JOB
searching........

THE
CANDIDATE
BIBLE

A comprehensive guide on how to
land that dream job

By Shaun Coe

HUMAN CAPITAL
RESOURCE

Chapters

THE UNWRITTEN RULES OF JOB HUNTING

By Shaun Coe

Alright, let's be real. Hunting for a job? It's like playing a game without a rulebook. Sure, there are tons of "best practices," but sometimes, the real game-changers are the ones nobody's shouting about. Let's dive into those sneaky, behind-the-scenes tips that can give you an edge.

Being Overqualified

The Misconception: You've got the skills, maybe even more than required. But suddenly, you're "too good" for the job. Sounds absurd, right?

But employers fear overqualified candidates might demand higher salaries or leave when a better offer shows up. They might also think the job could bore you.

Quick Fixes:

Tweak That Resume: *Tailor your resume to the job, showcasing relevant skills. If some of your experiences make you look like you're overqualified, maybe leave a couple out.*

Chat It Out: *If they bring up overqualification in the interview, be open. Why do you want this job? Tell them! Express genuine interest in the role and clarify any misconceptions about your career expectations.*

Aim for Growth-Hungry Places: *Find companies that love learners and see your experience as a bonus, not baggage.*

The Two-Year Rule: Debunking the Myth

The Misconception: Sticking with a job for less than two years makes you look fickle. But in today's fast-paced world, this isn't always the case.

Sometimes, short stints can result from various reasons: company downsizing, toxic work environment, or sudden relocation. What matters is the story behind these decisions.

Or some jobs just aren't a two-year gig. Maybe it wasn't the right fit, or you needed to adapt to life changes.

What to Do:

Craft your narrative: If you've switched jobs frequently, be ready to explain the reasons in a positive light. Show how diverse experiences have shaped you into a versatile and adaptive professional.

Example: "At Company A, I was given the opportunity to lead a project which was a huge success. But soon after, they had to downsize, and I found a role at Company B that aligned more with my long-term goals."

Emphasize Skill Growth: Use your varied experiences to showcase how you've acquired a broader range of skills faster than if you'd stayed in one place.

Action: Prepare a list of skills you acquired at each position and how they add to your professional toolkit. "In my six months at Company C, I mastered the CRM tools which I know are used here."

Highlight Adaptability: Employers value candidates who can seamlessly integrate into new environments. Your multiple stints can be proof of this.

Example: "While I've worked in diverse sectors, from fintech to e-commerce, I've consistently been able to hit the ground running, proving my adaptability."

Show Consistent Achievements: Job hopping isn't detrimental if you've consistently added value. Highlight achievements at each position.

Action: Have quantifiable results ready. "At Company D, I helped increase sales by 20% in just four months."

Be Honest but Tactful: If the reason for a short stint was a toxic work environment or a mismatch of values, it's okay to share this in an interview, but frame it positively.

Example: "I realized the company's direction didn't align with my personal values, and I wanted to be in a place where I could fully invest my passion and energy."

Reiterate Your Commitment: Assure potential employers that you're looking for a long-term commitment and explain why their company aligns with your career goals.

Example: "While I've had diverse experiences in the past, I see Company X as the place where I can truly grow and contribute for the long haul due to [specific company attributes]."

Nail down your story, flex the skills and adaptability you've gained, and be transparent. Show potential employers your trajectory and where they fit in your long game. It's a new era, and the playbook has changed.

How to Read Between Job Posting Lines

Job listings can sometimes feel like they're written in another language.

"Team player" can often feel like "you'll be putting in some late nights."

"Dynamic environment" could often mean "things can be a bit chaotic, and priorities shift quickly."

"Self-starter" sometimes translates to "we might not give much guidance, so you're on your own."

"Wears multiple hats" often signals "we're probably understaffed and you'll handle tasks outside your main role."

"Passionate about the industry" might sometimes mean "we expect you to work long hours without complaining because you 'love' what you do."

"Flexible work hours" could sometimes be a nicer way of saying "you might need to work odd hours or be on-call."

"Fast-paced environment" while this might suggest an exciting and dynamic role, it's also a hint that the days might be long, and multitasking will be your best friend.

"Competitive Salary" could mean that the company offers a salary in line with industry standards, but it's equally possible they're not willing to commit to a figure up front. It's your cue to do some market research to understand what "competitive" really means for that role in your region.

*** Due to recent legislative changes, many states now mandate public salary range listings. We anticipate that all states will adopt this trend in the near future.

"Ninja, Guru, Rockstar" are playful terms that are popular in tech and startup circles, suggesting they're looking for someone exceptional. But remember, titles don't pay the bills. It's essential to get clarity on the actual job responsibilities and whether the compensation matches the "Ninja" level expectations.

What to do:

Ask questions in the interview: If a job listing says "competitive salary," it's perfectly acceptable to ask for a range during the interview process.

Do your research: Platforms like Glassdoor and Payscale can provide insights into company culture and salary ranges, giving you a better understanding of what to expect.

Trust your gut: Sometimes, the vibes you get from a company's communication, be it their job listings or their emails, can tell you a lot. If something feels off, it's okay to trust that instinct.

Network with current or past employees: Platforms like LinkedIn make it easier than ever to connect and chat. Ask them about their experience and how these phrases played out in real-time during their stint.

Ask for clarity during the interview: When faced with ambiguous terms in a job listing, bring them up during the interview. For instance, when they mention a "fast-paced work setting", ask them to provide specific examples to gauge what your day-to-day might look like.

It's not about being skeptical but more about being well-informed. Now your job-hunting journey can be a little less "hide and seek" and a bit more "capture the flag".

CHAPTER 2

THE SILENT POWER OF PERSONAL BRANDING

By Shaun Coe

Whether you realize it or not, you've been cultivating a personal brand since the moment you first set foot in the digital world. Every tweet, every LinkedIn post, even the photos you've shared—everything contributes. Your personal brand is the amalgamation of your online actions and real-world behaviors. It's your reputation, your voice, and the digital footprint you leave behind. Let's navigate this complex terrain.

Recognizing Your Current Brand:

Ever Googled yourself? The results might surprise you. Your digital footprint spans from social media posts to articles or blogs you might have written. Everything that appears is a testament to your personal brand. The first step in refining your brand is knowing where you currently stand.

Action: Do a personal audit. Google yourself and look through at least three pages of results. Note down recurring themes or things you might want to change.

Tailoring Your Online Presence:

It's no secret: Recruiters nowadays don't just rely on resumes. Your online presence has become an integral part of your background check. This digital footprint can be an asset if you do it right.

Your digital presence should be a reflection of your aspirations, values, and professional persona. Random posts, old blogs, or even long-forgotten profiles can come back to haunt you.

Now, that doesn't mean you should start creating content like an influencer, it means to arrange your digital footprint.

1. Clean House: Go through your social profiles. Delete or untag from posts that don't align with the image you want to project.

2. Consistency is Key: Ensure that your voice, image, and message are consistent across platforms.

3. Engage with Purpose: Instead of mindlessly scrolling and liking, engage in discussions that matter to your industry and career.

4. Professional Imagery: An updated, high-quality profile picture and cover image can significantly impact first impressions. Avoid overly casual or outdated pictures.

Action: Identify individuals in your industry who have strong personal brands. Analyze their strategies, and see what you can adapt to your narrative.

With personal branding, it's not about reinventing yourself but rather strategically showcasing the authentic you.

CHAPTER 3

OPTIMIZING YOUR LINKEDIN PRESENCE

By Shaun Coe

Linkedin has become the go-to resource for recruiters and headhunters looking to find top talent. It's your ticket to new opportunities, but only if you make it work for you.

If you want to be on their radar, your profile needs to stand out.That means clarity, consistency, and showing genuine value. This chapter will help you transform your LinkedIn profile from a passive listing into a powerful tool for unlocking new opportunities.

We'll dig into specific, actionable steps: building a headline that gets you noticed, choosing the right keywords, and showcasing your career trajectory in a clear, concise, and impactful way.

Enhancing Profile Presentation

Profiles with photos are 12-16x more likely to be seen by recruiters.
This means using a high-quality, professional profile photo and a headline that accurately reflects your skills and experience.

