

Job Search Support Kit

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Awesome Careers for Gen Ys:

easy strategies to create an amazing career and life

Introduction

This Job Search Support Kit is a free resource for anyone who has read my book *Awesome Careers for Gen Ys: easy strategies to create an amazing career and life* or visited my website www.AwesomeCareers.com.au In my book I included a chapter on job search but I was not able to have a 25 page chapter on job search alone - so I produced this kit.

I have put together this Job Search Support Kit because I believe that many people disadvantage themselves when it comes to job search because they don't know how the job search process works and they don't know how to 'market themselves' in the most effective way.

There are a lot of free resume templates on the internet. Some of them are good. Some of them are flashy with no substance. They vary a lot.

And, of course, the resume is only part of the job search process. It is important to have a resume that works well for you but there are lots of tips and strategies you can use to make your overall application stand out from the crowd.

This kit has the following components:

1. An explanation of the two sets of skills involved in the job application process; how to market yourself effectively; what to include and what not to include in your application; how many resumes you should have; why you should write a different application letter for each job; applying online; responding to key selection criteria; the interview; and lots more
2. Two sample resumes you can use as templates
3. Two sample application letters that are linked to two advertised jobs plus tips about making the most of the information provided within the advertisement
4. Tips for responses to Key Selection Criteria and some examples of how to use the STAR technique

Just be aware of the following:

- Job search is a numbers' game so if you don't get the job, it's not personal
- If you've sent off 30 applications with no response, there's obviously some room for improvement with your application. Don't send any more applications until you've asked someone (friend or family) to look over your application.
- If there are lots of mistakes on your written application the employer will think that you're likely to bring those sloppy habits into his/her workplace and they won't consider you for the position.
- If you keep getting interviews and missing out on the job there are likely to be issues with your interview technique or your referees. Ask someone who's interviewed you for feedback on your performance. (More on this in that section of this kit).

OK, let's get on with it..

The job application process

There are two sets of skills involved in the job application process – and both sets can be learnt!

The **first** set of these skills is the written part - your application letter, resume and, in some cases, response to key selection criteria. If there are mistakes on these or your written application doesn't hit the mark in other ways, you will not progress into the next stage. This first stage is critical. If you don't have a good written application – that's it! It's all over, dead in the water.

So, if you have sent out 100 applications and haven't progressed any further, clearly your written application has some flaws that need to be addressed.

The **second** set of skills is the interview, particularly your performance in the interview. The lead up to the interview and what you do afterwards can also make a difference to whether you're selected or not. If you're getting to the interview stage and not getting to the employer's shortlist, there are strategies you can employ to turn that around (no pun intended).

If you take the time to learn how to improve these two sets of skills, you will never have to dread applying for a job again!

Marketing yourself

Your job or course application is an exercise in marketing! **It's about presenting who you are in such a positive and constructive way that it leads the employer/course selection officer to believe that you will be (i) worth interviewing, and (ii) the best person to do his/her job or take his/her course.**

However, it's not about lying about yourself to make yourself look better. That is never a good idea.

It's also not about hiding your light under a bushel, as the old saying goes. If you have experience with something and you achieved a good result, it's absolutely OK to say that. If you are really good at something, it's OK to say that too as long as you don't cross the line and sound like you're boasting.

It does take a certain level of self-awareness for you to know the difference between 'competent' and 'highly competent'. My book will help you with that. You also need to make sure that you don't build yourself up too much if you can't actually back it up with several concrete examples of your experience. It's also hard to back it up in interviews if it's not genuine.

Effective marketing of yourself is truthfully writing down your experiences, using the most appropriate adjectives (using describing words such as excellent or competent) to quantify what you've said AND THEN being able to talk about the examples you've used in a matter-of-fact sort of way in the interview. If you can talk about what you've done in a comfortable sort of way, you will be more believable.

Other aspects of marketing yourself well include:

- Being well prepared for the interview
- Turning up for the interview on time (or being a little early)
- Being dressed well, appropriate to the role, clean and well groomed
- Having good posture – standing and sitting with a straight spine
- Looking the interviewer(s) in the eye when answering questions
- Show your enthusiasm for the job
- Smiling (very important) – and not just at the interviewer. Smile at the receptionist, other workers, whoever!

