



## How To Rise To The Top In A Challenging Job Market

***Terry Buckel, Managing Director of Astute Technical Recruitment, gives an insight into how to go about getting a new job.***

It's competitive out there! During a recent recruitment campaign we received over 30 applicants who had the required experience for a specific technical role. With so many good candidates, employers are looking for reasons to exclude you just as much as to consider you. View the process as a pyramid – with you and 30 others on the ground floor – and you need to ensure that you tick all the positive boxes and avoid getting any negative marks to ensure you climb through each storey before reaching the top of the pyramid and getting the job offer.

### The CV

The first stage is to ensure that you have a clear and concise CV that portrays the image you want potential employers to have of you. Therefore, proof read your CV and use spelling and grammar checks, as you want to come across as having a keen eye for detail and strong written communication skills.

You should also ask yourself, “Does this sell my skills and experience to the potential employer in the right way”? Think about any achievements in your current role. Have you been involved in or coordinated any particular projects within your team? Is there any specialist training you have undertaken that would give you an advantage?

You want the potential employer to come away with a clear idea of your main Unique Selling Points (USPs) or competencies, so take time to draw up a list of these and make sure they stand out to the person reading your CV – even bullet point them at the top of your CV and tailor them to the position you are applying for. Avoid generic and long winded personal profiles. Also make sure your contact details are professional, so no funny or quirky email addresses, every part of your CV needs to remain professional.

### Finding Positions

In the past, hirers have used a wide range of media to advertise positions. Nowadays it is wise to focus on the internet – searching for positions through job title and location. You will find positions advertised on companies own corporate websites, generic job-boards, industry-specific sites and recruitment company websites. As well as applying direct for these positions, on many sites you can store your details and set alerts to email you when new jobs are added to the website. However, do not just spam your CV to lots of vacancies; instead, write specific covering emails and tailor your CV to each position. This will make you stand out.

### Communication With Recruiters

It is likely that your CV and application will be dealt with first by someone within a recruitment agency or the internal resourcing department within your prospective employer. They can rule you out without your details ever being seen by your prospective manager. Make sure your CV is easy to understand – and don't assume that because you have put on your CV that you are a member of the CIWM they know this is waste management.

Be patient, polite and proactive with HR and be honest and direct with recruitment agencies. Make sure you are targeted with your applications and apply for roles you feel are certainly within your remit; it is no good applying for positions which you know you will not have the experience for. If anything it reduces your credibility in the eyes of potential hirers and duplicate applications also give a negative impression. Good recruitment consultants will be able to give you advice on which companies could suit your career. Be honest about the type of company you want to work with and they can ensure they approach the right type of companies for you. Build relationships with



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consultants and they will remember you and have you on their hot list for when new vacancies are registered with them by employers.

## Linked In And Facebook

Professional networking sites are all the rage at the moment with more and more of us using sites such as Linked In to boost our profiles. Just like your CV, it is important that your internet profile gives potential employers the right impression about you. Having a professional photo, getting recommendations from former colleagues, making valid contributions to discussions within groups are all important factors.

It also pays to be mindful of content and avoid posting anything you would not want potential or current employers to see. This also goes for non-professional networking sites such as Facebook, so make sure your security settings are water tight or avoid any controversial photos or postings.

## The Interview

Finally, this is your moment to shine! Make the most of this opportunity to showcase your skills and experience. Make sure you research the company beforehand, it is better to over prepare than under prepare. Understand what you are looking for and what drew you to the interview, which helps to ensure you come across as having the right focus.

You must focus on your main competencies and USPs again as mentioned earlier in this article. The majority of interviews will involve a series of competency based questions which are founded on the idea that past behaviour is the best predictor of future behaviour. This allows all candidates an equal opportunity to present their past experiences in line with the criteria for the position being sought. Different companies look for different competencies when they recruit for their positions; refer back to the job description to remind you of which competencies are required for that specific job.

Time keeping is very important during this process, don't be late, make sure you plan your journey in advance and take into consideration traffic, train delays etc. When the market is tight and the competition is strong, it would be a shame that you fall down due to something like this which is completely unavoidable. Present yourself professionally, make sure you are dressed for the occasion which gives the impression that you care about the job you are going for. You may be asked to prepare a presentation, this has been the Achilles heal for many candidates I have worked with in the past. Small details like sitting down during your presentation or not maintaining eye contact can all be deciding factors when interviewers are faced with candidates who are equally as strong as each other.

## Conclusion

If you follow the tips above it will give you a good chance of reaching the top of that Pyramid and getting the magic job offer. If you don't get through then don't lose heart – it is competitive and there are many other well qualified candidates around. However, it is important to assess your performance and ask for feedback from the recruiter. Think to yourself, "Could I have done anything differently or better"? and create an action plan which learns from your mistakes and makes you even better prepared for the next job application.

**Note:** Terry Buckel is Managing Director of Astute Technical Recruitment Ltd, s leading provider of staff to the power generation, waste management and utilities sectors. [www.astutetechanical.co.uk](http://www.astutetechanical.co.uk)