Make sure to set your profile and picture to 'public' so recruiters can see it. Your headline should be a brief summary of what you do. Recruiters use job ad keywords so you should include keywords relevant to your industry.

  *Less Effective: A casual selfie taken during a night out with friends, featuring a busy background.
  *Optimal: A well-lit, clear close-up shot against a neutral backdrop, showcasing smart-casual attire. Friendly, but professional!

Example headline:

*Standard: Software Developer with 5 years of experience
*Standout: Experienced software developer with a track record of delivering high-performance and scalable systems for Fortune 500 companies"

Crafting Your Professional Narrative

The summary section of your LinkedIn profile is your chance to showcase your professional background and accomplishments. It should be written in the first person and should highlight your strengths and the value you can bring to an organization. Be sure to include keywords that are relevant to your industry and make sure your summary is well-written and free of grammatical errors.

Example:

"As a results-driven marketing professional with 8 years of experience, I have a proven track record of developing and executing successful campaigns for B2B and B2C companies. My expertise includes creating and implementing strategic marketing plans, managing budgets and teams, and utilizing data and analytics to drive ROI. I am highly skilled in creating and managing social media campaigns, email marketing, and SEO/SEM. I am also experienced in lead generation and nurturing, and I am dedicated to staying current with the latest marketing trends and technologies. I am looking for a new opportunity to bring my skills and experience to a dynamic organization and help drive growth and success."

Detailing Career Trajectories

Simplistic: *"Sales Manager - Managed software product sales."*

Detailed: *"Sales Manager at TechBrite - Led a robust team to surpass sales targets
by 150% in 2020, introducing our software solutions to over 200 enterprises."*

Amplifying Skills & Endorsements

Standard: *Mentions "Communication" as a proficiency.*

Enhanced: *Cites "Persuasive Storytelling" with recommendations from both a SEO and a Lead Copywriter.*

Engaging Constructively

Networking is a key component of a successful LinkedIn profile. Joining relevant LinkedIn groups and participating in discussions can help you build your network and make connections with people in your industry.

Additionally, you should actively seek out connections with headhunters and recruiters in your field.

Static: *Membership in the "Marketing Professionals" group.*

Proactive: *Contributed to a discussion in the "Marketing Pros" group, remarking, "The insights on neuromarketing presented were enlightening. Has anyone implemented this within e-commerce funnel strategies?"*
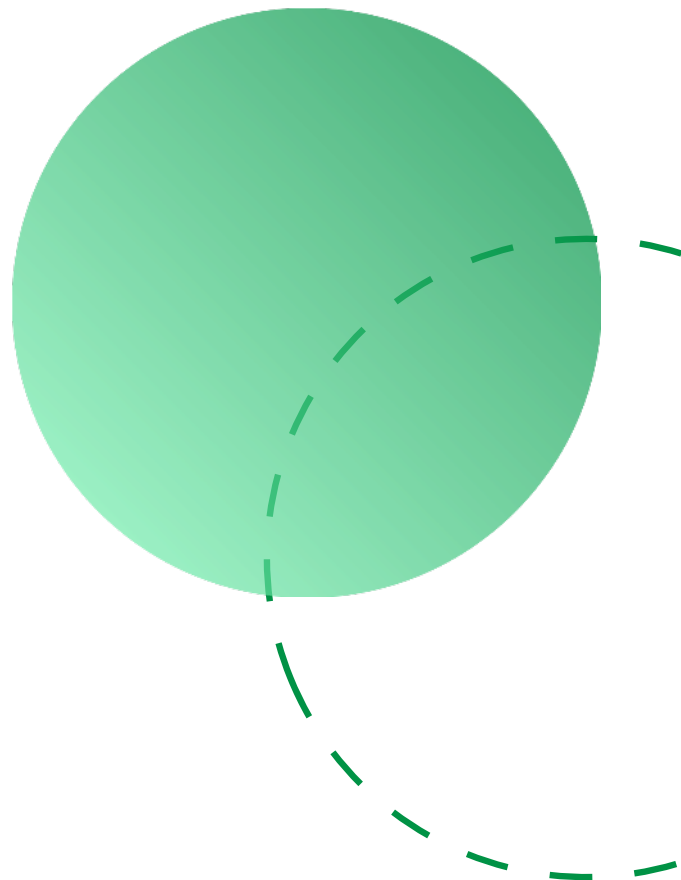
Garnering Impactful Recommendations

Recommendations from past colleagues and supervisors can be a valuable addition to your LinkedIn profile. They provide an independent perspective on your work and can help to establish your credibility.

Generic Recommendation: *"Jane is a good employee and does her job well."*

Effective Recommendation: *"Jane's innovative marketing strategies boosted our Q4 revenues by 30%. Her dedication and passion for the craft are unmatched!"*

Maintaining Up-to-date Accomplishments

Regularly updating your profile with new information and accomplishments will ensure that it remains current and relevant to recruiters and headhunters.

Outdated: *"Latest accomplishment: Graduated with a Marketing Degree in 2010."*

Updated: *"Recent Achievement: Led a workshop on Digital Transformation in Marketing, 2023."*

Use the "Open for Work" option

Under your headline you will see a few options. Select "Add Goal", then "Finding a new job".

Provide all the requested information, then you can select whether all LinkedIn members or only recruiters can see that you are open to opportunities.

Optimize your LinkedIn profile for search:

Recruiters usually pull keywords from job ads when searching. Without these terms in your profile, you risk flying under their radar. By using keywords relevant to your industry and profession on your profile, you can increase your chances of showing up in search results when recruiters and headhunters are looking for candidates.

Here are some examples based on different professions and industries:

Digital Marketing: SEO, SEM, Content Marketing, PPC, Social Media Advertising, Google Analytics

Software Development: Java, Python, Full-Stack Development, API Integration, Agile Methodology, Cloud Computing

Financial Analyst: Forecasting, Budgeting, Financial Modeling, Risk Analysis, Excel, ROI Calculations

Human Resources: Talent Acquisition, Onboarding, Employee Relations, Performance Management, Organizational Development, Benefits Administration

Sales: Lead Generation, CRM, Cold Calling, B2B Sales, Sales Forecasting, Account Management

THE RESUME: MYTHS, AND MAKEOVERS

By Shaun Coe

The trusty resume. That one document carries the weight of your professional history.

But as much as it's been a staple, its form and function have transformed. It's not just a piece of paper anymore; it's an evolving snapshot of who you are as a professional.

Debunking Resume Myths

1. One Page Fits All: We've heard it a million times. Keep it short, keep it one page. But here's the catch - if you've got a decade of experience or multiple crucial roles, don't limit yourself. Quality over quantity, always.

2. Formal Language Makes You Sound More Professional: Ditch the thesaurus. Write in a language that's authentically you, while still being professional.

3. Always Use the Same Resume: Tailoring your resume for every job application is not a suggestion; it's a must. Employers can smell a generic resume from a mile away.

4. References Available Upon Request: Employers already know you'll provide references if they ask. Save space for showcasing your achievements.

5. Personal Interests are Irrelevant and Fluff: While your resume shouldn't read like a personal diary, curated personal interests can add depth to your profile. They can signal cultural fit, hint at soft skills, or even showcase leadership and teamwork outside of a traditional work setting.

Modernizing Your Resume: Do's and Don'ts:

1. DO Highlight Transferable Skills:
Especially if you're transitioning industries, emphasize skills that are universally valuable.

2. DON'T Include Every Single Job You've Had:
Highlight the experiences most relevant to the position you're applying for.

3. DO Use Actionable Metrics:
"Boosted sales by 20%" is way more impressive than "Managed sales."

4. DON'T Rely Solely on Templates:
They're a good starting point, but customize to ensure your resume stands out.

5. DO Include Online Courses:
Especially if they're relevant! It shows you're proactive about your learning.

6. DON'T Forget About Soft Skills:
Teamwork, adaptability, and problem-solving can sometimes outweigh technical skills.

Best practices for tailoring your resume include:

Know the Company:
Research the company's mission and values. Understand the specifics of the role you're applying to.

Mirror the Job Listing's Language:
Use phrases and terms that the job listing emphasizes. It shows you're aligned with what they're looking for and it helps with the ATS.

Quantify Your Achievements:
Instead of making broad statements, highlight your achievements with specific figures and statistics. Show relevant skills: Highlight your transferable skills, such as problem-solving, teamwork, and leadership, that align with the job requirements.

