

THE LET'S ROLE JOB SEARCH SERIES

BOOK 3

**ENGAGING WITH
YOUR FUTURE**

EMPLOYER

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**A RECRUITER'S GUIDE TO STANDING OUT ONLINE
(AND NOT FOR THAT HARLEM SHAKE VIDEO).**

THE LET'S ROLE JOB SEARCH SERIES – BOOK 3

ENGAGING WITH YOUR FUTURE EMPLOYER

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CHAPTER 1

BIT OF A BORING TITLE, ISN'T IT?

We know. Unfortunately, this happens to be one of those topics that is difficult to sum up in a neat little headline. It's not as simple as 'Talking to People' or 'Writing a Cool Covering Letter' or 'Looking Good Online'. It's personal to you, and it incorporates not only who you are, but who you're trying to impress.

So the first question that's probably come to mind is *What do you mean by 'engagement'?* It's a good question, too. And no, we're not asking you to ask your future boss to run away and elope with you to Vegas.

Engagement, in our terms, is essentially everything that you do to interact with your future employer (other than by sending them your CV) before you go to interview. This includes messaging them on LinkedIn, email communications, sending your cov-

ering letter and any short phone calls you might have (excluding phone/video interviews, which we will cover in Book 4: [Winning In Interviews](#)).

When it comes to communication like this, many candidates find themselves at a bit of a dead-end. What you say, how you say it, when you say it, where you say it (email, LinkedIn, etc.), and even who you say it to all come into question, which can sometimes, understandably, become a little overwhelming.

Over the course of this book, we'll endeavour to dispel some of this confusion and make this communication much easier. There are, however, a couple of things to sort out before you even know who it is you'll be communicating with.

CHAPTER 2

REPAIRING YOUR DIGITAL REP

Digital reputation is better understood within the context of companies. The phrase refers to how a business presents and frames itself online, affecting how the company is seen as a whole.

This means its website, its LinkedIn page, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, even the way it communicates through email. Anything pertaining to the company that's seen online contributes to its digital reputation.

You might notice, then, that this means a company's digital reputation isn't entirely under its control. Any reviews, photos, articles, tweets or posts about the company written by *anyone else* also factor into this reputation. In fact, even the absence of a response to one of these things will affect it.

For example, let's say a huge fast food chain, let's call them... oh, I don't know... Mississippi Roasted Turkey, have an excellent

online presence. They try really hard to present themselves on Twitter as down to earth and 'with it' (to use a phrase that no one who is 'with it' ever actually uses). They post memes, have banter with other brand social accounts, and even post about ending systemic injustice and fighting climate change.

One day, however, a video surfaces from inside MRT's turkey farms, revealing that MRT do not use turkeys in their food, opting instead for an endangered species of pygmy ostrich. [#MRPO](#) and [#OstrichGate](#) are suddenly trending, and people everywhere are hounding MRT for a response to the video.

They never respond.

After that, no matter how much MRT try to claw back their reputation, no number of memes can salvage the mess made by OstrichGate. Whenever someone looks into the company, all they find is the news story that the company failed to acknowledge.

The existence of the video was not within their control, but their *response* to it was.

[What has this got to do with me?](#) Well, companies aren't the only ones with digital reputations. Individuals have them, too, and by individuals, yes, we mean you. That means everything you do online impacts how you will be seen by other people and, most importantly, by potential employers. That's *everything*, by the way, even the Twitter account you haven't used since 2014.

Before a recruiter or hiring manager even considers you a candidate, they will look you up on Google. It's a classic 'nothing to hide, nothing to fear' situation; if you've got a squeaky-

clean record, recently purged any unsavoury things from your past, locked your privacy settings up tighter than Fort Knox (or somehow *didn't* go through an embarrassing stage in your early twenties during which you collected empty bottles of alcohol so you could show off how cool you were for drinking so much), then you'll probably be fine. If, however, the thought of your future boss scrolling all the way through your Facebook timeline sends figurative fire ants crawling down your spine, it may be worth taking action.

That said, we would generally recommend doing this anyway, because you never know what things you may have tweeted a few years ago that, though fine back then, might under the blinding headlights of hindsight come across as insensitive, ignorant, or just plain idiotic. If you can say with 100% certainty that you've never said anything stupid, then you're already wrong.