Your written application

Your written application will often be emailed these days but don't make the mistake of writing a brief email to the employer and thinking that it will replace the application letter. You must still write an application letter and attach it along with your resume (and, if requested, your response to the key selection criteria).

All of these documents MUST be well written and not have any spelling or grammatical mistakes.

I am not a big believer in getting someone else to write your resume and application letter for you. I think it needs to be written using your 'voice'. If you are concerned that you will make mistakes, simply ask one or two other people for help in editing or proof reading what you have written.

It is best to ask people across the generations and, if English is not your first language, asking someone whose first language is English. If you ask someone who is similar to you in age, education or ethnicity, they are more likely to make the same sort of mistakes as you. You need to ask someone with a different 'eye' to read over your application. If you do that, mistakes are more likely to be picked up and you will look better to your prospective employer.

The application letter

The application should state what job you are applying for and where it was advertised. It should go on to say why you think you are a good fit for the job/ what skills and qualities that you have that make you an ideal candidate.

Next, it should provide some examples of roles you've filled or experiences you've had that have been referred to within the advertisement. This is important. Often people just fill up their application letters with information about themselves WITHOUT REFERRING TO WHAT THE EMPLOYER HAS STATED IS IMPORTANT TO THEM! If your letter acknowledges the employer's requirements – by referring to things mentioned in the advertisement or in the position description – the employer will immediately assume that you're in alignment with them. It will also be obvious that you are taking their advertisement seriously and that you are really interested in their job. They are key factors in getting to the interview.

I like to finish an application letter with a sentence that outlines several characteristics I have that I believe the employer will appreciate. I will have chosen these from my list of possible characteristics (recorded in my Awesome Me Folder) based on my analysis of what the employer will find appealing.

I close the application letter with a statement such as 'I look forward to meeting you at an interview'. I make this bold statement because I think that my application shows that I am a good fit for the job.

I should also mention here that application letters are (i) formal pieces of writing and (ii) should not be any more than a page in length.

Don't re-write your resume in the application letter – provide the employer with just enough relevant information for them to want to go to your resume to learn more about you.

If you re-write your resume in the application letter it will make the letter (i) too long, and (ii) it will be focused on you rather than what the employer wants. Your letter needs to show why you are the best person for this job and be written with the reader in mind. The reader is the employer (or representative) and **they are focused on getting the right person into the job**. In a way, you come second. It is a balancing act.

Too many people forget who is reading their letter. They are so focused on getting the job that they forget to write the letter for the reader. They write it for themselves, about themselves, and they get the balance wrong.

Why is it good practice to create a different letter for each position you apply for?

Every employer wants a person who wants their specific job. They don't want someone who is applying for lots and lots of jobs indiscriminately. Now, you might be applying for lots of jobs but your aim is to have each employer believe that their job is the one you really want.

You can only do that if you have carefully analysed their advertisement, worked out what key qualities and qualifications they want and have written a letter that uses that information in quite a targeted way.

It will help you to write a targeted letter if you have recorded your personal data in your Awesome Me Folder. Your Awesome Me Folder is discussed fully in my book, *Awesome Careers for Gen Ys: easy strategies to create an amazing career and life*. The template for it is available on the Free Stuff tab of my website www.AwesomeCareers.com.au You will then be able to copy and paste information about yourself into your application letter and your resume.

Over the next few pages, I have included a couple of advertisements and written targeted application letters that demonstrate a careful analysis of the advertisement. See if you can pick out what I have done.

Advertisements with sample application letters

Advertisement no 1

Warehouse Store Person / Picker Packer – Croydon

Fast growing online retailer
Family owned business
Small team with great company culture

The company is an online retailer of quality products available for delivery Australia wide. We are a small team but growing fast. In line with that growth we require a full time store person / pick packer to join our warehouse team.

You will be required to have a high attention to detail in all aspects of your work. It is important that you are able to work both as a team member and autonomously, taking responsibility for your work in a fast paced environment. You must be honest, committed, reliable and punctual with a strong work ethic. Previous experience in a similar warehouse environment preferred but not essential.

