



The Candidate Toolkit

Our expert guide to CVs, interviews
and securing your perfect role



RED DOOR
RECRUITMENT

Contents

- 1 Your job search
- 2 CV tips
- 4 CV template
- 5 Using an agency
- 7 Applying online
- 9 Interview preparation
- 14 Competency-based
- 17 Interview questions
- 19 Our consultants top tips



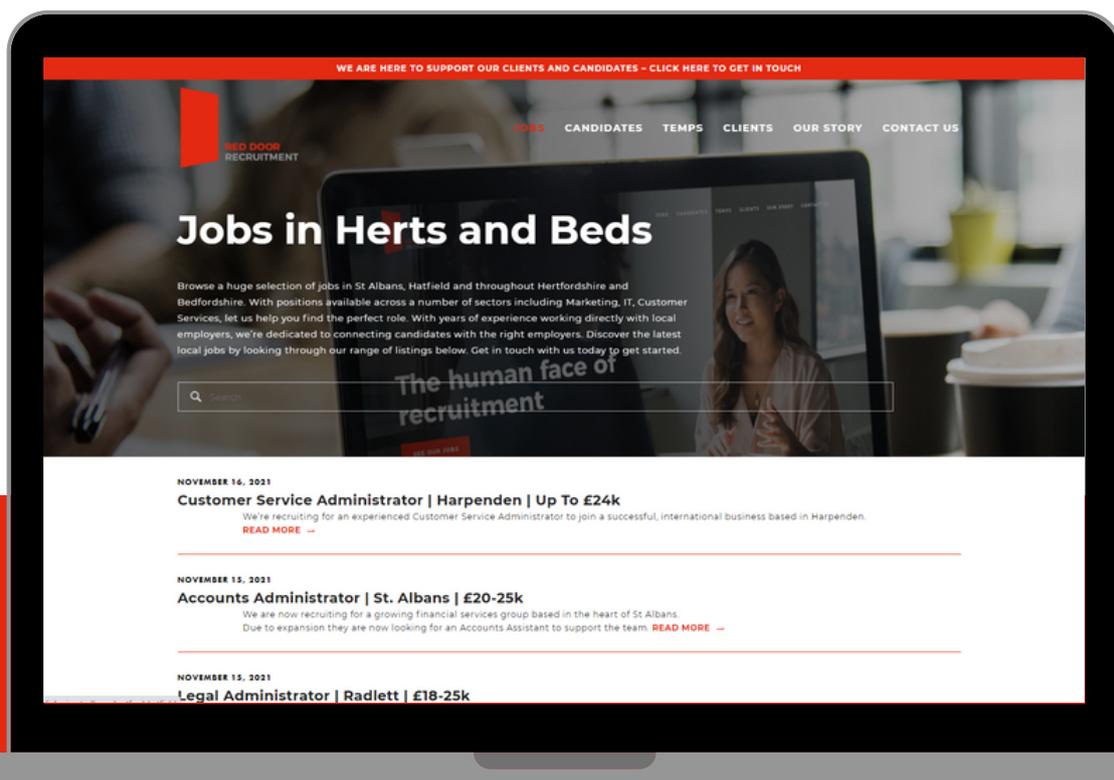
Your job search

So, you are looking for a new job?

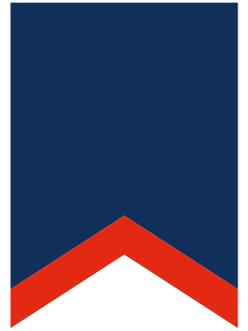
Well, we want to help! We have put together a fantastic guide on every step of the job search process to help guide you through what can be a challenging time.

Beginning your job search can be daunting and it's difficult to know how to get the ball rolling so here are some handy tips on how to get started.

The first thing you need to do is make sure your CV is up to date, clear to read, and free of spelling and grammar errors. Then we will discuss our best advice on how to get your CV and yourself out there. We will give you our top interview tips and how to answer both common and tricky questions! Finally, we have put together our consultants top job-hunting tips for you!



CV tips



We've created a list of CV writing tips to follow to make your CV stand out from the crowd, as it is easy to underestimate how important a carefully constructed CV is to your job application. We have also included a CV layout template if you are unsure of where to start.