There are two ways to ensure you can sleep comfortably without memories of your My Chemical Romance phase haunting your dreams:

1. Fix your privacy settings
2. Social media audit

These two methods have different levels of difficulty, but also have different levels of effectiveness.

Fixing your privacy settings is fairly easy. All you need to do is go through all your social media accounts (including the ones you don't use anymore), head into the settings and switch all of

them from Public to Private. This, obviously, will mean that if someone hasn't already connected with you, they won't be able to see your content. It's a nice and easy way of hiding all your stuff from potential peekers.

There are, however, a couple of drawbacks here. The first applies if you, as a person, prefer to be more of an open book. Locking all your privacy settings up means that you won't be able to be found by friends of friends or interested strangers – of course, for some this is brilliant, but others prefer to be able to be found. The second drawback is a little unfair. If you hide all your content, it might result in the suspicion that you are hiding it *for a reason*. Now, this isn't necessarily going to discount you from a role, but if you begin an interview with your interviewer feeling suspicious of you, it's going to be much harder to gain their trust. Trust is incredibly important to the success of an interview, so you want to avoid or somehow dispel this suspicion if you can. The best way to engender trust is to appear transparent, so setting all of your social media to Private is going to work against you.

A social media audit is a much more difficult process, but it's much more effective. What it entails is venturing through the entirety of your social media and manually taking down anything that might hinder your chances with a future employer. As to what this might be, it really depends on your industry and what kind of companies you're looking to work with. You can make an evening of it, though, and play this simple game: every time you cringe, take a shot of your chosen drink. You'll be having fun in no time.

The first thing to remember is to look not only at your own posts, but anything you've been tagged in as well; you don't want an unfortunate drunk photo posted by your best mate to trip you up in your application. The second thing is to check the comments on your posts, too. This is because some companies won't like it if it seems as though you associate with the wrong crowd. We once had a client turn down a candidate because they found a photo of them smoking on Facebook – the smoking was fine, but it was the inappropriate and offensive comments their friends made *beneath* the photo that soured the hiring manager's perception of the candidate. So, make sure you go through your internet past with a fine-tooth comb, sweeping up and disposing of anything that would give an employer any reason to drop your CV into the recycling.

Once you're finished either with your privacy settings or your social media audit, the best way to check if your efforts have worked is to do exactly what a recruiter would: google yourself.

Don't just search your name (especially if you have a fairly common one); instead, include any factors that would narrow down the search specifically to you. This could be your home town, your university, your job title – anything a recruiter would be able to use to find you. Then, simply scroll through the results and see what comes up. Be sure to use a few different search engines and explore image and news searches as well. Turn on private or incognito browsing so that it's not taking into account your previous history to find you relevant results. This way, you'll be able to see exactly what can be found about you.

Once you're happy with which bits of your past can be seen, it's time to turn your attention to the present. Think about your profile pictures, your various bio's, and the kind of language you use in your posts. We're not saying you have to slap **GIVE ME A JOB** on everything, but it may be worth steering your 'personal brand' towards something you'd want a potential employer to see. For example, we're writing this in the year 2020, during the Covid-19 pandemic, so your Twitter bio might read something like *This year is making me want to crawl into a blanket cocoon and hibernate 'til 2028*. While this is something that arguably rings true for most of us, it won't be the sort of thing to inspire confidence in a hiring manager. You want your online presence to project an air of positivity and put-togetherness, because this will serve as an excellent pre-first impression.

Now, you can be sure that when you're seen, it'll be from the best possible angle. The next step is to get yourself seen in the first place.

CHAPTER 3

HOW TO LINK ON LINKEDIN

We know, we know, we just did a whole book on LinkedIn (Book 2: [Becoming a LinkedIn All-Star](#)). However, whereas that was all about setting up your LinkedIn profile, this chapter is going to talk about how to use it to build your network and talk to people.

BEING ACTIVE

You can think of LinkedIn as being like a massive industry conference that's going on all the time. A lot of people seem to think that if they just turn up in their best business clothes and stand grinning at the side of the room with their CV in their hand, occasionally throwing a thumbs up when they hear something they agree with, someone will notice them and toss them a job.