Your day-to-day duties and responsibilities will include:

Picking & packing of orders. Assist with the receiving of deliveries and unloading of trucks. Ensuring that all products are received as ordered, undamaged and correctly warehoused.

Useful Tips:

- Read through advertisements 3-4 times to really get a sense of what the employer wants
- Highlight the important words
- The important words are things they might say about **the company** (in this instance, they have highlighted three important factors right at the top); about **the role** (receiving orders, making sure there's no damage and that they are then correctly warehoused – *the word correctly is a clue to the sort of person they want*); and about **the sort of person they want** – honest, committed, reliable, punctual, strong work ethic and with good attention to detail
- When you write your letter, you need to make sure that you use this information in a deliberate way
- Don't repeat everything back to them word for word. Repeat some of it - but use synonyms for the rest. For example, you could say that you're responsible instead of reliable.

Sample application letter for position in Advertisement no 1

X Company
address

Date

Your address
Your mobile/cell number

Dear Sir/Madam **(use this format when you DON'T know who is receiving this letter)**

I am writing to apply for the position of Warehouse Store Person/ Picker Packer that was advertised in The Age on 25th February 2015. My resume is attached.

As a reliable, responsible person with good attention to detail, I think that I am an excellent candidate for your position. When I was a student, I worked part-time in the Stores area of my local Target store and so have experience in receiving stock and both warehousing it or distributing it promptly to the correct department.

In my current role as Team Leader at Kentucky Fried Chicken, I have a responsibility for stock control and frequently have to receive goods from our transport company. I ensure that these products are quickly stored in accordance with food handling regulations. In this role I have a team of six staff reporting to me. Staff morale is high and we enjoy working together.

I take pride in the work that I do and enjoy working as part of a team to get a job done well. I am also happy to work independently on tasks. I am excited by the prospect of working in a dynamic environment such as X Company and would welcome the opportunity to be part of a positive, growing business.

I look forward to meeting you in an interview.

Yours faithfully **(use 'faithfully' when you DON'T know the name of the person you're writing to)**

Your name

Advertisement no 2

Social Media Manager

We are seeking a Social Media Manager to join our team.

The Social Media Manager will implement the company's Social Media Marketing. Administration includes content strategy, develop brand awareness, generate inbound traffic and cultivate leads and sales. The Social Media manager is a highly motivated individual with experience and a passion for designing and implementing the Company's content strategy, creating relevant content, blogging, website construction, and leadership.

Essential Duties:

Manage Social Media marketing campaigns and day-to-day activities including:

Curate relevant content to reach the company's customers.

Create, curate and manage all published content (images, video and written).

Monitor, listen and respond to users in a "Social" way while cultivating leads and sales.

Conduct online advocacy and open stream for cross-promotions.

Develop and expand community and/or blogger outreach efforts.

Oversee design (ie: Facebook Timeline cover, profile pic, thumbnails, ads, landing pages, Twitter profile, and blog).

Design, create and manage promotions and Social ad campaigns.

Design, create and manage multiple webpage designs.

Compile report for management showing results.

Marketing company products via all media types.

Demonstrate ability to map out marketing strategy and then drive that strategy.

Become an advocate for the Company in Social Media spaces, engaging in dialogues and answering questions where appropriate.

Executing creative social media campaigns.

Qualifications and Experience:

Possesses knowledge and experience in the fields of marketing.

You must demonstrate creativity and a passion for Social Media, with in-depth knowledge and understanding of platforms including Google+, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc. and how each platform can be deployed in different scenarios.

Makes evident good technical understanding and can pick up new tools quickly.

Possesses outstanding communication skills.

Extensive experience in webpage design is required.

Please forward any questions and applications to: admin@xxxxxxx.com.au

Sample application letter for position in Advertisement no 2

Jenny Zhang
Director of Communications
X Company
Company address

Date

Your address
Your mobile/cell number

Dear Ms Zhang **(write her name formally like this)**

I am writing to apply for the position of Social Media Manager that was advertised on Seek on 6th March 2015.