Keep It Professional:
Use a clear and professional format, and make sure your resume is error-free.

Tailor Your Resume:
Make sure your resume is tailored to the specific job you are applying for and not a generic resume you use for all job applications.

Proofread:
Finally, proofread your resume several times to ensure that it is error-free and clearly communicates your qualifications.

Here's what Jane's bad resume might look like:

Jane Smith

(123) 456-7890 | jane@email.com

Summary

Digital marketer with years of experience. Looking to work in a company where I can utilize my skills.

Experience

Company A
Digital Marketer | 09/2018 - 09/2023
- Managed online campaigns.
- Responsible for content on various social media channels.
- Interacted occasionally with sales teams.

Company B
Assistant Digital Marketer | 05/2015 - 07/2018
- Supported SEO strategies
- Created monthly newsletters
- Assisted in content creation

Education

College A
English literature | 06/2013

Skills

Digital Marketing, Social Media Management, SEO

The Summary is generic and doesn't clearly state what she brings to the table.

Under Professional Experience, there's a lack of specificity, making it hard to understand Jane's actual contributions or achievements.

The Skills section is basic and lacks depth or specialization.

Here's how Jane's resume should look like:

Jane Smith

(123) 456-7890 | jane@email.com | linkedin.com/in/janesmith, New York City, NY

Summary

Results-driven Digital Marketing Specialist with over 5 years of experience in executing online campaigns, curating high-quality content, and driving website traffic. Proven track record in enhancing online visibility, increasing conversions, and collaborating cross-functionally with sales teams to boost revenue.

Experience

Company A
Digital Marketer | 09/2018 - 09/2023

- Led online campaigns that boosted website traffic by 35% and increased conversion rates by 15%.
- Curated and scheduled content across social media channels, growing followership by 20%.
- Fostered cross-departmental collaboration with sales teams, contributing to a 25% increase in online sales.
- Developed and optimized paid advertising campaigns across platforms such as Google AdWords and Facebook Ads, ensuring maximized reach within set budgets.

Company B
Assistant Digital Marketer | 05/2015 - 07/2018

- Played a pivotal role in devising SEO strategies that improved website ranking from page 5 to page 1 on targeted keywords within 8 months.
- Oversaw the monthly newsletter process, resulting in a 10% uplift in email open rates.
- Assisted in content creation, leading to a consistent 5% month-on-month growth in organic traffic.
- Collaborated with the design team to create visually compelling digital ad campaigns, enhancing click-through rates.
- Assisted in crafting compelling content that highlighted the benefits of sustainable living and eco-friendly product choices.

Education

College A
English literature | 06/2013

- Relevant Coursework: SEO Optimization, Content Strategy, Social Media Management
- Recipient of the "Digital Innovator" scholarship, awarded for excellence in digital strategy projects.

Skills

Social Media Management, SEO, Digital Campaign Management, Content Strategy, Data Analysis Skills, Brand Development, Email Marketing, Management, Copywriting

Languages

English, Spanish

Certificates

Google Analytics Certification, Digital Marketing Certification

Awards

Best Email Marketing Campaign

This version of Jane Smith's resume:

* Provides a Summary that clearly states her strengths and value proposition.

* Lists relevant education with some coursework detail.

* Contains quantifiable achievements in the Professional Experience section.

* Includes a comprehensive Skills section, demonstrating her technical competencies.

* Adds a Certifications section which can be crucial in the digital marketing field.*

* Notes language proficiencies under Languages, which can be an added advantage in global companies or for content targeting diverse audiences.

Best practices for making your resume visually appealing and easy to read:

1. Use a clear and professional font, such as Times New Roman, Calibri, Arial or similar font

2. Use a consistent format and layout

3. Use bullet points and headings to make it easy to read and understand

4. Use white space to separate sections and make it easy to scan

5. Use bold or italics to highlight important information

6. Avoid using too many colors or graphics, keep it simple and clean

7. Avoid clutter and make sure it is easy to read

8. Use a high-quality printer and paper if you are sending a hard copy of your resume

If you're serious about leveling up and landing that dream role, your resume shouldn't hold you back. Reach out to us and our team of experts can help you elevate your presentation. See our services here.

SOFT SKILLS: THE HIDDEN CURRENCY

By Shaun Coe

Soft skills, often referred to as interpersonal or people skills, play a critical role in workplace success. From effective communication and teamwork to problem-solving and adaptability, these skills can often make the difference between a good candidate and a great one.

But how do you showcase these intangibles during the short span of an interview? Let's delve into practical strategies.

Storytelling:

Perhaps the most powerful way to convey your soft skills is through personal anecdotes. When asked about a particular soft skill, instead of merely stating you have it, recount a time when you've effectively used it.

Example: If an interviewer asks about teamwork, instead of saying, "I work well in teams," you could respond with, "At my previous job, I collaborated with a cross-functional team on a challenging project. I played a key role in facilitating communication between different departments, ensuring we were all aligned. As a result, we completed the project ahead of schedule and under budget."

Body Language:

Your non-verbal cues often speak louder than words. Maintain eye contact to demonstrate confidence and attentiveness. Sit up straight and lean slightly forward to show you're engaged. Your handshake, posture, and facial expressions can all convey enthusiasm, confidence, and professionalism.

Active Listening:

Show that you're a good listener by paying full attention to the interviewer's questions. Nodding in agreement, summarizing their points before answering, or asking clarifying questions can all demonstrate your listening skills.

Ask Thoughtful Questions:

At the end of most interviews, you'll have the chance to ask questions. Craft questions that not only clarify your understanding but also demonstrate your emotional intelligence, critical thinking, and genuine interest in the company.

Example: "How does the company nurture a culture of continuous learning and development?" This question shows that you value growth and are a proactive learner.

Soft skills that companies are looking for:

1. Emotional Intelligence:
Share a situation where you navigated a challenging interpersonal dynamic at work. For instance, "In my last role, I worked closely with a colleague who often seemed stressed. By taking the time to understand his perspective and offering support, we fostered a more positive working relationship."

2. Adaptability:
Scenario Response: If presented with a hypothetical situation that requires a swift change in strategy, discuss how you'd pivot and adapt to the new circumstances. Your reaction will demonstrate your flexibility and readiness for change.

3. Communication Skills:
Clarity in Answers: Answer questions clearly and concisely. Avoid jargon, and ensure the interviewer understands your point. If discussing a technical issue, gauge their familiarity with the topic and adjust your language accordingly.

4. Problem Solving:
Situational Recall: Describe a situation where you faced an unexpected challenge and the steps you took to overcome it. This not only showcases your problem-solving abilities but also gives insight into your thought process.

5. Conflict Resolution:
Personal Experience: Discuss a time when you dealt with a disagreement at work. Emphasize your ability to understand both sides, mediate, and find a compromise or solution that benefited all parties involved.

6. Leadership:
Leading by Example: Share experiences where you led a team or a project. Highlight moments where you had to make crucial decisions, guide your team through challenges, or mentor junior colleagues.

7. Initiative:
Proactivity: Illustrate times when you saw an opportunity for improvement in your previous role and took the initiative to implement a change or propose a new idea, even if it was outside your primary responsibilities.

***While they might not be explicitly mentioned in a job description, their presence (or absence) can significantly impact one's success in a role. Actually, a survey by LinkedIn found that 92% of hiring managers believe that soft skills are more important than hard skills. Shocked? You shouldn't be. Technical abilities can be taught; core characteristics like resilience, empathy, and adaptability cannot.

And remember to be genuine in your responses; authenticity is a soft skill in its own right.

INTERVIEW SECRETS FROM HIRING MANAGERS

By Shaun Coe

We've all been there - the sweaty palms, rehearsing answers, dressing to impress, and then stepping into the lion's den: the interview room. But what's really going on from the other side of that polished table? Let's dive into some secrets that hiring managers wish you knew.

Biases: Identifying and Countering Them:

Whether we admit it or not, biases are omnipresent, subtly coloring our judgments. In the context of job interviews, these biases, often subconscious, can significantly sway hiring decisions.

Invisible Chains:

Historical data suggests certain roles "fit" certain genders or age groups. For instance, tech roles have often been associated with younger candidates, while leadership roles lean towards older, sometimes male candidates. Recognizing these stereotypes allows you to break them with your narrative.