DO

Use a clear font and spacing

Choose a simple font to ensure you don't distract from the content and make sure your spacing is equal between paragraphs

Work in reverse chronological order

Start with your most recent role (or qualification if you have just finished your education) and work backwards

Use concise bullet points

They need to be easy to read and we recommend 5–7 points per job

Keep it short and sweet

Two-three pages maximum depending on how many roles you've had Include key skills- but keep these relevant to the job you are applying for, if you're applying for an admin role it isn't relevant to list plate spinning as a skill!

Tailor your CV to individual roles

Small changes can make a big difference, look at your summary, key skills, and employment history to make sure the content is appropriate for specific roles

Always include months and years of employment

Explain your gaps briefly

It's okay to have some time off from work, but we don't need to know that you refurbished your bathroom in that time!

DON'T

Make grammatical mistakes

Make sure that you correctly use capital letters, full stops, punctuation, and don't overuse the '&' sign

Include irrelevant information

Less is more! This includes oversharing personal information

Use jargon, abbreviations, or 'slang'

Go too far back in time

Keep it in the 21st century, recent job roles only! Use 'further history available on request' if need be

Switch between tenses

Try and keep it in the first person and when writing about previous jobs don't write in the present tense



Your Name

email@address.co.uk

Mobile number and/or home number

Home address

Personal Statement

Your personal statement is perhaps the single most important part of your CV. Get it wrong and your chances of being invited to interview are drastically reduced. The aim is to highlight your professional attributes and goals, summarising why someone should consider your application.

Employment History (*Your most recent job first*)

Company Name – Location, Job Title, Dates of Employment including months and years. You should give your reader a brief introduction to what the company does and explain in bullet points a bit about the responsibilities your role covered.

- Provide a list of the key achievements you have made in your job
- Try to show evidence such as percentage increases or financial figures
- Provide enough information to entice your potential employers to call you
- Always keep examples relevant to the role you are applying for

Education

- University name, dates - Courses, (results)
- School name, dates - Courses, (results) – briefly explain how the courses you studied have led you to your chosen career path

Certificates & Memberships (*Further Qualifications*)

- Include any relevant professional qualifications here
- Make sure your most impressive accreditations are highest
- Add any professional associations of which you are a member

Key Skills

Technical Skills

- Show that you have the knowledge required to succeed in the role
- Include computer software you have used and relevant training courses

Personal Skills

- Include some of your main attributes that are vital to the role
- Good communication and flexibility are qualities that all employers look out for
- If you are changing career these transferable skills will aid your application

Interests

- Outside interests enable a potential employer to gain an understanding to what motivates you, what personal skills you may have and how you will integrate into the team.
- Look at how job advertisements stipulate certain personality traits required for positions.
- Identify what they are and show how your hobbies can relate to their requirements.



Using an agency

Now your CV is ready to go, the next step is getting it out there.

There are a couple of great ways to do this- we highly recommend registering with some local recruitment agencies.

Your CV will then be with an experienced group of recruiters hunting for a job role for you. We can support you every step of the way, through careers advice, CV editing, interview prep and landing your perfect role.

Using an agency to help you find a new job makes your process easier. It saves you time and effort in your job search and give you access to far more job roles than you have on job boards.

Not only do we have the resources and connections to find you what you are looking for; we coach you through the whole process from formatting your CV to interview prep to negotiating your contract.

Get in contact today, send us your CV or give us a call!



info@reddoorrecruitment.co.uk



01727 899490



reddoorrecruitment.co.uk



It is also really important to understand the difference between job descriptions so that you can be looking for the right kind of role for you.

Permanent

You will not have a predetermined end date to employment

Full-time

In the calendar month, as a full-time employee you will be employed on average at least 35 to 37.5 hours of service per week

Part time

A part-time worker is someone who works fewer hours than a full-time worker. Part-time employment is usually less than 30 hours a week, this can sometimes be confused with temporary

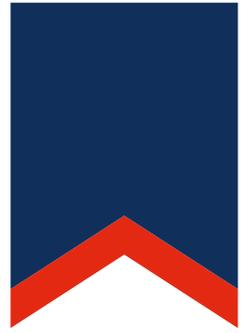
Temporary

You will be in an employment situation where the working arrangement is limited to a certain period of time based on the needs of the employing organisation

Contract

A contract employee is an individual retained by a company for a predetermined time

Applying online



That's not to say that you can just sign up for an agency and then not pursue your job search in an active way. You should explore other opportunities alongside this. You can put your CV up online on job boards such as Reed or Totaljobs or Indeed.

