investment, so every bit of time you spend on it should be towards a higher goal and that includes your work experience.

### YOU ARE BORED

Motivation is key in any job and allows you to achieve higher

goals and move forward in your career. When motivation creeps out the door and all that's left is boredom, it's just a matter of time before you become stagnant in your career. Passion is a necessary ingredient for success, so move on before you don't move at all.

### THERE IS NO ROOM TO GROW

You love what you do and by now you're quite comfortable in your work environment. Be careful that you are not in the danger zone.

If you can do your job with your eyes closed, it might be time to move on to the next challenge. Experience is only good until you can't learn anymore.

### THE COMPANY IS NO LONGER PROFITABLE

When a company runs at a loss, it becomes necessary to cut costs wherever possible, and this often includes letting go of certain employees. In addition, performance bonuses will be adversely affected.

If you see the company is taking strain, you may want to start updating your CV and looking for greener pastures.

### YOU HATE WHAT YOU DO

No-one particularly likes getting out of bed, especially on Mondays, however if you are feeling depressed and dread walking into the office, every single day, you may be in the wrong job.

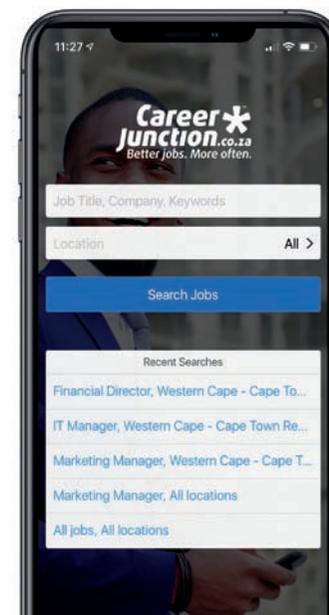
Not many can say they love their jobs, but if you are passionate about what you do for a living, you should enjoy a good challenge.

### YOU ARE BURNT OUT

Work can occasionally make everyone feel exhausted, but if you are in a constant state of panic and exhaustion, then you are probably not in the right job.

Physical and mental exhaustion can easily flow over into other areas of your life and eventually have a very negative effect on your health and relationships outside of work.

So, make the move before you are too tired to do so!



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