You will see from my resume, attached, that I graduated with Honours in Marketing in 2012. Since then I have been employed in ICT marketing roles in a contract position at Wizz Banger and in my current role at XYZ Plus. I am highly motivated and keen to be considered for this role.

I relished the challenge, at Wizz Banger, to design and create approximately 45 websites that were focused on increasing the profit possibilities for clients through the use of the various social media platforms.

In my current role at XYZ Plus, I have honed my skills in marketing campaigns across the social media platforms. Charged with the task of developing brand awareness of the company on social media and to foster this approach within the company itself, I have been actively involved in assisting staff in the use of Twitter and in using blogs to communicate their particular expertise. I have also further developed my ability in determining and driving social media marketing strategies while at XYZ Plus.

My passion for using social media as a key marketing tool plus my technical expertise across ICT makes me an ideal candidate for the position of Social Media Manager with your company. You will find that I am a positive and dynamic communicator (in both writing and in person) who will bring creativity, attention to detail, the ability to learn and generate new ideas quickly, and an attitude of responsibility mixed with good humour.

I look forward to meeting you at an interview.

Yours sincerely **(use 'sincerely' when you know the name of the person you're writing to)**

Your Name

Your resume

There are a lot of sample resumes online that you can use. Chose a format that you feel comfortable with but don't chose something that is all flashy fonts and graphics. That's especially important if you don't have a lot of actual information to put in there.

Check out the ones in this kit.

What to include in your resume:

- Take a look at the sample resumes for the headings that I recommend
- The template for your Awesome Me Folder will also list things that could be considered. That template is also available on the Free Stuff tab of www.AwesomeCareers.com.au

What not to include in your resume:

- Your date of birth – unless it's your first job and the position is for a junior or requires a 'school leaver'
- Your marital status and whether you have children – in Australia it is illegal for the interviewer to ask about those things
- Your state of health (unless it's something specified in the advertisement)

How many resumes should you have?

If you have several areas of interest and/or expertise, create a separate resume for each of them. Generally, you would have somewhere between one and three resumes. For example, if you have a couple of major areas in your study such as 'marketing' and 'ICT', you could do a resume that focuses on marketing and one that focuses on ICT. You would not ignore the other part of your studies or experience but you would make sure that you place your marketing information ahead of ICT or vice versa.

Each of the resumes would highlight any experience you have within a particular field and the skills you list would have particular relevance to that specific field. It's about bringing the experience, skills and interest that you have in a particular field to the forefront. The reader needs to see that the resume has a particular focus.

Make it obvious to the employer (or HR person reading the resume) that you should be considered because you have some of the experience or skills they're looking for in their candidates.

Changing occupational fields & changing your resume

Sometimes people come to me and say that they want to change fields altogether but are not sure what to do or how to present themselves to a new 'market'.

The first step is to analyse what skills are inherent in the 'old' job. Go online and Google it. Make a really comprehensive list of the skills and then use a highlighter to determine what skills you actually enjoyed using in the 'old' job. If you still want to keep using those skills – and they probably are what you still want to use - include them on the new version of your resume.

Then it's a matter of working out what job roles might use those particular skills and applying for them. If you know what roles you'd like to apply for, analyse what skills are used in those jobs and see if there is anything in common.

Some occupations have quite distinct ways of presenting information. Schools, for example, often has quite prescriptive formats for teacher applications and it can take a fair bit of work to change that to something that is commercially appropriate. It's worth the trouble, though, because teaching gives people a huge range of transferrable skills. They just need to be teased out and then presented in a very different format.

Go online again and find resumes suited to the sort of role that you'd like to get into. See if there is any jargon or particular phrases or words that are common across the resumes and make sure that you incorporate them into your resume.

If you don't know what roles you'd like to do, then I suggest that you (i) read my book *Awesome Careers for Gen Ys: easy strategies to create an amazing career and life*, or (ii) talk to a good career counsellor.

Consider creating a YouTube clip

Think about producing a short video of yourself (2 minutes is fine, 10 minutes is way too long), within which you talk about yourself, your skills and your values. Download it to YouTube. You can put this on your website and put a link to it on your resume.

