



Landing a new job in 2021

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It's Welcome to 2021. Let's hope it's less eventful than 2020. It will certainly still have its challenges – Covid-19 is still here, vaccination programmes need to rollout and take effect, employment needs to increase, and businesses need to get back on the road to success again.

If you are someone who is looking for a job this year, then I am going to discuss some trends which are likely to impact job seekers.

1. Covid-19 has changed the landscape for industries. Although some businesses have been hit, others are booming. If you need to get a job, then consider those industries that are in need of employees. Currently the industries booming are those in healthcare, pharmaceuticals, protective equipment, technology, fintech, E-commerce, and customer service (especially virtual customer service). If you have been battling to find a job then consider these industries. E-commerce, tech, and fintech, as well as virtual customer service are also likely to still boom once the Covid-19 storm is over. The aviation and travel industries have been hit hard. The predictions are that as we gain control over the virus leisure travel will rise and possibly grow, but business travel, and especially international business travel may never reach their previous levels. So think about the industry you work in. The landscape has changed so much you may have to do a career pivot. To find a job you may have to branch out into a new industry or take on different roles.
2. Currently because of job losses the applicant pool for vacant positions is growing bigger and bigger. This is still likely to be the case for this year, however, as the virus comes under control and economies can start growing again this will tail off. Certainly, for the first part of 2021, if you are job hunting expect it to be very competitive and expect it to take longer than ever before to find something. World-wide career experts are also predicting the hiring process will be more intense, with more interviews and assessments. Practise and get really good at these.
3. The increasing competitiveness in the job market means that in order to get a job you are really going to have to stand out. Worldwide most people expect that professional CV and cover letter writers are going to be busier than ever. You are going to have to put more effort into your cover letter and CV, and tailor them very specifically for the jobs you are applying for. You also want to take a look at your social media presence and clean it up if necessary. Recruiters Google your name and look at your social media posts. So, make sure they reflect a good image. Look at skills you can develop that may give you an edge in the job market. Keep increasing your value to an employer.
4. You can enhance your image and employability through social media and using the internet. Writing articles about your field demonstrating your expertise is a good way to stand out and showcase your talents. Doing pro bono or volunteer work usually always gives you an advantage in the job hiring process.

5. Recruiting is increasingly going to become impacted, like all other fields, by technology, including advances in AI. The pandemic has already meant virtual interviews have become quite common. Although, before making a final offer, managers are likely to want to meet with you face-to-face, the predictions are that virtual interviews are still likely to be used in earlier rounds of interviewing as they can save time and money. Make sure you polish your video and audio interviewing skills. Most applications already are quite automated, and this is likely to continue. As AI becomes embedded more and more into recruiting procedures, you may find yourself being interviewed by a machine/robot. Questions such as “Tell me about yourself”, “What are your strengths and weaknesses?”, “Why do you want this job?” may be asked by a bot. It may take a while for this to happen in SA but, when it comes you will need to be comfortable responding to interview questions asked by a bot. Recruitment is a time consuming and expensive activity for most companies, so they will definitely be wanting to take advantage of technological developments.
6. Networking will be more important than ever – in-person, and increasingly on-line. It takes time to build a network so get started. Start meeting people, start building the relationships, start conversations, and look at how you can help others in your network. When you have just met people you cannot start asking for all sorts of favours without scaring them off. So keep working on your network all the time. People who have strong networks find it much easier to get a job.
7. Work from home is likely to continue in many industries world-wide. This has an advantage in that you can broaden your search across the country and perhaps even to another country. If you are battling to find positions in your town, perhaps you can look elsewhere. Also, if you can point out to hiring managers how you have mastered working from home, you are likely to be seen more favourably if the job is one that will be a work from home one.

Because the job search is likely to take longer, be less personal due to increased automation of the process, and be increasingly competitive, when you are job hunting make sure you work on your health and wellbeing and self-care. You need to be in a good mental space when job hunting, so keep your confidence and self-belief high. Spend some time doing fun things, keep your social life going, and learn to come back from rejection. Nothing stays the same forever, and the job situation will change for the better. And when it does you will have learned the skills to be excellent at job hunting.