The Halo Effect:

This cognitive bias means that if an interviewer likes one thing about you, they might like everything about you. Similarly, one mistake could cloud their entire judgment. Being consistently professional and approachable can help ensure that if a halo is formed, it's positive.

Actively Countering Biases:

Knowledge is power. When you suspect a particular bias might be in play — like the bias against frequent job changes — prepare to proactively address it. Frame your narrative in a way that turns potential red flags into strengths. For instance, frequent job changes can be portrayed as versatility and a wide skill set if pitched correctly.

Affinity Bias:

This occurs when interviewers favor candidates who share similar backgrounds, interests, or hobbies with them. For example, two individuals who went to the same university might form an instant connection, making the interviewer subconsciously biased towards that candidate. While it's great to find common ground, it's essential for interviewers to ensure this doesn't overshadow the evaluation of actual qualifications.

Confirmation Bias: This is a tricky one. It happens when an interviewer forms a quick judgment (good or bad) about a candidate and then seeks out evidence to confirm that judgment during the interview. For instance, if an interviewer sees a candidate had a gap year on their CV and assumes it's due to a lack of ambition, they might focus on questions or signs that confirm this belief, ignoring evidence to the contrary.

These biases, among others, underline the importance of self-awareness and preparation for candidates. Recognizing potential biases and having strategies to navigate or counteract them can significantly improve one's interview experience.

How to Counter Biases in Interviews:

Be Informed: Knowledge is power. Understand the most common biases like Affinity Bias, Confirmation Bias, etc. Knowing what you might be up against is half the battle.

Personal Storytelling: Use stories that highlight your strengths, resilience, and versatility. Got a career gap? Maybe that's when you did some freelance work or took a course. Frame your narrative to turn potential negatives into positives.

Ask Thoughtful Questions: Show you're more than just your CV. Ask questions that highlight your industry knowledge, enthusiasm, and fit for the company culture. For instance, "I saw the company is focusing on X. How does this role contribute to that direction?"

Dress for Success: First impressions count, and while we wish they didn't, they sometimes can override a lot of biases. Dress appropriately for the role. Looking polished and confident can help negate some preconceived notions.

Follow Up with Evidence: If you feel an interviewer might have a bias based on your experience (or lack thereof), send a follow-up email with more details or examples of your work. This proactive approach can shift their perspective.

Seek Feedback: If you're comfortable, ask for feedback post-interview. It's a bold move, but it can offer insights into any biases at play and give you a chance to address them directly.

What Your Interviewer Won't Tell You:

It's not always about the spoken words. Here's a sneak peek behind that professional demeanor:

Time Matters:
That 10-minute delay because you couldn't find parking? It's silently noted.

They're Also Nervous:
Sometimes, the interviewer is just as anxious as you. They have the pressure of selecting the right candidate.

Your Online Footprint Counts:
Rest assured, they've probably Googled you. Your online presence speaks volumes.

Cultural Fit:
While skills are essential, they're often gauging if you'd mesh well with the company culture.

Body Language Speaks:
Your non-verbal cues might be revealing more than your words. A firm handshake, eye contact, and posture can say a lot.

Your Questions Matter:
The questions you pose can often be as illuminating as the answers you provide. They hint at your priorities and depth of understanding.

Transparency wins:
If there's a gap in your resume or a skill you lack, own it. It's better than being found out later.

Common Missteps Candidates Make:

It's not always about the big blunders. Sometimes, it's the little things:

The Overshare:
Balance is essential. Veering too much into personal stories can appear unprofessional.

Not Knowing the Company:
Surprisingly, many candidates don't do their homework. This omission is glaringly obvious to interviewers.

A One-Way Street:
Merely answering questions without having any of your own implies a lack of enthusiasm or preparation.

Generic Answers:
Responding with overly rehearsed or cliché'd answers doesn't help you stand out. Authenticity is key.

Speaking Negatively About Past Employers:
This can raise red flags about professionalism and loyalty.

Neglecting Soft Skills:
Being technically adept is great, but not showcasing interpersonal skills can be a missed opportunity.

Weak Non-Verbal Communication:
Poor eye contact, a limp handshake, or closed-off body language can adversely affect the candidate's image.

Not Following Up:
Sending a brief thank you note or email post-interview shows initiative and genuine interest.

Not picking the right time for the interview:
Schedule the interview when you're at your best. Avoiding overly early or late times shows consideration and preparedness.

For virtual interviews:

Poor Tech Setup:
Not testing equipment, software, and internet connection beforehand, leading to technical glitches during the interview.

Unprofessional Background:
Holding the interview in a messy or distracting environment instead of a clean, quiet, and neutral space.

Multitasking During the Interview:
Being caught looking at another screen, typing, or being visibly distracted suggests a lack of focus and respect for the interviewer.

Dress to Impress:

Your appearance should be as locked in virtually as it is in person.

Making Sure Your Name is Set Up Right:

In a digital space, your name is often the first thing interviewers see when you join the call. "LaptopUser" or "John's iPad" doesn't exactly scream professionalism. Make sure your name reflects your actual name (first and last) or how you introduced yourself in your application.

Not only does this show attention to detail, but it also helps interviewers remember you post-interview. Remember, it's all about setting the right first impression, even if it's just with your name.

MASTERING ATS: THE KEYWORDS STRATEGY

By Shaun Coe

In the digital age, your resume isn't initially seen by human eyes but by an Application Tracking System (ATS). These systems are like gatekeepers, deciding which resumes get through to the recruiter's desk and which ones don't make the cut. Let's peek behind the curtain to understand the magic of ATS and how to ensure your resume shines, even to a machine.

Deciphering the ATS:

An ATS is a software tool that companies use to sort through the massive piles of applications they receive. The system scans for specific keywords, qualifications, and other crucial details, filtering out those that don't meet the mark.

Think of it as a search engine. When you search for something on Google, the search engine scans billions of websites and delivers results based on relevant keywords. Similarly, an ATS scans resumes for specific terms that match those in the job description.

If your resume lacks these keywords, it might not make it past this digital gatekeeper. And remember, its job isn't to find the best candidate but to eliminate the least suitable ones.

Example: Imagine two applicants, John and Jane, applying for a Digital Marketing Manager position. John's resume mentions "Online Marketing," while Jane uses the term "Digital Marketing." If "Digital Marketing" is the keyword the ATS is set to search for, Jane's resume stands a better chance of moving on to the next round.

Unlocking the Keywords Mystery:

To beat the ATS, you need to think like it. Most often, the job description holds the keys to the kingdom. By closely analyzing the job listing, you can pinpoint the exact terms the company values and integrate them naturally into your resume.

Avoiding Keyword Stuffing:

Yes, keywords are essential, but sprinkling them mindlessly throughout your resume can be counterproductive. ATS systems are becoming smarter, and many can now identify "keyword stuffing."

Example: If you're applying for a Graphic Designer role and you mention "Adobe Photoshop" ten times in a two-page resume, the ATS might flag this as over-optimization.

Formatting for the Win:

ATSs can be pretty picky when it comes to formats.

Simplicity is Key: Fancy templates, intricate designs, or unusual fonts might look visually appealing, but ATS may struggle to read them. Stick to clean, simple resume designs and standard fonts like Arial or Calibri.

Avoid Tables and Columns: While they may look organized, ATS systems can jumble the content inside tables. Stick to simple bullet points.

Tailoring Over Generality:

While it might seem efficient to send the same resume to multiple employers, this approach could see your application lost in the ATS abyss.