Unfortunately, it doesn't quite work like that. You actually have to make your way around the conference, interacting with people in your industry and discussing trends and events that are occurring in your sphere. It's only by doing this that you'll make any kind of impact and prove that you're someone worth knowing.

If it wasn't clear, we're recommending that you don't just sit on LinkedIn and 'like' a post every so often. Instead, find relevant news to do with your industry and interests and comment on it. Even better, respond to other people's comments and get a conversation going. This is a good way not only to be seen by those specific people, but to get elevated in the eyes of the *all-powerful algorithm*; the more you engage and interact with their platform, the more visibility LinkedIn will give you.

Similarly, don't just 'share' articles without adding anything to the conversation. This is like standing silently in the middle of the conference holding a big sign with an arrow on it pointing to something else in the room. Even if people look at whatever the arrow is pointing to, no one will care who's holding the sign. Instead, add some commentary, give your opinion or share a relevant anecdote. Give people a reason to engage and interact with *you*.

Finally, it's tempting to use LinkedIn as a mouthpiece to talk about how great and successful you are. While there is space for posts that celebrate your work and your achievements, if the only topic you talk about is yourself, you'll come across as narcissistic. Not only that, but it fails to open up the floor to conversation; if someone brags to the room at a party about all the important clients they've worked with, are you more likely to ask them

follow-up questions, or creep over to the kitchen and hope they don't address you directly? If you are making a celebratory post about yourself, be sure to end it with a question asking people about their own similar experiences. This way, you're celebrating *with* people, not just *at* them.

NOW YOU'RE TALKING

Once you've explored the conference a bit, sauntering around seminars and lingering in lectures, you may decide it's time to strike up a conversation with someone. The trouble here, of course, is identifying who's worth talking to. You don't want to waste your time chatting to people who aren't in your industry, aren't right for you, or aren't even looking for someone like you. So, how do you narrow things down?

You need to create what's called a company persona. This is essentially a description of your hypothetical ideal company. This is entirely based on you and what you want, so your ideal company's culture, size, location, priorities and progression structure.

The best way to structure your company persona is to ask yourself these questions:

1. What's my ideal **job title**?
2. Who would I **report to**?
3. What **industry** do I want to work in?
4. What's my ideal **company culture**?

5. What's my ideal company **size** (number of employees, e.g. under 50)
6. What's my ideal **location**?

Feel free to add any more important information. When you have this, you can use it to search for companies on LinkedIn that fit the description. After that, look in their 'People' section and search for the job title you specified as the one you would ideally report to. If there's no one matching this exact description, find someone that's as close to it as possible. This is your first target.

SPEAKING THEIR LANGUAGE

Now comes the all-important opening message. If the empty box and blinking cursor cause you to stop in your tracks, don't worry: this hurdle is one that most people find tricky to vault. You want to catch their attention, but for the right reasons. You want to give them enough information without rambling on at them. You want to encourage a response without coming off as needy and cloying. So, how do you do it?

In order to communicate with someone in their language and have a meaningful first connection, we need to utilise:

- Triggers
- Priorities

We're sure you don't need us to define the word 'trigger', but in this context we're referring to a particular event or circum-

stance within a company or its industry that *triggers* something else. Some examples of this might be:

- An economic downturn, forcing it to come up with cost-cutting solutions
- Company growth, providing it with the opportunity to expand into new areas
- Winning an award, giving it some good press and, therefore, more business
- Merging with another company, making it reorganise the structure of the business

Triggers like this are great jumping-off points; referencing a recent one in your message shows that you have done your research and are not just sending the same message to everyone. It also creates a sense of urgency in the suggestion of cause and effect: 'That has happened, so you must *react* with this'. What you need to do here is create pain. It sounds harsh, but we're not talking about insulting or harming them. No, what we mean is that you need to bring a problem to their attention, purely so that you can offer to swoop in and solve it.

In order to know what problem will matter to them, however, you need to know what their priorities are. This can depend on the trigger itself: if there's been an economic downturn, their priority might be stabilising their budget. Sometimes, the priority will depend on the position of the person you're messaging: if they're in human resources, their priority might be mass hiring or diversifying the team's skillset. All it takes is a quick bout of research into the recipient of your message and their company to

find out what is currently important to them. This way, when you try to create pain, you can make sure you hit a nerve.

