

Job Seeker Handbook

Building a Strong Resume

Your resume is your first impression. Make it count! A well-crafted resume highlights your skills, experience, and accomplishments in a clear and concise manner. Tailor your resume to each job you apply for, emphasising the skills and experiences that are most relevant to the position.

Key Guidelines:

- Keep it concise: Aim for one to two pages.
- Use action verbs: Start each bullet point with a strong action verb (e.g., Managed, Developed, Implemented).
- Quantify your achievements: Use numbers and metrics to demonstrate the impact of your work (e.g., Increased sales by 15%).
- Proofread carefully: Errors can make you appear unprofessional.
- Use a professional font: Stick to classic fonts like Arial, Calibri, or Times New Roman.
- Consistent formatting: Use the same font size and style throughout the document.
- Tailor to the role: Highlight the skills that match the role description





Key Resume Sections:

- Contact Information: Full name, phone number, email address, LinkedIn profile URL (optional).
- Summary/Objective: A brief overview of your skills and career goals. Use a summary if you have more experience, objective if you have less.
- Work Experience: List your previous jobs in reverse chronological order (most recent first). Include job title, company name, dates of employment, and a bulleted list of responsibilities and achievements.
- Education: List your degrees and certifications in reverse chronological order. Include the name of the institution, degree earned, and graduation date.

Skills: List your relevant technical and soft skills. Categorize them for clarity (e.g., Technical Skills, Communication Skills, Leadership Skills).

Optional Sections: Volunteering, Awards, Publications, Projects.

Common Resume Mistakes:

- Typos and grammatical errors.
- Generic summaries or objectives.
- Irrelevant information.
- Lack of quantifiable achievements.
- Poor formatting.
- Exaggerated skills or experience.
- Not tailoring the resume to the job description