Tailoring your resume to each specific role, using relevant keywords and aligning your skills with the job requirements, can greatly boost your chances.
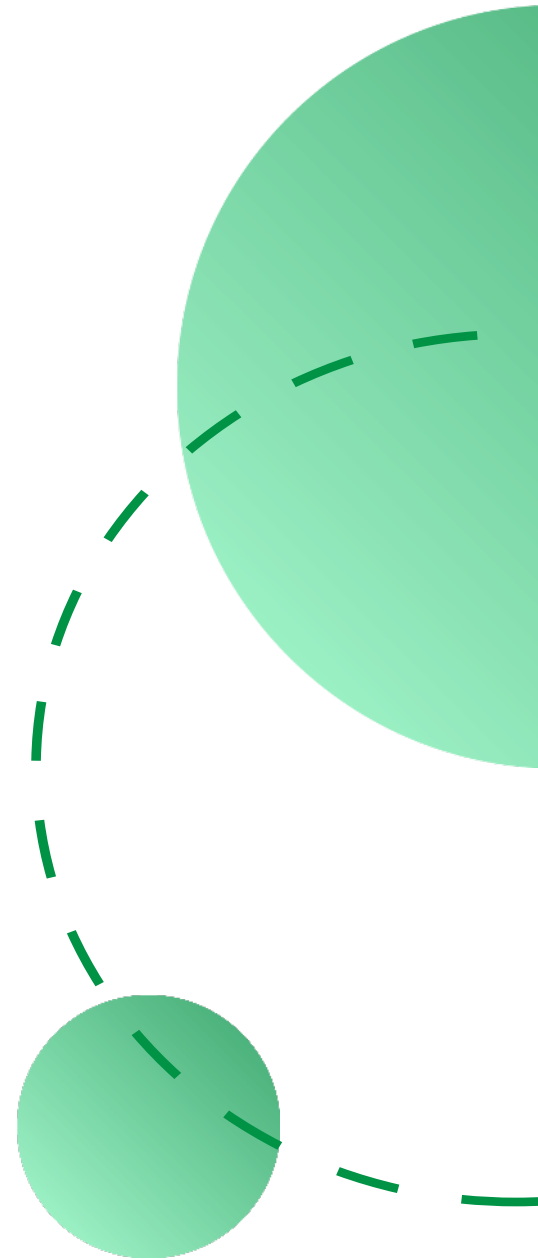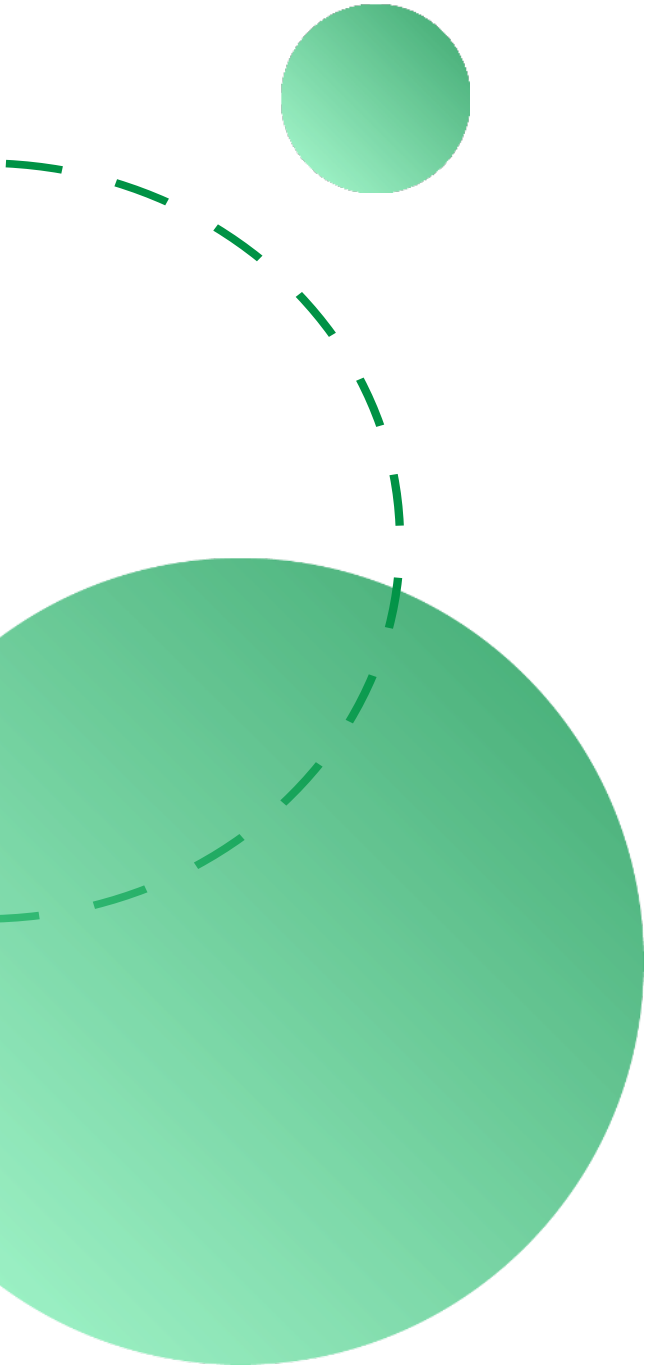
Example: For a Content Writer position that emphasizes SEO skills, ensure you mention any SEO courses, certifications, or projects you've tackled in past roles.

Beware of the Acronym Trap:

Some ATSs might not recognize acronyms unless they're written out. If you're unsure, it's safe to use both.

Example: Instead of just "CRM," write "Customer Relationship Management (CRM)."

The Hidden "Loyalty" Keywords:

Some companies value loyalty and long-term commitment. Their ATS might prioritize resumes that show longer stints at previous jobs, signaling commitment.

Action: If you've hopped jobs a lot, emphasize any long-term projects or impacts you've made in short periods, showcasing dedication. Also, highlight all of the whys for the transitions.

Strategic Keyword Placement:

Where you place keywords in your resume can be as crucial as which keywords you include:

Prioritize the Top Third: Often dubbed the 'prime real estate' of your resume, ensure important keywords, especially those pertaining to the job title or primary responsibilities, are present here.

Professional Summary: A concise summary can be a golden opportunity to showcase your fit for the job using specific keywords.

Relevance Over Repetition: Instead of repeating the same keyword multiple times, focus on its relevance to the context. For instance, instead of mentioning "data analysis" repeatedly, diversify with terms like "data interpretation," "quantitative analysis," or "statistical modeling."

Navigating the ATS maze can seem daunting. But with a sprinkle of the right keywords, a dash of formatting, and some tailored content, you can make sure your resume doesn't just appeal to machines but resonates with human recruiters too. Remember, the goal isn't just to pass the ATS but to land the interview and, ultimately, the job.

> *Partnering with a recruiter can be a game-changer. Not only can they navigate past the ATS, but they also ensure your resume lands directly in the hands of the decision-makers.*

Looking Beyond Keywords: The Human Touch:

While keywords play an integral role in passing the ATS test, remember that eventually, a human recruiter will read your resume.

Ensure that it's not just a collection of keywords but a coherent story of your professional journey.

Maintain Readability: Ensure your resume is structured, uses consistent formatting, and is easy to read.

Quantify Achievements: Instead of merely stating you "increased sales," specify "increased sales by 20% in the first quarter."

Showcase Soft Skills: Qualities like teamwork, communication, and adaptability are harder to quantify but are equally vital.

The key is to strike a balance—optimize your resume for the algorithm but also create a compelling narrative for human eyes.

Testing the Waters with ATS Simulators:

Before sending out that resume, why not test it?

Use ATS Simulators: Several online platforms can give you a glimpse of how your resume might be viewed and ranked by an ATS.

Platforms like **Jobscan** can provide feedback on keyword matches, formatting, and other crucial factors.

Continuous Improvement: Based on feedback, continually refine your resume. The job market is dynamic, and so should be your approach.

*** Remember, the job description is often your best friend when it comes to identifying the most relevant keywords.

Companies typically highlight what they value most in the descriptions.

UNLOCKING CORPORATE CULTURE

By Shaun Coe

Job hunting's a two-way street. You're not just on trial; you're doing some judging too. The verdict? Whether you and the company are a match made in workplace heaven. Let's talk "cultural fit" - it's not just about beanbag chairs and ping-pong tables.

Understanding Cultural Fit:

Understanding a company's culture goes beyond assessing dress code or office looks; it's about knowing the common beliefs, values, and work dynamics that propel the organization.

This aspect affects your daily work, professional development, and job satisfaction. Here's how to get an insider's look at cultural fit:

1. The Alignment of Values:

An employee's satisfaction often revolves around personal values resonating with the company's core beliefs.

Example: Imagine you're a strong advocate for environmental sustainability. If the company you're eyeing actively promotes wasteful habits without any inclination towards eco-friendly practices, there might be a mismatch.