This is really a group task because, to get the best result, you need others' opinions of what you've done. It does need to be professional and appropriate. Be dressed professionally. Don't have the video shot with you in your favourite hoodie or five year old T-shirt.

You need to make sure that it doesn't work against you through an amateurish effort. Just be yourself. Don't try the hard sell unless that is genuinely who you are.

Sample resumes

Brad Jones

[This resume is from a school leaver looking for a retail job.](#)

12 Station St
Danyo
03 8888 9999
0444 444 444

Career Objective

To start my career in the retail sales industry with a company where I can use my excellent interpersonal skills and can-do attitude

Skills & Characteristics

Establishes rapport easily with people of all ages and ethnicities
Loves being part of a team
Willing to learn
Enthusiastic and positive
Reliable and punctual
Good literacy and numeracy

Education

Completed year 11 at Danyo College 2014

School Involvement

Class Captain 2014
Member of the School Representative Council 2013

Sport

Member of the Eastern Hornets Basketball Team 2010-current

Hobbies

Keeping fit (running), writing a blog for the Eastern Hornets Basketball Team, family activities

Referees

Jenny Mack
English Coordinator
Danyo College
03 8888 1171

Rob McIntyre
Year Level Coordinator
Danyo College
03 8888 1171

RESUME

Doula Liolios

45 Mackie Close

Danyo

03 8888 6666

0444 414 414

Skills and Characteristics

- Excellent website design and implementation skills
- Dynamic communicator (both in writing and in person)
- Positive attitude
- Very sound knowledge of social media platforms, their uses and possibilities
- Ability to produce workable, creative marketing strategy plans
- Broad range of technical skills in ICT
- Ability to learn and adapt quickly to change
- Responsible and reliable

Employment History

Social Media Marketing Officer

2013-current

XYZ Plus

Responsible for:

- Implementing the company's social media marketing strategy; driving the expansion of social media use across the company and with our clients; and designing and creating promotions, campaigns and webpages

Achievements:

- Increased the use of social media by staff by 350% in a two year period
- Developed a targeted, detailed social media strategy plan to replace general statement of intent
- Revenue from social marketing campaigns has produced \$1.2m in sales over 2 years

Website Designer in Marketing Department (contract position)

2012

Wizz Banger

Responsible for:

- Designing and creating 45 websites with specific requirement that the sites maximised the use of social media platforms

Achievements:

- Completed the project on time and on budget
- Received very positive feedback about all websites with minimal changes being requested

Education and Training

Level 1 Occupational Health & Safety Certificate 2014
Conducted in-house at XYZ Plus

Bach of Business (Marketing) (Hons) 2011
Banksia University
Majors in Marketing & ICT

Community Involvement/Sport

Coach for the Under 13s Eastern Wanderers Girls' Soccer Club 2010-current
Member of the Eastern Wanderers Women's Soccer Club, B Division 2008-current

Hobbies

Running (have completed 2 half-marathons), gym, water skiing

Referees

Bill Lee
Head of Marketing
XYZ Plus
0411 111 111

Tiffany Bell
ICT Manager
Wizz Banger
0412 111 111

A few tips about responding to Key Selection Criteria

- Don't do it as part of your letter
- Write your response as a separate document entitled 'Response to Key Selection Criteria'
- Don't give them your philosophy about life or your occupational field in your response. This is NOT a document about your beliefs. It is a document that sets out how you have demonstrated particular requirements of the position in previous roles (including work, leisure, volunteering, sports, etc)
- Use dot points and make your information succinct and focussed. (It can make the reader's eyes glaze over if they are presented with a block of text. Break it up.)
- I use a maximum of four dot points under each criterion. I have also shown how I have used that skill or demonstrated that quality in different roles that I have had. (That way the prospective employer can see that this is something you have consistently done throughout your career. If you are new to the workforce just keep that in mind for next time you apply for a position.)
- Provide concrete examples of your experiences for each of the selection criteria. These examples should demonstrate how you did something AND, ideally, quantify your experience. See examples on the next page.
- Please note that it doesn't have to be complicated. What you're demonstrating is your ability to use a particular set of skills NOT providing an essay about yourself and your philosophy of life.
- Use the **STAR** technique to come up with your answers. **S** = situation (where were you); **T** = task (what task/job/problem had to be solved); **A** = activity (what did you do to solve the issue); **R** = result (quantify the outcome/ show what you achieved)
- By the way, this STAR technique is one that is useful in job interviews to describe how you dealt with a particular problem. It helps keep you to the point and has your answer be succinct

