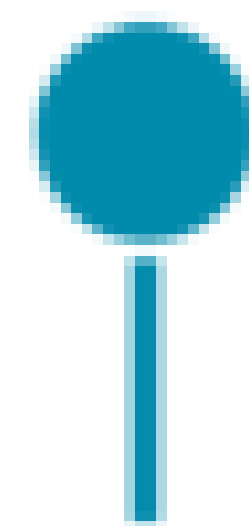


The Talent Place

Attracting and Developing Talent



The Candidate Journey

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Introduction

In a fiercely competitive job market, numerous strategies can distinguish you and boost your prospects for success.

This comprehensive guide endeavours to highlight some of these methods, with the aim to inspire you in your job search journey and increase your chances of success.

The guide will cover three stages in your journey as a candidate:

PREPARE, MARKET AND ENGAGE.

Each stage will bring you practical advice and actionable steps curated by the minds at The Talent Place – an executive recruitment, leadership development and coaching company.

At The Talent Place, our mission is to help individuals and businesses reach their full potential. Whether you need to attract top talent, build strong leadership teams, or manage organisational change, we are here to assist you every step of the way.

We are dedicated to improving the capabilities of our clients and their employees, recognising the unique strengths within each individual person. Our wide range of people focused services are designed to attract and develop talent.

Our Core Services:

Career Coaching – HR Recruitment – Outplacement – Psychometrics

For more information or to get in touch, visit www.thetalentplace.co.uk and gain extra insights into all of these areas by subscribing to our free newsletter.



Section One: PREPARE

In the PREPARE section, we will cover where to start in your job search, the traditional methods you may have taken to secure previous roles, the challenges you're likely to encounter using these methods and what some of the new recruitment alternatives to secure a new job in 2023. We'll help you to think differently about how to approach your job search, market yourself and proactively engage with recruiting companies.

Let's reset.

Looking for a job, or the next step in your career is a chance for a clean slate.

Find some time to be in your own company, self-reflect and pour yourself a hot drink. Take out a sheet of paper and imagine you could be anything you wanted to be and doing anything you wanted to do.

Write it down.

Now, list all of the skills and experience you have to become this person; your aspirational self.

Now, list any gaps in those skills and experiences which would make that challenging.

This is an essential starting point.

In this day and age employers are increasingly turning to professional social networking sites such as LinkedIn to pre-qualify candidates before inviting them to interview.

What does your current profile say about you?

How does it portray your professional persona?

Does it accurately reflect your aspirational goals?

Is it doing all it can to promote YOU?

If it doesn't then it's time to re-evaluate. Beginning to see your professional work life and CV as a 'career journey' is critical to progression and hence key to attracting your dream role. Stop and take a look back on each and every position you've held since your first.



Writing Your Story

Your CV is a documentary of **YOU**. It showcases the various important stages in your professional career - the milestones, the challenges, and the key moments. It's what sets you apart and what makes you unique.

It's your story, so tell it!

Finding the relevant links and charting a path from where you started, to where you currently find yourself is critical in showing growth in your progression. More so, it sets the foundations for where you're going next.

For Example:



How did your bartending job as a teenager make you personable and sociable?



How did this experience lead on to getting that job which centres around people in that growing start-up?



How did this provide you with the necessary skills for progression into that managerial role at a big corporate organisation?

(Essentially, how have your diverse experiences, challenges, and triumphs influenced you? Have they cultivated greater resilience, generosity, tenacity, and ambition within you? Interviewers will often seek certain competencies when shortlisting talent, so knowing these will come in useful).

Once you begin viewing your professional life as a career journey it gets much easier to navigate and simpler to market yourself correctly, a core skill and one which is key in the '**PREPARE**' stage of your career search.

Personal Brand

A key pillar in marketing yourself is [personal brand](#), and (we're glad to say) you don't have to be an influencer with two million followers to have one.

In fact, each and every person on the planet should have a personal brand. Think of it as your professional identity. It's a conscious, intentional effort to ensure that you're perceived in the way you want to be.

Everything you're putting out into the world should be reflective of your personal brand and reinforce your uniqueness and character.

[Want to be thought of as reliable?](#)
[Authentic? Curious? Ambitious?](#)

Great, well your personal profile and each asset that sits within it should represent this.

Each asset with your name attached to it, from the smallest social post to a constructive re-share of a company's thought leadership should symbolise your personal brand and add to it.

It's easier said than done and requires conscious effort to maintain and uphold, but you can't underestimate the power and importance of a good personal brand.

The stories you tell should be instantly relatable and understandable so that, when the right employer comes looking, they can gain an instant grasp of [who you are, what you're about and what you can bring to the table](#).