This will give recruiters all over the country access to view your CV. We search every day to find candidates on these job boards so it's a great way to make yourself accessible to recruiters who may have a good opportunity for you.

You can use those same job boards to explore jobs that have been posted online. We have a couple of tips for this

01. Only apply for jobs you really want, are qualified for and that you can travel to
Applying to job you don't really want or can't see yourself in will only delay your search and waste time on your end and recruiters

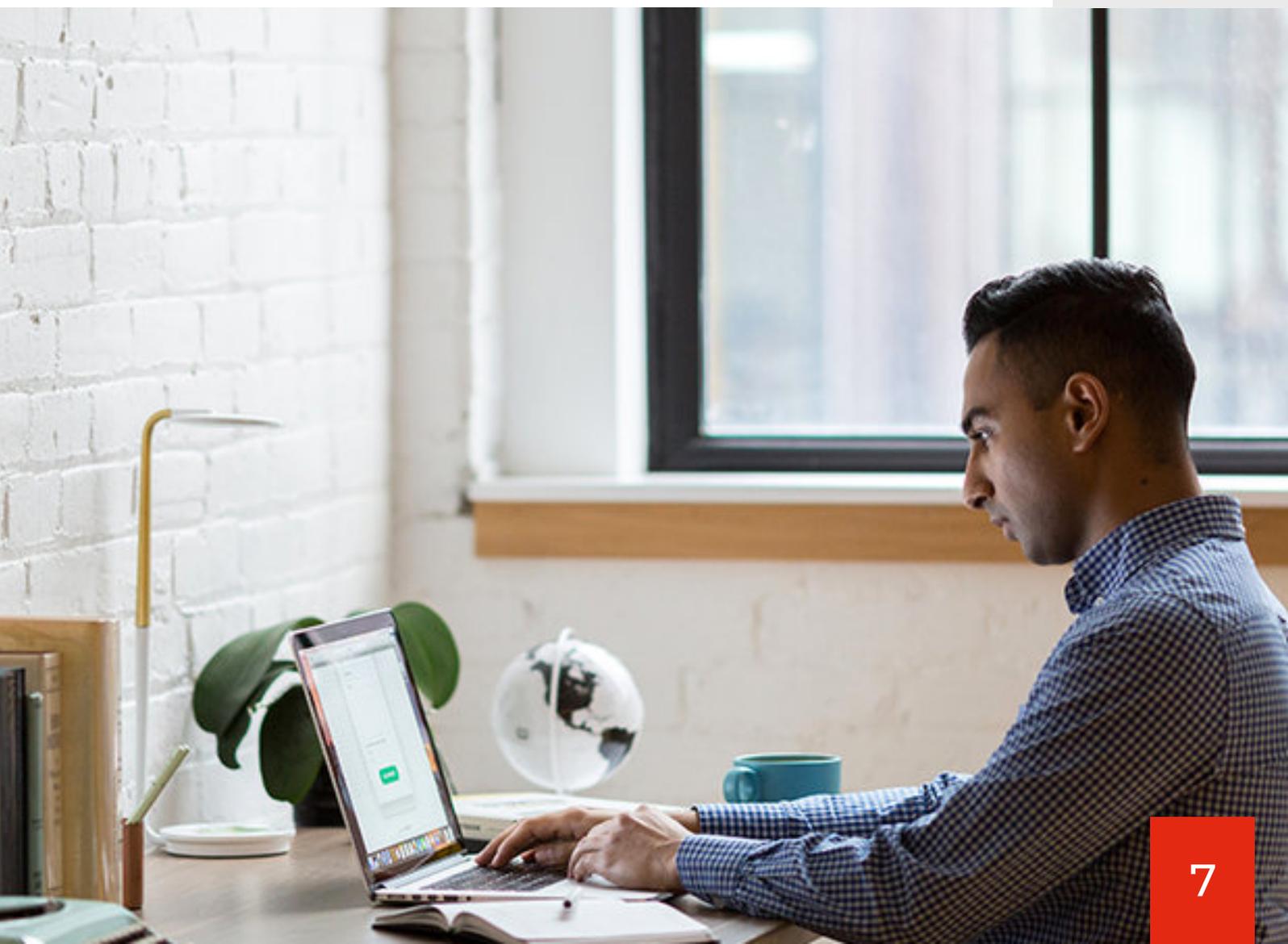
02. Keep track of what you have applied for
So you know what they are talking about when a recruiter calls you to discuss a role

03. Answer your phone and check your emails regularly
You don't want to miss out on an opportunity because you haven't moved quickly enough

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a fantastic networking platform connecting business professionals and B2B business. It's a really useful tool particularly for recruiters when seeking potential candidates and vice versa.