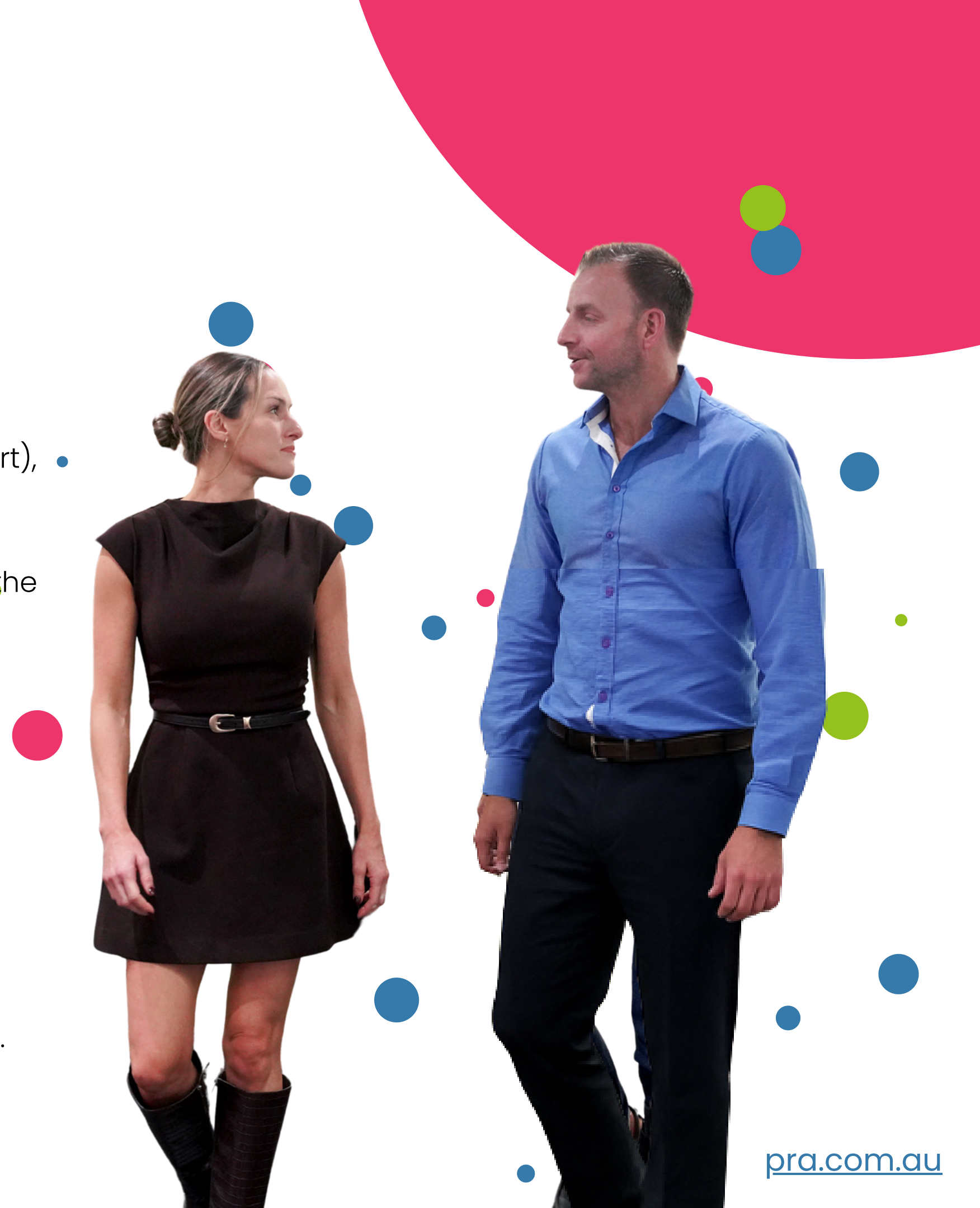
Presentation & Professional Image

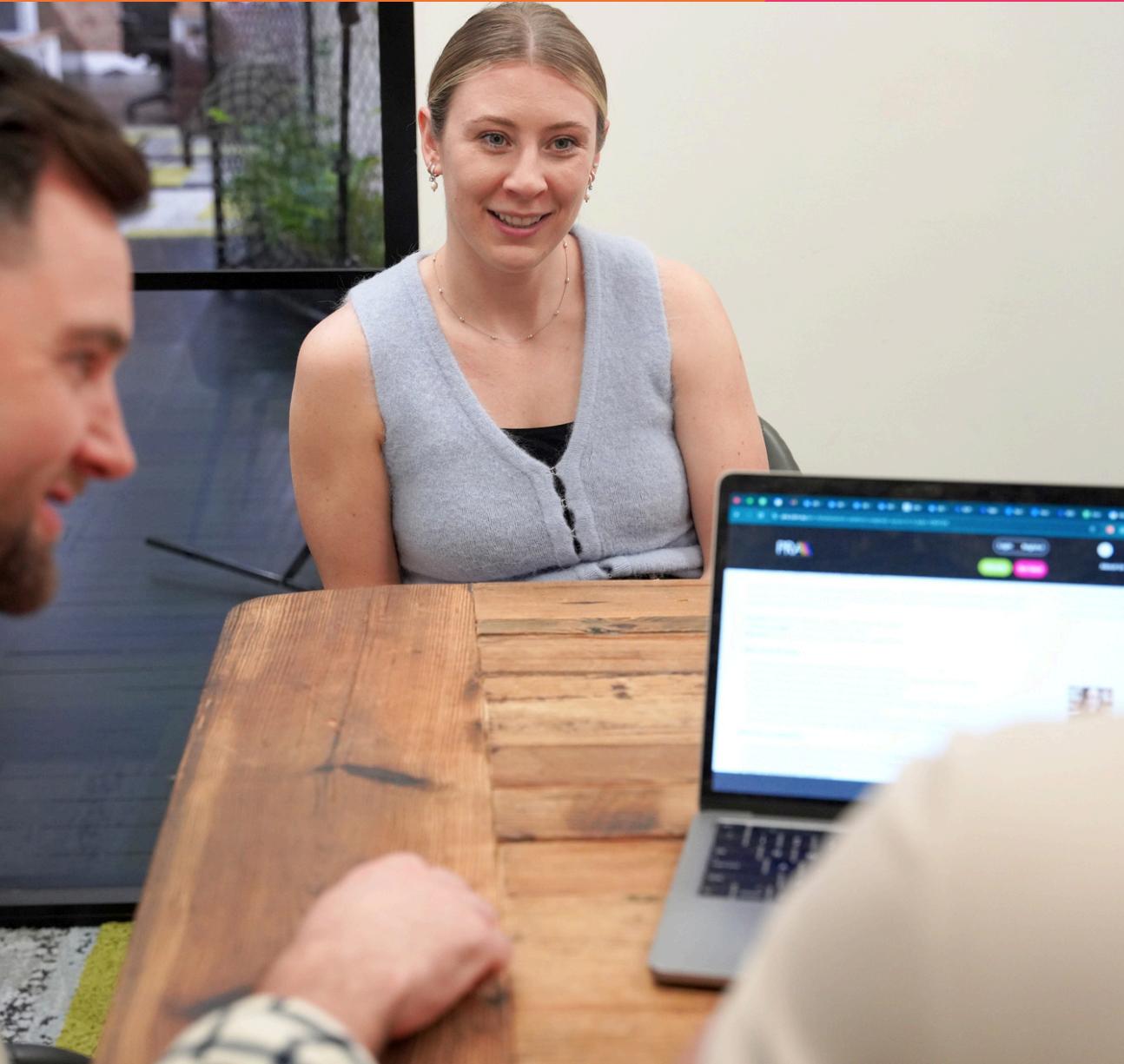
Dress Code:

- In-Person Interviews: Business professional attire is typically recommended. This usually means a suit (or blazer and dress pants/skirt), a dress shirt/blouse, and dress shoes. Ensure clothes are clean, well-fitting, and wrinkle-free.
- Video Interviews: Dress as you would for an in-person interview, even if the interview is conducted remotely. This shows respect for the interviewer and demonstrates your professionalism.
- For in office work at PRA: A business casual dress code is accepted.