AIDA

Who's Aida? Not 'who', but 'what'. AIDA is a technique used by salespeople to construct pitches to potential clients, and by marketers and copywriters to create engaging advertisements. We're going to use it here because what you're doing is essentially pitching and advertising yourself to this potential employer. AIDA stands for:

- Attention
- Interest
- Desire
- Action

These are the four stages your message should follow: first, get your recipient's attention, then spark their interest, offer something they desire, and then encourage them to take action.

Let's imagine that the person you're messaging is the head of recruitment at a technology company that's going through a merger, and their priority is creating stability within the organisation. Let's say you are someone with experience in managing people within this industry. We'll take this message step by step and walk you through how we would craft it.

Attention: *Can you believe the SaaS market is now worth \$157 billion?*

We always like to start with a question, even a rhetorical one, because a question automatically demands an answer. Something like this, which not only references the industry but shows you know your stuff about it, too, can really grab their attention.

Interest: *After your recent merger with TechCorp (congratulations on that, by the way; what an achievement!), you now make up 2.5% of that figure! I'm sure that such a leap in power also comes with a fair jump in responsibility, and managing a team of professionals through a transitional time like this is just another huge task to add to your ever-increasing stock of spinning plates.*

Here, we've introduced that trigger, taking time to congratulate them on the achievement, and flaunted another piece of research in the form of that percentage. That's when we bring the pain and pluck the nerve of increased responsibility; more responsibility means more stress, a button we've pressed with the spinning plates imagery.

Desire: *With over 10 years' experience in management, and more than half of that in the technology sector, I know exactly what makes tech teams tick. I specialise in creating solutions to logistical problems such as workflow, scheduling and project management.*

Now we sell. Obviously you don't want to overdo it and come off as bragging, but this is your chance to demonstrate your worth and show that you can be a valuable asset to the business.

Action: *I want to place myself in your network and on your radar. If there's any interest, do let me know, and I'll send through my details or make some time for a short call to discuss possibilities.*

This call to action, or CTA, doesn't need to be very long, it just needs to give your recipient a next step should they be interested. Be careful not to come off as pushy (no 'Connect NOW!' or anything like that), as people generally don't like being told what to do. You may notice that in our message we placed most of the action on ourselves in sending through details or making time for a call. This is because we want to show that we're willing to do the legwork and make sacrifices for the chance to speak. It also takes the work off of their shoulders so that, essentially, all they have to do is say, 'Yes'. We also left the topic of the conversation vague; you don't want to charge in with a, 'So if that sounds good, let's discuss salary and benefits'. Your recipient will be less likely to engage if they feel that by doing so they'll be trapped in a deal – a good conversation never began with one person cornering the other.

Finally, you need to sign off your message with a typical 'Best, Matt'/'Warm regards, Huw', or something similar. Afterwards, consider linking to a relevant blog post or article that your recipient might find interesting. It's another way to demonstrate your research and serves as a good conversation starter.

If you follow all these steps as closely as you can manage, you'll end up with a message that is much easier for the recipient to engage with and respond to. That's not to say that you're guaranteed a job, or even a reply, but you'll have given yourself a much better chance than if you'd just said a simple 'Hi!'

Lastly, we'll just run through a few simple things you can do to really hone your engagement on LinkedIn.

FINAL CHECKLIST

- ✓ Add relevant people regularly and consistently to build your network. Set a daily target of between five and ten.
- ✓ In your posts, use three hashtags. LinkedIn likes hashtags, but it doesn't *love* them, so don't overdo it.
- ✓ Connect with people who use similar hashtags to you in their posts. This keeps your network relevant.
- ✓ Start conversations rather than just make comments. Keep your contributions open by asking open-ended questions.
- ✓ Ask thought-provoking questions and send relevant articles to people through the messenger function. It's a good way to create more meaningful connections.
- ✓ Follow companies instead of just people to increase your 'interests'. This will be good for your profile, algorithmically speaking.
- ✓ Ask for recommendations and endorsements. This will sky-rocket your profile's validity.
- ✓ Use Owler to keep yourself informed of relevant updates. It's a tool that keeps track of online activity.