LinkedIn is most likely to be the biggest aspect of your professional presence online- so you want to make it count! Your profile needs to be as full and appealing as possible and you should use it as a tool to interact with professionals and potential employers within your field.



Our tips to you

Profile

You should ensure that your profile is complete with photo, skills, and recommendations.

Open to work banner

You can let recruiters and other people in your network know that you are looking for opportunities using the LinkedIn

Making connections

Reach out to people you know in your professional life or have known in the past. Feel free to reach out to old contacts with a message to reacquaint yourself. Connect with professionals within your sector that you would like to know

Interacting with content

It is really important to make yourself seen by interacting with other people's content on LinkedIn, whether it be congratulation comments on personal or professional achievements or voicing your opinion on a particular discussion someone has initiated.

Posting content

As well as interacting with others, you should make an effort to post and share parts of your life also. This can include your personal experiences/ achievements and news/opinions regarding industry or workplace issues



Interview preparation



It is essential to maximise your chances of success through in depth preparation and choosing the most appropriate questions to ask during the interview. If you allocate time to your preparation, you will be in the best position to decide about the role and the company by the time you leave the interview.

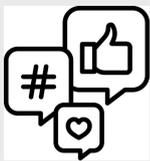
Research



Look at the company website and Google supporting information about who they are



Check LinkedIn to see if the interviewers are on the site



Check every aspect of the website, including their social media accounts and YouTube accounts



Be prepared to offer a short introduction of their products/services. If relevant, try their products or services prior to the interview

During the interview

Always remember, the interview is a two-way process; you should be asking as many questions as you need to decide if you want to work for the company

Be honest about your reasons for leaving roles, it is always the best policy, but we strongly advise against criticising your current or previous employers. If you are finding this difficult to manage, please discuss with us in advance during your interview preparation

A firm handshake, a ready smile and maintaining good eye contact are essentials, they can make a dramatic difference to your success

A photograph showing two women sitting at a table in a bright, modern office setting. They are positioned in front of a large window that offers a view of a city skyline. The woman on the left has long brown hair and is wearing a light-colored top. The woman on the right has dark curly hair, wears glasses and a blue long-sleeved top. They appear to be in a professional conversation, with the woman on the right smiling slightly. The lighting is bright and natural, coming from the window.

A firm handshake, a ready smile and maintaining good eye contact are essentials...

Good practise

Your appearance is very important, always make a real effort to present yourself in a professional way.

Even if the company has a relaxed dress code you will still need to look as though you have made every effort to look as well-groomed as possible.

Take a good quality notepad with your prepared questions listed.

At the end of the interview always refer to it, indicating to the interviewer you have a list and would just like to check everything has been covered. It demonstrates you have prepared for the interview and really thought through the questions you need to ask appropriate to the role.

Take a copy of your CV in case the interviewer refers to something within it.

You can use it to support your answer. Practice talking through your CV and anticipate the questions you are likely to be asked.

Check the route beforehand and allow extra time in case of traffic delays.

It is always better to be early, allowing you time to compose yourself. This is also your opportunity to soak up the culture of the company while you wait. Speak to everyone who speaks to you, you never know who you may be talking to!

Questions you could be asked

About yourself

- Tell me about yourself
- How would a friend or colleague describe you?
- What motivates you?
- Describe your greatest achievements
- How do you work under pressure?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?

About the company and role

- What do you know about our company/products/services/industry?
- Why do you think this is a good role for you?
- What experience or strengths do you bring to the role?
- What can you contribute to the organisation?

At a second interview

- What is your view about the role and company now you have a better understanding of both?
- Were there any tricky questions in the first interview?
- What do you want to make sure you get across in the second interview?
- What further questions will you be asking?
- Do you have any concerns about the role?
- Are you considering this alongside other roles? If yes, how does this role compare, and which one is your first choice and why?

