

4 tips for first-time job seekers

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In my career, I have seen many people getting stuck, settling for a job just because it is the first one available. This is not necessarily the best approach.



Image: supplied

Are you a first-time job seeker? Here are a few tips for when you are entering the workplace for the first time.

1. CV tips

Focus on the basics...do a spelling and grammar check. Save the document using a professional file name e.g., CV_KMadikwa. Often, people waste too much space on the fixed info (names, address, contact details etc.). Try to reduce or space it in such a way that it does not take more than half a page including your CV profile.

The CV profile is short and to the point - intended to hold the readers' attention. It is a summary of your most valuable industry experience, skills, and highlight the benefits of employing you.

When sharing work experience, do it in a reversed chronological order with the most recent job first. Be mindful to not only

list responsibilities but also show the value and impact you made. You may not be able to do this for every point on your CV, but always try where possible. The seven areas that you can consider showing your impact is: cost saving, revenue generation, problems solved, time saved, awards and recognition, increased production and efficiency.

Pro-tip: *Think outside of the box and have a unique CV. Have a look at this innovative one on LinkedIn – [I have coached a young graduate to relook her CV](#). Two weeks after the post, this HR Intern had secured 2 permanent offers.*

2. Interview tips

An approach that I followed in my corporate days was: “hire the attitude, teach the skill”. This seems to be a trend nowadays and keep it in mind when preparing for the interview. The interview process is the opportunity for you to sell yourself. You can showcase your talents and achievements; be confident yet remain humble.

Prepare questions related to the culture and financial stability of the company and not only questions related to the job itself. As a candidate, I was interested to hear what the interviewer loves about working for the company.

In the virtual environment ensure that your camera is eye height and that you either have natural light or a lamp in front of your face. If you use Zoom you can hide your self-view if you find it a distraction.

Pro-tip: *Research indicates that 60% of millennials don't negotiate a salary when receiving their first job offers. This can be a costly career decision. That starting salary is such an important key to financial success, as it impacts compensation rates for years to come.*



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3. First few weeks in a new role

The first few weeks in any new role can be challenging and overwhelming. New people, processes to learn and in the hybrid world, you might not have the “luxury” of meeting the other newbies face to face.

Every company is doing their induction and onboarding differently but do insist on sufficient time with your direct manager. Use this time to clarify and have a conversation around different styles and what are expectations from one another. Most importantly, have a clear understanding of what are your goals for week 1, month 1 and quarter 1.

Pro-tip: *Neuroscience has shown that doing a charity project with colleagues support the sense of belonging and bonding of a team. Connect with the corporate social investment programme and if the company doesn't have one in place suggest starting with a project making a contribution to the community as a team.*

4. Be a lifelong learning with a spirit of generosity

To be successful the best approach is to adopt a growth mindset and see every interaction as a learning opportunity. Even the parts that seem like a “mistake or failure” can be turned into a learning moment. Do share these learnings with the team; don't keep it for yourself.

A principle to remember is reverse mentoring. This is your opportunity to “educate” more senior members on topics, often tech-related, where you can add value. You can pass skills or knowledge to a more senior member of the team and demonstrate a spirit of generosity.

Pro-tip: *In the fast, ever-changing world of work ensure that you create the necessary habits and boundaries for you to flourish in your new job. Self-leadership is finding the balance between stress (energy expenditure) and recovery (energy renewal). To add to that keep in mind that resilience is not about bouncing back but about growing and learning from the challenge you face.*

Your first job is such a significant milestone and stepping stone in your professional life. By following these tips can help you have a more rewarding experience while balancing some of the stress and challenges of a brand new work setting.

ABOUT ANJA VAN BEEK

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