CHAPTER 4

COVERING LETTERS, COVERED

Do I really need a covering letter? We know that in this day and age covering letters can seem a little extraneous and unnecessary (like the word 'extraneous'), and may be a little overly traditional. However, a really nice covering letter is going to be able to do things for you that your CV alone cannot. For this reason, we always recommend sending a covering letter along with any job application you actually care about.

So what are these things that a covering letter can achieve? Well, the first way it can help is to explain and overcome any glaring issues that might arise from your CV, or anything that may be used as a reason to discount you. This could be something like a mysterious gap in your working history, a suspiciously short stint at a company, or a majority of experience in a completely different industry. These things on their own are not a problem; you may

have gone travelling, the company may have had to make unexpected layoffs, or you may only recently have discovered your true calling. The problem arises when a recruiter or hiring manager has to consider the possibility that you were just lazy or bored, or were fired. Sending a covering letter allows you the opportunity to put their mind at ease by giving them the proper context.

The second thing a covering letter does is act as an asset that grabs attention. Not everyone is going to send a covering letter, so the mere act of doing so is already going to make you stand out much more than if you send just a CV. More than just making you stand out, it does so for the right reasons. Writing a covering letter demonstrates that you care about your application, and that you have taken the time to do it properly. The better written and researched your covering letter, the better the impression the recipient will have of you, and the further ahead of the other applicants you will be.

Lastly, it increases familiarity with your recipient, making you more than just a name at the top of a list of skills and experience. It's not going to do as much as can be done with, say, a video CV, but it does allow you to inject some more of your personality. Familiarity is absolutely vital, because we as people are biased towards those with whom we're familiar; familiarity breeds trust, and the more you trust someone, the more likely you are to hire them over someone else.

That said, we realise that the prospect of writing a shiny new covering letter for every single job application you make may be a little overwhelming, so we're going to walk you through building a template that will make the whole process much easier.

QUICK TIPS

First, we'll talk through a few small things to make sure your covering letter is in the best shape.

Don't just replicate your CV. A recruiter or hiring manager is not going to appreciate being made to read the same thing twice, and will hold it against you. Instead, a covering letter should *supplement* your CV, adding context and elaboration where necessary.

Tailor it to the specific organisation. While we do recommend templating your covering letter, simply switching the name at the top before you send it off is going to stick out to any reader as lazy and impersonal. Keep the structure, but make sure to change the language so that it is specific to the company and the job description.

Proofread your letter. Don't rely on Word's spelling and grammar check. Print out your covering letter and take the time to read it out loud. This will prevent you from skimming over any mistakes and will make any awkward language obvious. Consider handing it to someone else to read, too.

Use nice, simple formatting. You shouldn't employ any silly fonts or a rainbow of colours, but at the same time try not to have one solid sleeping pill of 12pt Times New Roman. We recommend using the same style as your CV for the sake of consistency, and be sure to space it well so that it's legible.

Identify your USPs. These are your unique selling points, and are what's going to differentiate you from the rest of the pack. Be positive and confident about what more you have to offer than what's requested in the job description, and why you're the perfect candidate for the job.

Include examples. If you make a claim about your experience or skills, make sure you back it up with some evidence. Otherwise, an employer might think you're just saying what they want to hear.

STRUCTURE

When it comes to length, your covering letter should be no more than one page long, and in some cases needs only be in the body of an email, rather than its own attached document. The structure should consist of:

1. **Addresses:** Online or not, this is a letter and should be structured as such. In the top right corner in separate lines add your name, your email address, your phone number, the date, and any social media links you feel are relevant. Under that and aligned to the left, you should add the recipient's name, the company name and the company's address; you should be able to find the company's address either on its website (often right at the bottom), or on its LinkedIn profile.
2. **Your opening statement:** This should set out why you're writing the letter (though please don't start it with 'I am writing to you because'; it's unnecessary). Start with the position you're applying for, where you saw it advertised, and when

you're available to start.

3. Your suitability: Cover why *you specifically* are suitable for the job. Also talk about what attracted you to this type of work, what interests you about the company and what you think you could bring to it.
4. Your strengths: Highlight your relevant experience and the skills you have that specifically match the job description. Then, talk about any additional skills and how they could contribute to the role.
5. The ending: Close the letter by reiterating your interest in the role and your desire for a personal interview. Mention now if there are any dates that you are unavailable. Finally, thank them for reading it and express that you look forward to their response.