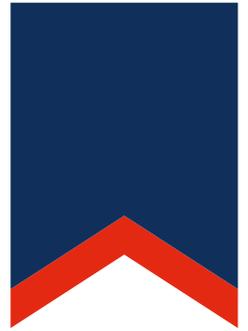
Questions you can ask

Some examples

- Why has the position become available?
- Can you give me an example of a typical day?
- What are the three key responsibilities of the role?
- What is the most difficult aspect of the job?
- What are the biggest challenges in the role?
- How long does it take to learn the role and what training do you offer?
- What skills and experiences are you looking for?
- Can you tell me more about the team I'll be working with?
- What is the culture of the department and/or company?
- Is there potential to develop within the company?
- If interviewed by HR, can you tell me more about my line manager?



Competency-based



Although the type of question you are asked will depend entirely upon the role and industry you're applying for, there are themes which run through competency-based interview questions.

Some examples include

- Tell me a time when...
- Can you think of an example of how/when...?
- Describe a way in which you...

Firstly, pick out the key competencies stated in the job description and think of some examples for each one.

If they're looking for someone with excellent teamwork and leadership skills, think of a scenario in which you've demonstrated this. Workplace situations show your capabilities, but you can also consider describing a group presentation you've undertaken at school or college, or even a situation where you were part of a sports team and how you worked together.



S

Situation



T

Task



A

Action



R

Reaction



A simple answer, using the situation above, would be:

“I demonstrated teamwork when my department presented a group proposal in front of some key clients. We were asked to give a one-hour presentation about how we could improve their hiring practices. After extensive competitor research, we were able to put a competitive price together and present the features and benefits within the allotted hour. We went on to win the business.”





Top tips for competency-based interviews

- 01.** Before you arrive at the interview, pick out the key skills in the job description
- 02.** For each one, have a pre-prepared example of how you've handled the situation
- 03.** Use a wide variety of examples where possible, including during school or higher education, any previous employment or work experience, and in your daily life in general
- 04.** Don't lie, as the interviewer will ask you questions about the subject, and any embellishments you've made will be quickly found out

Interview questions



Why should we hire you?

- Reiterate your top 3 selling points that are integral to the role
- Highlight that you will be a great fit for their team
- Express how hiring you will help them grow and achieve
- Explain what makes you different from other candidates

Why do you want to work here?

- What the organisation actually does – the product/service it provides and what interests you about it
- The organisation's culture – what it's really like to work there
- The organisation's recent successes and the challenges they face
- The philosophy and mission behind the organisation
- The training and development they offer

Where do you see yourself in the next 5 years?

- Mention targets you have that fit in with the current role you are applying for
- Emphasise your interest in a long-term career at the company
- Don't be too bold and exhibit a need to progress too quickly, it can make a recruiter unsure of your commitment to this role
- Don't be afraid to mention goals outside of work too, if you are looking to buy a house or upgrade to a larger house for example, this shows discipline and determination!

What is your biggest weakness?

- Find a balance between not coming across too arrogant; but not too self-critical
- Share details of something you think you can improve on in the working environment
- The weakness you choose should not be a skill or attribute that is essential to the role you are applying for
- You can highlight how you have turned something that was a negative into a positive and what you did to improve

Where do your strengths lie?

- Showcase your problem-solving skills
- look at the job description beforehand and have a few scenarios prepared that could correlate with your new role
- Explain it in a way which highlights how you cope with pressure and your ability to act quickly in the workplace



Our consultants top tips!



Be aware of your social media accounts – clients do check these so ensure to make your profiles private or appropriate! Explain any gaps on your CV... Use the advice and experience of your recruitment consultant when preparing for an interview – they are knowledgeable and work closely with the clients, so will be able to guide you on what to expect.

Laura, Recruitment Consultant

Spell check and check grammar on C.V... Set up a LinkedIn page and make sure you change settings to looking for work – update your headline and profile for any future employers. Approach a Zoom interview as you would a face-to-face interview, ensure phone is switched off and you have no other interruptions.

Tracy, Business Development Executive

Ask yourself, what do I need to know about this company to enable me to decide if I want to join them? The interview is a 2-way process, and you should prepare a minimum of 5 insightful questions to ask the interviewer to enable you to make this important decision.

Louise, Director

Suited and booted – always dress as smart as possible for an interview unless specifically told otherwise. Eye contact – make sure you make eye contact and smile. Build a rapport with your interviewer and try to enjoy the process.

Joanna, Recruitment Consultant