Grooming:

- Hygiene: Shower or bathe before the interview. Use deodorant.
- Hair: Make sure your hair is neat and styled appropriately.
- Facial Hair: If you have facial hair, make sure it is well-groomed.
- Minimal Jewellery: Avoid excessive or distracting jewellery.
- Clean Nails: Keep your nails clean and trimmed.
- Avoid Strong Scents: Refrain from wearing strong perfumes or colognes.





Body Language:

- Maintain eye contact: Show that you are engaged and attentive.
- Smile: A genuine smile can make a positive impression.
- Sit up straight: Good posture conveys confidence.
- Avoid fidgeting: Fidgeting can be distracting and can make you appear nervous.
- Use hand gestures: Use natural hand gestures to emphasize your points.
- Nod to show understanding: Show that you are listening and understanding what the interviewer is saying.
- Firm handshake: A firm handshake conveys confidence and professionalism (when appropriate).

Online Presence:

- Clean up your social media profiles: Remove any inappropriate or offensive content.
- Maintain a professional LinkedIn profile: Make sure your profile is up-to-date and showcases your skills and experience.
- Be mindful of what you post: Potential employers may check your social media profiles.

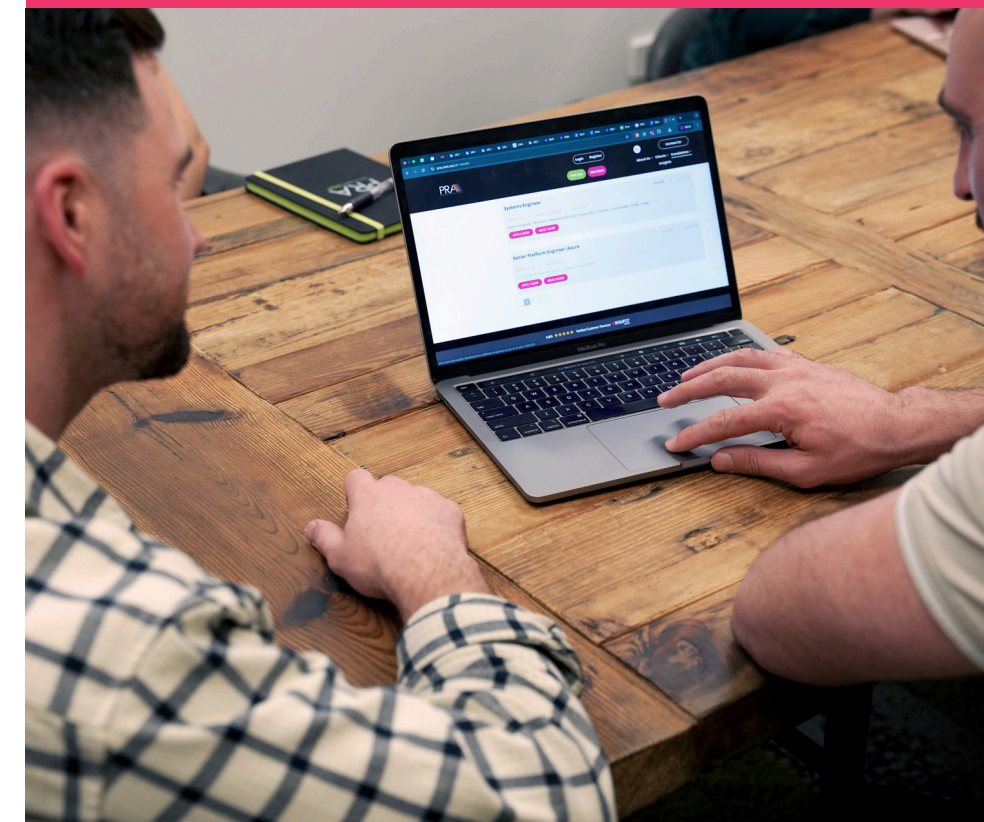
Interview Advice

Preparation:

- Research the company: Understand their mission, values, products/services, and recent news.
- Understand the job description: Identify the key skills and qualifications they are seeking.
- Prepare answers to common interview questions: Practice your responses out loud.
- Prepare questions to ask the interviewer: Show that you are interested and engaged.
- Plan your attire: Choose appropriate professional attire.
- Know the interview format: Will it be in-person, phone, video, or a panel interview?
- Test your technology (for video interviews): Ensure your camera, microphone, and internet connection are working properly.
- Plan your route (for in-person interviews): Account for traffic and parking.
- Gather your materials: Resume, portfolio, notepad, pen.