Sample Responses to Key Selection Criteria

Criterion 1: Demonstrated excellent communication and interpersonal skills

- For the six-monthly review of our department in July 2014, my peers and I presented a workshop to the whole of the staff at Jill Johnson Pty Ltd that was aimed at informing staff about our key project. I was selected as Master of Ceremonies and received positive feedback about my performance from the General Manager.
- I achieved a trophy for Best Evaluation Speech in my Toastmaster club's annual speech-craft event in 2012
- As a Year 12 student at Danyo College, I was runner-up in the college's speech competition in 2010

Criterion 2: Ability to plan and implement events and activities

- I initiated, planned and led the implementation of the inaugural Student Cooking Boot Camp at Banskia University in 2014
- I assisted my aunt on a stall at the Mildura Festival in 2013 by creating flyers for the event, posting about it on social media, delivering products for the event and then staffing the staff with her for the day
- As a Year 12 student at Danyo College, I was one of four students who planned and implemented our Year 12 Formal Dance in 2012

With both of these examples I have tried to show how someone might have developed an existing skill or tendency for something over time. Employers will be able to see that you have built on a skill they're looking for and could reasonably expect that you will develop it further while you're employed by them.

This is also why it's a really good idea to record everything you do in your Awesome Me Folder. We do forget things we've done and yet they can be very useful ways of demonstrating a skill we have.

The Interview

Preparation

In the days leading up to the interview:

- Research the organisation by spending quality time on their website, making notes and writing down any questions that you might want to ask in the interview
- Find out where you have to go for the interview
- Work out how you're getting there and how long it will take
- Allow extra time to get there in case of traffic or public transport holdups
- Think about what situations might commonly occur within the role and how you would handle them. If you get asked about some hypothetical situations, you're more likely to do well if you've already thought about possible scenarios
- Practice for the interview with your friends or family and use the questions below

Always have answers ready for the following, commonly asked questions:

- Tell me about yourself
- Why did you apply for this job?
- Why should we give you this job?
- What are your strengths?
- What are your weaknesses?
- Where do you see yourself in 5 years' time?

If you have answers ready for these, you will relax a bit more and handle the interview better overall.

In the interview itself

If you're new to the workforce, don't be alarmed if you find there is more than one person conducting the interview. It is quite common for interview panels to consist of up to three people. Less common is having a panel of four or five but it can happen.

Be conscious that anything you say provides an employer with information about you. Seemingly innocent questions may be ways for the employer to determine what sort of person you are. Now, that's not a bad thing but it's a good idea to frame any responses in a positive way.

Don't sound off about previous employers or bosses. A prospective employer will assume that you are not loyal, not positive and that you may not be able to be trusted to be discreet and keep some things private.

If you're not sure how you're going to answer a question, repeat it slowly to give yourself time to come up with an answer.

If you're not sure if you were on track with your answer, ask if you got off track and if there's anything else they want to know in relation to that question.

If you don't understand the question, say so. Ask them to repeat it or say 'I didn't understand about...'
Your honesty and confidence in asking will be seen a lot more positively than if you try to bluff your way through – that won't work!

The other ways that they will determine whether you're a good fit for their organisation can be more subtle. Knowing what the organisation's values are, what their core work is, what programs or projects they are involved in and knowing what's on their website is critical.

Wearing clothing that is consistent with what their current staff are wearing is one thing to keep in mind (although you need to be well dressed for the interview). Be clean and well groomed.

At the end of the interview

After the interviewer(s) have finished asking their questions they will usually ask if you have any questions. Always try to have something you can ask about. A question or two about induction or training is the way to go.