Action Step: Before the interview, check out the company's mission statement, its CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) activities, and any initiatives they've undertaken that reflect their values.

2. The Dynamics of Team Interaction:

The way employees collaborate and communicate can be a significant indicator of cultural fit.

Example: If you thrive in independent environments but notice during your interview that the company leans heavily on team-based projects, you might find yourself out of your comfort zone.

Action Step: During your interview, ask about team structures, collaboration tools used, and typical project management styles. Notice the interactions around you if you're on-site.

3. Flexibility vs. Structure:

Some companies thrive on fluidity and adaptability, while others emphasize structure and predictability.

Example: If you're someone who appreciates a flexible work schedule but the company sticks rigidly to a 9-5 model, there may be friction.

Action Step: Research the company's work hours, remote work policies, and how they've adapted to situations like global pandemics. Such scenarios reveal a lot about a company's adaptability.

4. Approach to Innovation and Risk:

Companies vary in their appetite for risk and how they innovate. If you're a natural innovator keen on trying new strategies, but the company is steeped in "this is how we've always done it" thinking, there might be a clash.

Action Step: During your interview, ask about the last innovative project they undertook and how they handle failures or unexpected challenges.

5. Feedback Culture:

The way a company gives and receives feedback can deeply influence an employee's growth and satisfaction. If you're someone who craves constructive feedback to grow, but the company either doesn't provide it or does so in a very negative way, you might feel stifled.

Action Step: Ask about performance reviews, mentorship programs, and feedback mechanisms. How they approach this aspect speaks volumes about their investment in employee growth.

6. Approach to Learning and Development:

If you're someone who views learning as an ongoing journey and values professional development, but the company offers no opportunities for courses, workshops, or conferences, there's a disconnect.

Action Step: Inquire about their budget or programs for employee education. Gauge if they see it as a valuable investment or just an expendable cost.

7. Work-Life Integration and Boundaries:

If the company expects you to answer emails and attend meetings on weekends and you value disconnecting from work outside of office hours, your personal time will be compromised.

Action Step: Ask current employees about their daily routines. Does the company respect boundaries? Are there unspoken expectations to always be 'on'?

8. Response to Failures and Mistakes:

The company's reaction to errors reveals a lot about their growth mindset and understanding of human nature.

Example: You believe in a "fail fast, learn quick" approach. If a company penalizes every minor mistake instead of viewing them as growth opportunities, you might feel constantly under pressure.

Action Step: Try to unearth stories of projects that didn't go as planned. How did the company respond? Was there a blame game or collective learning?

9. Decision-Making Process:

Some companies are top-down, while others adopt a more collaborative decision-making approach.

Example: If you value being a part of the decision-making process, but the company makes decisions in closed rooms without team inputs, you may feel sidelined.

Action Step: During the interview, inquire about the last major decision made by the team. Who was involved? How were differing opinions treated?

10. Approach to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:

Understand the company's true commitment to diversity and inclusion, not just its written policies. If the leadership doesn't reflect diversity in both representation and mindset, the company's commitment is likely superficial, regardless of varied recruitment claims.

Action Step: Scrutinize the composition of leadership positions. Ask about both visible and invisible diversities: are there platforms for different voices to be heard? Does the company merely meet diversity standards, or does it genuinely encourage diverse perspectives and innovative thinking?

> *Remember, a company's culture is embedded in these subtleties. It's about reading between the lines, asking the right questions, and ensuring that their values resonate with yours on a deeper, more holistic level.*

Valuable Questions to Ask in an Interview:

1. Decision Making: "Can you describe a recent decision that was made and the process behind it? How are employees involved in decision-making processes?"

2. Growth and Learning: "How does the company support ongoing training and education for its employees?"

3. Performance Metrics: "How are success and performance measured here? And how often?"

4. Team Dynamics: "How do teams typically collaborate? Are cross-departmental collaborations encouraged?"

5. Flexibility: "How does the company approach remote work or flexible working hours?"

6. Employee Turnover: "What's the average tenure of employees? And what steps does the company take to retain talent?"

7. Day-to-Day: "What's a common challenge someone in this role might face, and how is it typically addressed?"

8. Innovation: "Can you provide an example of a project or initiative driven by a team member?"

9. Diversity and Inclusion: "How does the company approach diversity and inclusion, both in hiring and day-to-day operations?"

10. Feedback Culture: "How often are feedback sessions conducted, and what format do they typically take?"

The key here is to glean not just the processes and structures, but also the undertones of the company's values, beliefs, and behavioral norms. With these questions and insights, you'll be better equipped to judge if a company's culture aligns with your personal values and career aspirations.

IDENTIFYING COMPANY RED-FLAGS

By Shaun Coe

Finding a place that really gets your career goals and values? That's not just nice, it's crucial.

But here's the thing: even if a company looks shiny and perfect on the outside, spotting any warning signs is your secret weapon to dodging future headaches. These are some of the red flags you'll want to keep an eye out for in your job hunt.

Online Company Reviews:

Glassdoor, Indeed, and other platforms: These websites allow current and former employees to post reviews about their experiences. While some might be biased, a pattern of negative reviews is something to consider.

Frequency: If there's a consistent pattern of complaints over time, that's a major red flag.
Response to reviews: Companies that take the time to respond constructively to negative feedback indicate a willingness to improve.

Vague Job Role Descriptions:

Red Flag: An unclear job description can signal a lack of organizational clarity or potential role fluidity.

Example: The listed responsibilities seem broad or don't align with the stated job title.

Action Step: Request specific role clarifications. If definitions remain elusive, it may hint at structural disarray or unrealistic expectations.

High Employee Turnover:

Red flag: Frequent turnover can suggest dissatisfaction among employees or potential issues with management.

Action Step: Ask current employees or check out LinkedIn to see how long people typically stay in the role you're considering.

The Interview Process:

Too easy or too hard: A lack of thoroughness can show desperation or disorganization, while an overly complicated process might indicate indecisiveness or bureaucracy.

Lack of respect for your time: Rescheduling interviews multiple times or being left waiting can be indicators of how they treat their employees.

Focus Solely on Perks:

Red flag: While perks are great, they shouldn't be the only focus. If a company heavily advertises their "cool" perks but doesn't talk about career growth, values, or mission, they might be using these perks to compensate for deeper issues(below-market compensation, limited growth opportunities, etc.).

Action Step: Navigate the conversation to detailed compensation breakdowns. Ensure you're informed about industry benchmarks.

Unclear Path for Advancement:

Red Flag: If a company can't clarify how you can move forward or grow within the company, it might mean there's limited room for progression.

Non-Competitive Salaries Justified by 'Exposure' or 'Opportunity':

Red Flag: If a company tries to undercompensate by promoting the experience or exposure you'll gain, it might suggest they undervalue their employees.

Example: The recruiter might mention that the salary is below industry standard but insists that the learning opportunities will "more than make up for it."

Action Step: Research the industry standard for your position in your area. If the salary is below par, consider if the offered "opportunities" are genuinely valuable or mere platitudes.

Delayed Response or Follow-Up:

Red Flag: While hiring processes vary, a prolonged silence or a lack of structured communication can indicate disorganization or a lack of respect for candidates.

Example: After two interviews, there's a radio silence for weeks, only to receive a hasty follow-up much later.