Common Interview Questions:

- Tell me about yourself.
- Why are you interested in this position?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
- Why should we hire you?
- Describe a time you failed and what you learned from it.
- Describe a time you had to overcome a challenge.
- Tell me about a time you worked as a team.
- What are your salary expectations?
- Do you have any questions for me?



Tips:

- Be on time: Arrive early (or log in early for video interviews).
- Be enthusiastic: Show genuine interest in the company and the position.
- Be yourself: Let your personality shine through.
- Listen carefully: Pay attention to the interviewer's questions and respond thoughtfully.
- Answer honestly: Don't exaggerate your skills or experience.
- Provide specific examples: Use the STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result) to answer behavioural questions.
- Thank the interviewer: Express your gratitude for their time and consideration.
- Follow up: Send a thank-you note or email within 24 hours.



Job hunting tips

Where to Look:

- **Online Job Boards:** Seek, Indeed, LinkedIn, Glassdoor.
- **Company Websites:** Check the career pages of companies you are interested in.
- **Networking Events:** Attend industry events and career fairs.
- **Recruiting Agencies:** Partner with recruiters who specialise in your field.
- **Professional Associations:** Join relevant professional associations and attend their events.
- **University Career Services:** If you are a recent graduate, utilise your university's career services department.
- **Government Job Sites:** Check your local or national government job boards.

LinkedIn Optimisation:

- **Professional Profile Picture:** Use a high-quality, professional headshot.
- **Compelling Headline:** Highlight your skills and experience in your headline.
- **Detailed Summary:** Write a compelling summary that showcases your accomplishments and career goals.
- **Complete Work Experience:** List your previous jobs with detailed descriptions of your responsibilities and achievements.
- **Skills and Endorsements:** Add relevant skills and ask for endorsements from colleagues and supervisors.
- **Recommendations:** Request recommendations from colleagues, supervisors, and clients.
- **Network Actively:** Connect with people in your industry and engage with their content.
- **Join Relevant Groups:** Participate in discussions and share your expertise.



Application Strategy:

- **Tailor Your Resume and Cover Letter:** Customise your resume and cover letter for each job you apply for, highlighting the skills and experiences that are most relevant to the position.
- **Proofread Carefully:** Double-check your resume and cover letter for typos and grammatical errors.
- **Follow Instructions:** Carefully read and follow the application instructions.
- **Submit Applications on Time:** Don't wait until the last minute to submit your application.
- **Track Your Applications:** Keep a record of the jobs you have applied for and the status of your applications.
- **Network with Employees:** If possible, connect with employees at the company you are applying to and ask for advice or referrals.
- **Prepare for Assessments:** Some companies may require you to complete assessments as part of the application process. Practice these assessments in advance.
- **Be Persistent:** Don't get discouraged if you don't hear back from every employer. Keep applying and networking.





Job boards and how to use them!

If you're job hunting in Australia, knowing where to look and how to present yourself – can make all the difference. The big three job boards remain SEEK, LinkedIn, and Indeed, but the way you use them matters more than just uploading your CV.

On SEEK, make sure your profile is complete and your CV is searchable, many employers and recruiters use SEEK Talent Search to headhunt candidates directly.

On LinkedIn, switch on the “Open to Work” feature in your profile settings (you can control whether only recruiters see this or make it visible to everyone). A well-optimised LinkedIn profile with clear achievements, keywords relevant to your industry, and regular engagement with posts helps you stand out.

Indeed also allows you to upload your CV for easy applications and has a strong presence in contract and casual roles.

Beyond these, don't underestimate niche job boards specific to your industry – for example, EthicalJobs for purpose-driven roles, ArtsHub for creative industries, or Australian Computer Society's job board for IT and tech professionals.



Training & short courses

While applying for jobs is essential, adding new skills can be the edge that gets you shortlisted. Platforms like Coursera, Udemy, edX, and FutureLearn offer affordable (and often free) short courses across everything from project management to cloud computing. Australian universities also provide free micro-credentials through platforms like Open Universities Australia. Even a short course - if it's recent and relevant - signals to employers that you're proactive about professional growth and adaptable in a fast-changing market.

The best strategy is to combine both: actively apply through the major boards while quietly strengthening your profile with fresh skills. That way, when a recruiter or hiring manager checks your CV or LinkedIn, they see someone who is not only qualified but also investing in their own career development.

This handbook provides guidelines for job seekers including resume building, professional image, interview preparation, and job hunting strategies. Following these tips can greatly increase your chances of landing your dream job. Good luck