DON'T ask about what you'll be paid or when you can take holidays. Those things can be discussed when they call you to offer you the job. At that stage, you know that they want you and your negotiating power is much stronger.

Ask them when they will make a decision about the job and when you will be notified.

After the interview

If you have not heard from the employer within the time they specified, call and ask whether a decision is likely to be made soon. Don't assume that they have made a decision and haven't called. Workplaces are busy. Also, hearing back from referees sometimes involves a fair bit of 'phone tag' and may not get completed within the period that was specified at the interview.

If you have been unsuccessful with your interview, **NEVER ask 'why didn't I get the job?'** The employer will immediately become defensive or cautious and you won't get any useful information for next time.

ALWAYS ask 'what can I do next time to improve my chances of getting a job?' Asking for assistance is much more likely to elicit a positive and constructive response than asking a question that could have the interviewer feeling defensive. Most people like to help when asked. Really listen if they provide you with constructive feedback. It's not always easy to hear but can turn out to be quite useful to you for future interviews.

Applying online

You may make an application online. Many big companies will have installed a software package that enables them to sort applications electronically and discard some without an actual person even having

read it. The software will determine if you have used the key words they're looking for and their frequency. It will automatically send you the 'thanks but no thanks' response.

It provides the employer with a much shorter list of applicants and then a real person steps in to sort through that list.

As you can imagine, if you want to change your job and you have little or no experience in an advertised role, the data that your resume will provide will ensure that your resume is one of the unsuccessful ones.

So, it is very important that you (i) use the job title that they have used in the advertisement, and (ii) use key words that they have used in the advertisement. If you think that you have done a role that was quite similar to the one advertised but it had a different title, I suggest putting both titles down with a slash in between so that the software program 'thinks' that you've done that role.

Referees

It's a good idea to have a range of people on your list of referees and then select which of them you will call on when applying for a job.

There are some really important points to keep in mind:

- Make sure that you ask them if they are prepared to be your referee
- If there has been any time lapse since your last contact with them, get back in touch and check that they're still OK to be a referee for you
- If you have had another job in the interim, don't assume that (i) they are still OK about being your referee; (ii) that they still work at the place you knew them; and (iii) that they have the same number as previously – so, call them again and check all those things.
- Check their mobile/cell/telephone numbers EACH TIME you talk with them

If you think that you've gone well at a few interviews and can't work out why they suddenly went cold on you, I suggest that you ask them if you'd been given any negative referee reports. If you have, don't waste time going back to that person. Find someone else who will be positive about you.

An important warning

I have included the following excerpt from my book, *Awesome Careers for Gen Ys: easy strategies to create an amazing career and life*, just in case you have not read the book. It's really important that you take care of your online reputation because it can impact significantly on your chances of getting a job.

Employers often do internet checks on prospective employees. In fact, some employ people specifically to do these checks. (Now, there's a prospective job for those of you who like working with technology and are good at problem solving!)

If they see that you have made negative comments about your previous employer online they will be concerned that you will do it if you come to work for them. Companies are always concerned about their reputations.

If they find that you get drunk or high (even if you've only done it once), they are likely to be concerned that you will not turn up fresh and ready for work on Monday morning.

You are probably thinking that you're OK because your privacy settings are fairly tight. Try putting your name followed by the words 'images' or 'photos' into Google and see what comes up. Most people are shocked to see that the photos they've been tagged in are there for all the world to see. If those photos contain some images of you drunk or high at a party, you're unlikely to get a positive call back from the employer. If you do find photos of yourself that you wouldn't want an employer to see, ask your friends who tagged you in those photos to un-tag you.

The amount of control you can have over somebody if you can monitor internet activity is amazing. Tim Berners-Lee (best known as the inventor of the World Wide Web)

In closing...

I genuinely wish you good luck with your job search. Applying the information within this document will help you but your attitude will be what helps you the most. Staying positive, being open to opportunities and being flexible with what you apply for will help you a lot.

And, still being able to laugh at the end of the day, will be the quality that will help you most of all.

Sharon Davey