Action Step: Establish clear communication expectations. If a company is genuinely interested, they should maintain open channels and respect your time.
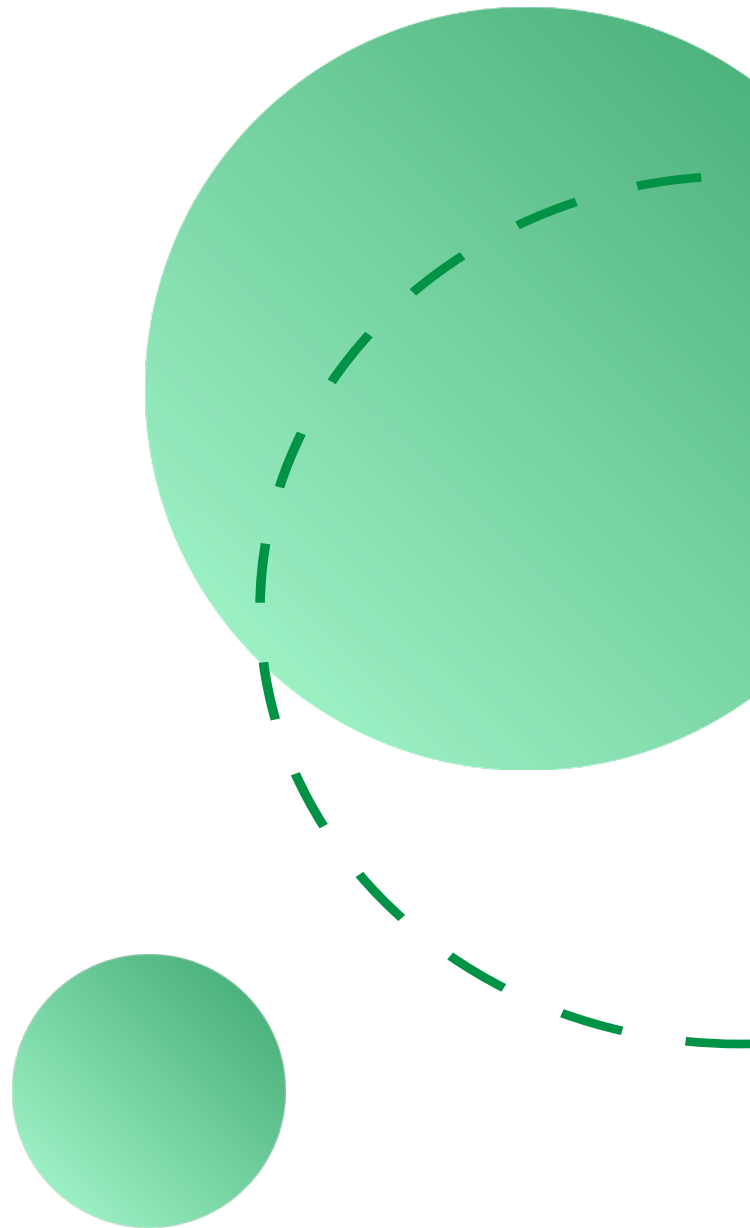
Misalignment Between Values:

Red Flag: Company values and mission statements that sound generic or don't translate into actual practices can be cause for concern.

Example: The company's website speaks volumes about "sustainability," but there's no visible program or initiative in place supporting this.

Action Step: Request examples or initiatives that highlight their commitment to stated values. Genuine dedication should be evident in tangible actions.

Overfocus on 'Family':

Red Flag: While promoting a tight-knit work environment can be positive, harping on it can sometimes suggest blurred boundaries, potentially fostering an environment where professional distance is hard to maintain.

Action Step: Inquire about how feedback is given and received, and how professional conflicts are resolved.

The "Eternal Startup" Mentality:

Red Flag: Companies labeling themselves as perpetual startups often have chaotic, unstructured, and unpredictable environments, possibly using this as an excuse to avoid establishing processes, benefits, or clear direction.

Example: The company has been in business for over a decade but still describes itself as having a "scrappy startup vibe," with indications of erratic schedules, lack of clear processes, and limited benefits.

Action Step: Delve into specifics about career progression, training opportunities, and employee benefits. How does the company support its employees' professional and personal growth over time?

Negative Reactions to Feedback or Questions:

If interviewers respond to your feedback or questions with defensiveness or dismissiveness, or ignore them altogether, it's a sign that the company might not be receptive to employee input or concerns in the long run.

Delayed or Inconsistent Responses:

Long delays in post-interview responses or inconsistent information from company representatives suggest internal disorganization or disrespect towards candidates.

Ambiguity Around Diversity and Inclusion:

Red Flag: When a company hesitates or is vague about its diversity and inclusion initiatives, it might signal a lack of genuine commitment.

Example: Upon asking about the company's diversity initiatives, you receive a generic response about "valuing all individuals" without concrete policies or programs in place.

Action Step: Research the company's public stance on diversity, inclusion, and equity. If in doubt, ask for specific examples of initiatives or metrics they track.

> **Remember, while the red flags may be subjective and offer caution, always directly weigh them against your personal values, career goals, and the factual company perception.**

JOB HUNTING ETHICS: GREY AREAS EXPLORED

By Shaun Coe

Navigating the moral maze of job-hunting

Job hunting isn't just a series of tasks; it's an art, with its own ethical dilemmas and grey areas.

While landing your dream job is the goal, how you get there defines not just your journey, but your character. In this chapter, we'll dive deep into the ethical quandaries many candidates face, and explore how to navigate them while staying true to oneself.

Ghosting Employers: The Unspoken Impact

We've all heard about the dreadful experience of being ghosted after a date. But did you know the job market has its own version of ghosting? It's that cringe-worthy moment when a candidate, after rounds of interviews, simply vanishes without a word.

1. Why Ghosting Isn't Cool: While it might seem harmless to avoid that awkward "thanks, but no thanks" conversation, ghosting can burn bridges. It's not just about the time and resources; it's about trust. Today's ignored recruiter can be tomorrow's decision-maker at your dream job. Remember, industries can be smaller than you think.

2. The Human Element: Behind every email or call is a person. A recruiter who may have championed your case, a hiring manager excited about your potential. Ghosting affects them personally.

3. A Better Way: Declining gracefully. A simple, respectful message can close the loop, maintain relationships, and demonstrate professionalism.

Balancing Multiple Job Offers: Strategy and Ethics

It's every job seeker's dream: multiple job offers on the table. But with great opportunities come great dilemmas.

1. Avoid Playing Games: It might be tempting to play one offer against another, but be cautious. Authenticity wins every time. Share your situation honestly with potential employers; they'll respect your transparency.

2. The Ethics of Saying 'Yes' Then 'No': Accepting a job only to turn it down later for a better offer can be ethically murky. It can leave employers in a lurch, especially if they've already begun onboarding preparations or turned other candidates away.

3. Seeking Counsel: Sometimes, the best way to navigate an ethical quandary is to seek advice. Trusted mentors, colleagues, or friends can offer invaluable perspectives.
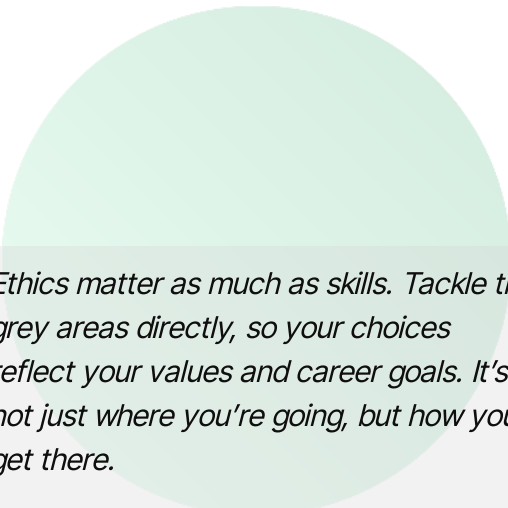
Rapid Job Changes: Ambition vs. Loyalty

The concept of loyalty has shifted lately. It's no longer about spending decades at a single company, but there's still a line between ambition and hopping around too much.

1. The Perception Risk: While changing jobs can be a sign of ambition and adaptability, too many moves in a short span can signal a lack of commitment or even instability.

2. Deep vs. Wide Experience: Diving deep into one role can offer as much value as skimming across multiple ones. Think about the depth of experience you're gaining versus just adding more logos to your resume.

3. Loyalty's New Look: Today's loyalty isn't about time; it's about impact. If you're switching jobs, ensure it's for the right reasons and that you're leaving a positive legacy behind.

Ethics matter as much as skills. Tackle the grey areas directly, so your choices reflect your values and career goals. It's not just where you're going, but how you get there.

SELF-CARE: FUELING YOUR JOB HUNT

By Shaun Coe

In the thick of resume crafting, interview prepping, and networking, it's easy to lose sight of an essential element: **you**. While your end goal is landing the perfect job, the journey towards it shouldn't cost your well-being.

Prioritizing self-care isn't just a nice-to-have; it's an integral part of sustaining your job search effectively.

Understand the Emotional Rollercoaster:

Let's face it; the job hunt isn't just a professional challenge—it's deeply personal. Rejections can sting, the wait can be nerve-wracking, and uncertainty can cast long shadows. Recognizing that this is a normal part of the process is the first step towards managing the emotional toll.

