

Unfortunately, it is not a great time to be a young person in the job market. Companies are cutting hundreds of thousands of jobs as Covid-19 continues to batter the economy. Unemployment rates are rising, and one of the hardest-hit groups has been young people. 156,000 fewer 16-24 year olds are employed **compared to three months ago**, and most economists expect unemployment to continue rising for the rest of the year.

There's no doubt that entering the job market at this time is a nightmare. Not only do young people have to compete against their peers, but they are also up against an army of unemployed people who are more experienced, and have had a lot of time to develop skillsets over their careers.

So, what are you to do?

It's a difficult time for sure, but nothing is impossible.

Here are some top tips to get you interview-ready and put you in the best possible position to secure a job:

Believe in yourself

It may seem like a fruitless task to apply for a position that hundreds of other candidates want as well. You probably think, "What's the point in even trying?" The odds of success in this situation aren't great, but the fact remains that the job has to go to somebody, so why not you? You could be the wheat amongst the chaff, the shining jewel in the sand.

You have to believe in yourself first before anybody else can.

Ensure your CV is the best it can be

A Curriculum Vitae (CV) is the key to securing an interview. It's the first obstacle you have to navigate on the journey to gaining employment, so it has to stand out from the crowd, and it has to make employers want you.

Keep it short and keep it simple. An excellent CV should take up no more than one page because prospective employers don't have time to read reams of paper that detail your whole life history. Remember, a CV is not an autobiography, but instead a highlight reel of your key roles and achievements.

Employers also want to know a bit about you on a personal level. What are your interests, your passions, and what makes you tick? These sorts of details should be covered in an initial paragraph underneath your

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name and contact details. Doing this will humanise you on paper, and interesting individuals are guaranteed to stand out in a crowded market.

Do include a brief work history, academic achievements, and any voluntary work you may have done. Ensure the format is easy to read, and avoid using fancy fonts as they seem amateurish and too try-hard.

Finally, you should spend the time composing a unique cover letter for every job you apply to. This is very time-consuming, but so worth it. A well-written cover letter will show that you have researched the company you are applying to, while also highlighting why you are the right candidate. It also shows the employer that you are committed and willing to go the extra mile for them.

Prepare for the type of interview

You've received an invitation to attend an interview? Amazing news. Now for some planning. Knowing what type of interview to expect can make you feel more prepared and confident. Apart from the traditional one-on-one meeting, here are several more interview formats:

Group interviews: This could either be when a panel of people interview you, or when you are interviewed as part of a group comprised of other candidates. You should prepare some answers to typical questions, practice your listening skills, and do not be afraid to get stuck into discussions and debates. There will be a reason that prospective employers choose the group interview format, most likely because they want to see how you interact with other people and how you handle conflict, so don't disappoint them.





Phone and video interviews: Make sure the technology you use is charged and working, and find a quiet room that is free of distractions.

Out-of-office interviews: Arrive a few minutes earlier, browse the restaurant menu online before arriving (this will make you look more decisive when you order), and dress appropriately according to the type of restaurant.

Learn about behavioural interviewing techniques

Behaviour-based interviewing is when an interviewer asks you about how you handled past situations at work. This gives employers an insight into the way you approach challenges and turn them into favourable opportunities.

If you have never had a job, have no fear. You can use experiences from your personal life as well, which will display lateral thinking to prospective employers.

Prepare for these type of interview questions by making a list of your skills, strengths, and weaknesses, and then think of times when you displayed these qualities. In the interview you will use these examples to show how you have handled certain situations and overcame challenges, while explaining how the skills you possess are easily transferrable to the role you have applied for.

Practice makes perfect

Practice will lead to improvement. [Click here](#) for some common interview questions, prepare the answers, and ask a friend or family member to conduct a mock interview. Alternatively, record yourself to analyse how you deliver answers and observe your own body language.

Do your research

At the end of an interview it is common practice for the interviewer to invite candidates to ask their own questions. To prepare, you could contact people who

already work there to learn about the company culture and the work environment. You could search on social media pages to find out more, and these additional details will show the interviewer that you are interested in the company, whilst allowing you to ask informed questions.

Look the part

Make a positive first impression by dressing right. Ensure your clothes fit well and wear simple accessories. You should be well-groomed and presentable. Your research on the company will help you decide if it is better to dress more casual or more formal, but if you can't find any information you could contact the person who scheduled the interview. If all else fails, stick to formal.

Go equipped

Don't turn up to an interview empty-handed. Be prepared. You should bring a printed copy of your CV, a list of references, samples of work, a list of questions to ask at the end of the interview, and writing materials to take notes.

Build rapport

An interview is an opportunity to create a connection with your potential employer and colleagues. Be friendly, yet professional, and try to create a more comfortable conversation. It's a great idea to practice some casual conversation topics, such as remembering to compliment the office design and location, or complementing the team on any awards they may have won. You could also try to find a common interest. The key is to be positive, friendly, and charming. Make prospective employers become interested in you as a person, not just as a worker.

Don't let them forget you

After the interview, write a short email to thank the employer for taking the time to meet you. Remember to reiterate your interest in the company and your passion for the position you applied for, and state that you will be fully flexible to meet the requirements of the company.

Be you

Don't pretend to be somebody you're not. You are amazing, talented, and there's only one of you in the whole world. Only you can do what you do, so own it, and go and get that job that you deserve.

Find more advice on applying for jobs at
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