Remember, each of these paragraphs should be no more than two or three sentences long.

RESEARCH

We've referenced throughout this book how important it is to show you've done your research. You might well be asking, then, what research you're supposed to do. What are you supposed to know? To help you out, we've put together this list of questions that you should find out the answers to:

- ✓ What does the company do?
- ✓ Who are its competitors?

- ✓ What's the mission of the business?
- ✓ What's the vision of the business?
- ✓ What are the company's values and ethics?
- ✓ What are the triggers?
- ✓ What are the hiring manager's priorities?
- ✓ What pain does this create?

Once you know the answers to those questions, you'll be able to write your letter in the correct tone.

tone & language

Tone is subjective, and there's no one 'right' voice to write in. It entirely depends on the company to which you're applying. During your research you'll start to get a feel for how they communicate, whether that's on their website or social media. In your covering letter, you should try your best to replicate this tone, leaning a little more to the side of professionalism, if possible. This is because when companies look for new staff, they don't just want to find someone who has the right skills and experience: they want to find someone who is also a *cultural* fit for the business. You have an opportunity in your covering letter to demonstrate that you can fit this requirement.

Related to tone is the type of language you employ. A great trick you can use to make sure you're writing in the company's language is to head to wordclouds.com and paste the full job advert into the text box. When it processes, it will give you a word

cloud that displays the most commonly used words in the advert: the more frequent the word, the bigger it appears in the cloud. You can then use this to see what the company prioritises and work it into your covering letter.

One more tool you can use is hemingwayapp.com. This analyses your language and highlights instances of needlessly complex sentences, use of the passive voice, unnecessary adverbs and other common writing errors. Simply pop your covering letter into the system and see what it suggests (but don't take its word as gospel; if you prefer a sentence as is, don't feel you have to change it just because the app tells you to).

Finally, make sure to insert brand names, facts and figures wherever you can. These will add validity to your statements and ground them in reality, rather than seeming like you're pulling them from thin air.

SAVE AND SIGN

When it comes to closing your covering letter, give a standard sign-off such as 'Best regards', 'Warm regards', any kind of 'regards', really. Under that, place an electronic signature. This can be done a few different ways, either by scanning a physical signature and placing it in, using Adobe Reader's Fill and Sign feature or even drawing a signature in Microsoft Paint. However you do it, adding a signature is a brilliant way to add a touch of class to your covering letter and show you've made the effort to present it well.

Finally, you need to save your covering letter. Export it as a

PDF rather than as a Word file, simply because it's more professional. Don't name it 'Covering Letter' or '[Your Name] Covering Letter'; instead, name it 'FAO [Name of Recipient]' (FAO stands for For the Attention Of). This tells the recipient that the file is specifically for them and will spark their attention. If you just call it 'covering letter', they're likely to switch it immediately.

FINAL CHECKLIST

1. Does your covering letter include all essential information?
 - ✓ Full name
 - ✓ Professional email address
 - ✓ Phone number
 - ✓ Date
 - ✓ Relevant social media profile/s
2. Have you addressed it to the right person?
 - ✓ Hiring manager, or
 - ✓ Your future direct supervisor
3. Does your introductory paragraph grab the reader's attention?
 - ✓ Mentions two or three of your top achievements
 - ✓ Backs up claims with facts and figures
4. Have you explained your suitability for the advertised role?
 - ✓ Identified the job requirements
 - ✓ Demonstrated how you match these requirements

5. Have you communicated your passion for the company?
 - ✓ Listed your three favourite things about the company
 - ✓ Avoided generic reasons for liking the company
6. Have you closed the letter with a good call to action?
 - ✓ Asked for interest, not time
 - ✓ Made it easy to say 'Yes'
7. Did you close the letter formally?
 - ✓ Used a standard sign-off
 - ✓ Added your signature

With that, your covering letter should be absolutely airtight and ready to send to your recipient.

CHAPTER 5

FINAL STEPS

Between sending off your covering letter and being invited to interview, there might be a couple of emails or even a phone call or two between you and your future employer. These might seem scary, and you might be hoping for a detailed list of *dos* and *don'ts* surrounding them. However, a common mistake applicants will make is to overthink these communications, stressing themselves out and alienating the hiring manager or recruiter. So, we decided to boil down our advice into three simple points.