Remember: a 'no' from an employer isn't a measure of your worth. Every 'no' is one step nearer to 'yes'. Maintain perspective.

Schedule Breaks:

Much like a 9-5 job, allocate specific hours for job hunting and stick to them. Once you've hit your daily or weekly limit, take time off. Read a book, watch a movie, or engage in any activity that relaxes you.

Connect with Others:

Share your journey with friends, family, or fellow job seekers. Their perspectives can provide comfort, fresh insights, or even leads on potential opportunities.

Celebrate Small Wins:

Got an interview call? Updated your resume? Finished a challenging skills course? Celebrate it! Every step, no matter how small, is progress.

Set Realistic Expectations:

Understand that the perfect job might take time. Don't rush the process or settle for less than you deserve. At the same time, be open to some new challenges and stay flexible on your search.

TO-DO LIST

By Shaun Coe

Begin with Digital Cleanup:

- Google yourself. Scrutinize the first three pages for any content that might hinder your personal brand.
 - Address or remove any content that doesn't align with your professional image.

Optimize LinkedIn Profile:

- Ensure your profile picture is public and professionally appealing.
- Craft a direct, impactful summary that emphasizes your key achievements and skills.
- Update and tailor your experience section, making sure it's relevant to the roles you're targeting.

Turn to Your Resume:

- Choose a clear, professional format for your resume.
- Tailor it for every job application.
- Use keywords from the job listing.
- Quantify achievements wherever possible.
- Proofread meticulously.

Application Process:

- Thoroughly read job descriptions before applying.
- Customize your application for each job.
- Keep a record of where you've applied, including the job description, contact details, and the date of application.
- Follow up if you haven't heard back within a couple of weeks.

Network with Intention:

On LinkedIn, don't just connect randomly. Interact with contacts who can offer company insights or job leads. Targeted connections boost your chances of getting interviews and valuable info.
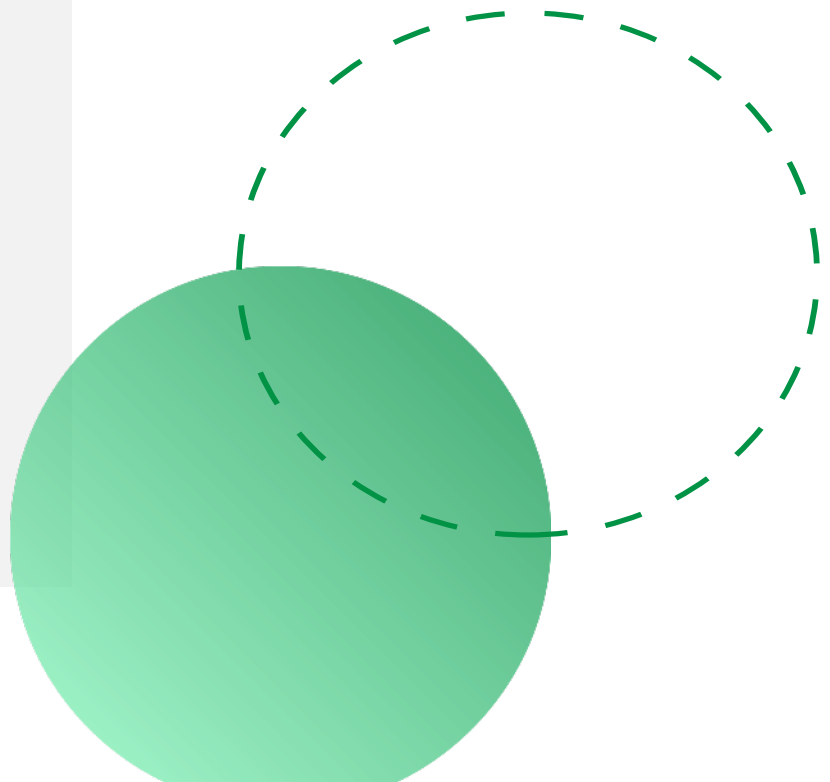
Prepare for Interviews:

- Research the company extensively.Use tools like Glassdoor and LinkedIn to get insights on company culture and fit.
- Understand the job description thoroughly.
- Practice common interview questions and curate compelling stories.
- Plan your questions for the hiring manager.
- Decide on professional attire that fits the company culture.
- Plan your route to the interview location, allowing for unexpected delays.

For remote interviews:

- Do a tech check: camera, mic, and relevant software.
- Choose a distraction-free environment with good lighting.
- Make sure your name is set-up right.
- Watch out for background noise and silence those extra notifications.
- Wear professional attire.

Interview Process:

- Arrive a bit early, but not too early (10-15 minutes is good).
- Offer a firm handshake and maintain good eye contact.
- Listen carefully and answer questions succinctly.

- Show enthusiasm and interest in the role and company.
- Send a thank you email after the interview or consider sending a more detailed follow-up if you have any clarifications or additional information to provide.

Stay Updated:

Regularly update your skills and certifications. The job market is dynamic, so should be your skillset.
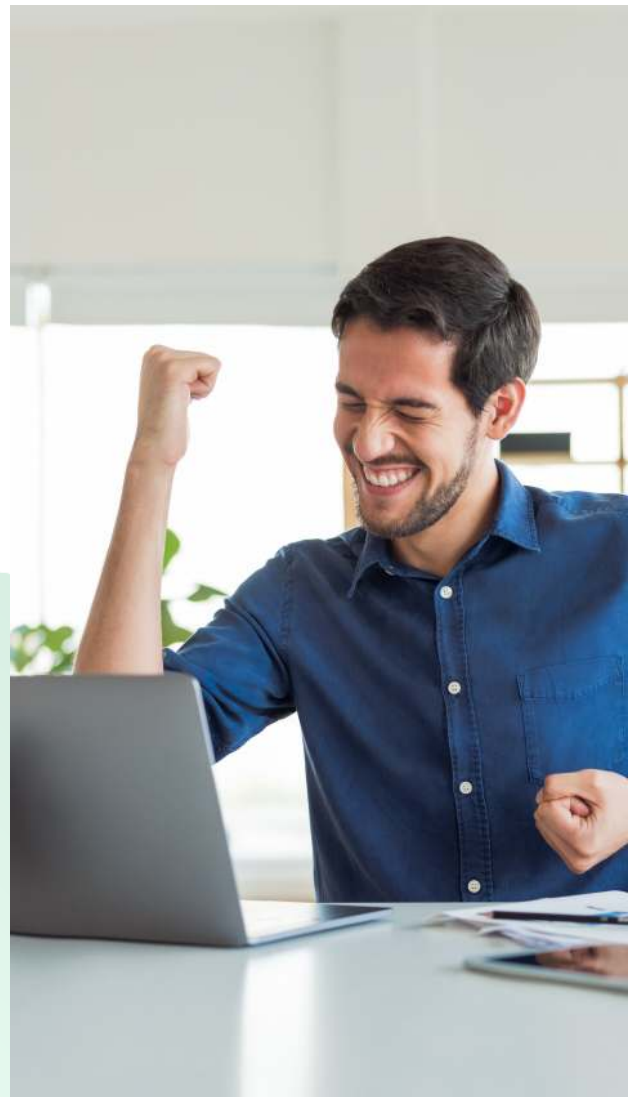
Our Final Thoughts

Thank you for reading! We have put our recruiting know-how straight into this book, making sure it's packed with real, actionable tips from both our experiences and those of job seekers.

Next Steps, Made Simple

While this book wants to be thorough, your unique journey may have its own challenges and opportunities. If you hit a hurdle or spot an opportunity and need to talk, we're right here.

Additionally, if you're still looking for support and guidance, we're offering a 50% discount on LinkedIn and resume optimization. This is your chance to present your skills and experience in the best light, with professional support behind you every step of the way.

Explore our full range of services at https://www.hc-resource.com/boost-your-career.

Job Opportunities: We're not just here for advice, we bring genuine job opportunities. See our open roles here.

"The Candidate Bible" is your ongoing guide - a resource to come back to, time and again. And at HC-Resource, we're always here, ready to assist in your job journey whenever you need it.

Here's to landing that next role,

Shaun Coe
CEO at HC-Resource
Linkedin
www.hc-resource.com

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