MIRROR THEIR TONE

As for mimicking the tone, this is similar to what we said about covering letters: companies are looking for those who match their culture as well as for people with the required skills and ex-

perience. If the way that you communicate with them follows a similar tone to the way they communicate with you, then this will indicate you fit that cultural requirement. We're not saying you should change your entire personality (because if you have to in order to fit in, the company isn't right for you), just that you should follow their lead. A small caveat is to be careful when it comes to companies who use relaxed and casual communication styles. Don't let yourself get so comfortable that you slip into using swear words or other entirely inappropriate language – remember that you're still trying to look employable. And yes, that still applies even if *they* swear. All you're trying to do is show that you can operate on the same wavelength.

BE HONEST

Being honest is pretty self-explanatory in that you shouldn't lie about your skills or experience, but it does go a little further. For example, if they ask you whether you're comfortable with a certain aspect of the job that you were unaware of, and you aren't, don't pretend that you are just because you want the job. Ultimately, this will make things difficult both for you and for the company, and it's much more beneficial for both of you if you are honest about your discomfort. This way, either you can work out a compromise, or you can move on to something better suited to you. You have to think about Future You's happiness, as well as the happiness of Present You.

BE PREPARED

Being prepared simply means that you should know the answer to whatever introductory questions they may ask you over the phone or through email. This could be about references, start dates, availability for interview, or questions regarding your CV or covering letter. You don't want to be left frantically looking through your notes and calendar apps while someone's patiently waiting on the other end of the phone; it looks unprofessional and will lose you points.

And, that's all we have to say on the subject! The last piece of advice is to always 'Remember the Human'; every piece of communication you send has a person on the other end. On the one hand, this means you need to be mindful of being respectful and considerate; on the other, it means allowing yourself to relax a little. They are not a robot, so you shouldn't speak to them like one. Feel free to develop a rapport – this will give you a good head start for the interview.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION



Making contact with a future employer is the last step in the job-search process that is entirely within your control. Up until now, it's all depended on the assets you create and the way you present yourself and your history. It is simultaneously, however, the *first* step in which you directly interact with someone else, and this transitional period can be very stressful. Despite this, it so often goes unnoticed and unacknowledged. We hope that with this book we've been able to shine a light and help you navigate these murky waters with a little more confidence.

With that, you should be prepared for every step in the job-search process, right up until the interview. Interviews are arguably the scariest part of the job search process, so we hope you look forward to joining us in Book 4: [Winning in Interviews!](#)

WHO ARE WE?

MATT SEDGWICK

Matt is a talent acquisition specialist with over 10 years of experience in recruitment. Over this time, he has successfully owned and run two businesses, spending his working days making calls to clients and candidates and finding the right people for the right roles. In his spare time, he enjoys completing construction projects and playing with Pablo the pug.

HUW LANDAUER

Huw began working with Matt as a marketer just under a year after graduating from his Drama degree at Queen Mary University of London. Huw likes to branch out into the arts, writing plays and short stories, making music and running a webcomic (find it at @lowercasecomics). At work, he designs graphics, produces videos and edits these books.

CAT, MEET TONGUE

YOU'VE SPENT WEEKS PERFECTING YOUR CV. YOU'VE SET UP A LINKEDIN PROFILE THAT EVEN BILL GATES WOULDN'T REFUSE TO CONNECT WITH. NOW, YOU'VE FOUND THE PERFECT JOB OPENING AND ARE READY TO APPLY. BUT HERE'S THAT FAMILIAR HURDLE: WHAT DO YOU SAY?

MAKING FIRST CONTACT WITH A FUTURE EMPLOYER CAN OFTEN BE HARDER THAN MAKING FIRST CONTACT WITH AN ALIEN SPECIES, SO IN THIS BOOK, WE'RE GOING TO TAKE A LOOK AT EVERYTHING YOU'LL NEED TO DO TO MAKE SURE YOU CAN GET A POSITIVE 'CLOSE ENCOUNTER' WITH YOUR FUTURE BOSS.



**MATT
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**HUW
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