Strategy

Think of your overall persona as a portfolio of 'personal marketing assets' that make up your professional profile.

You have the ability to share these in their entirety or, strategically use each of your 'marketing assets' as a hook to engage in topical conversations and get noticed by the right people who are more likely to uncover your entire persona.

The assets that surround you not only reinforce your personal brand but can also be used proactively to drive employers toward you.

Think about the role you're going after and put yourself in the headspace of the recruiter trying to fill that role.

We'll be delving into this a lot more in the '[MARKET](#)' stage of the guide, so just keep the concept of 'personal marketing assets' in the back of your mind.

Although looking for a job or a career is no easy task and can often be overwhelming or a discouraging process, there are plenty of things you can proactively do to make yourself stand out amongst the sea of candidates.



Understanding these problems and preparing for the in advance is essential in making yourself both seen and heard.

Many of the problems you can encounter in a job search will feel out of your control, which is why it's so important take charge of the things you can in order to maximise your chances of being hired.



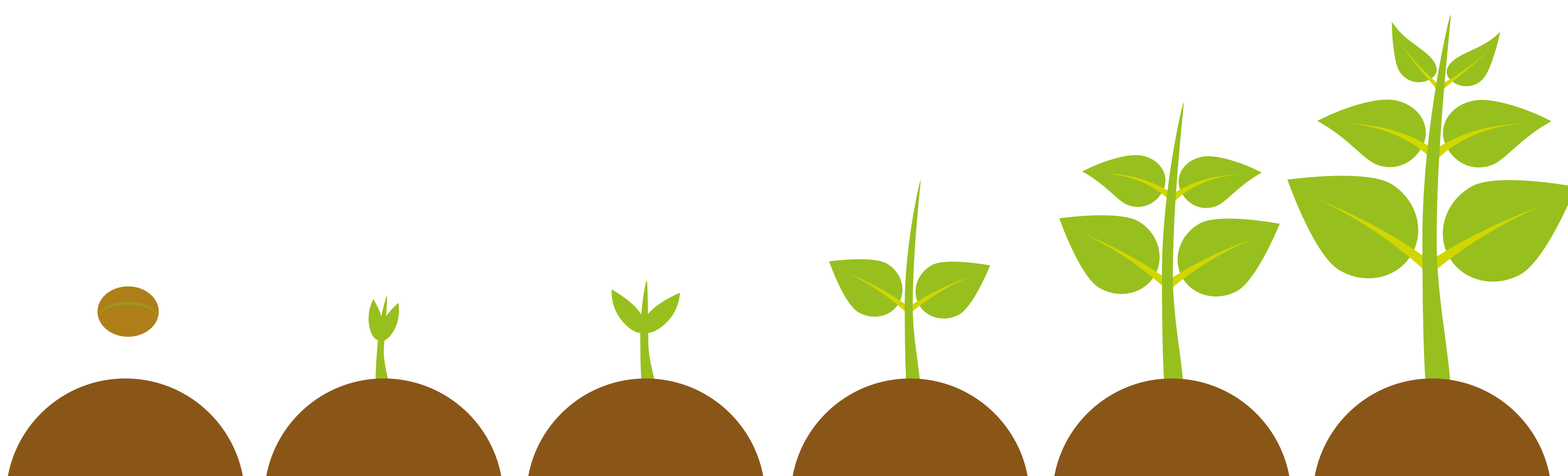
Personal Marketing Assets

The concept of 'personal marketing assets' will only become more important as this guide progresses, so best to engrain it now!

As we mentioned it's imperative to think of every piece of experience, skill and career achievement you've ever garnered as an asset that makes up a portfolio. A portfolio whose sole purpose is to help you market yourself.

Begin to think of your CV as your prime 'personal marketing asset' and foundational basis of the marketing tree that makes up your profile/persona.

If each growing branch and leaf is its own 'personal marketing asset', then your CV is the foundational piece from which they all grow. The seed, if you will. It might be the most basic, and (on the surface) most boring part of your sales pitch, but without it the tree won't grow at all. So, getting it right is critical.



Each bullet point, sentence and word on your CV should showcase your worth and what the return on investment would be from hiring you. If it doesn't, it doesn't belong there.



CV Preparation

One of the first and most fundamental pillars of the 'PREPARE' stage which you can control is your CV. Knowing how to write a good one is essential. Being your first point of contact with an employer, this little A4 piece of paper is your first impression and its importance cannot be overstated. It's critical to setting yourself up for success and securing that much wanted interview.

Whilst we're sure you've heard everything there is to know about the basics and fundamentals of crafting a CV, on the off chance that you're revisiting your resume after holding a long-term position and are looking to update it for the first time in months (or even years!) it never hurts to brush up on the fundamentals and get some advice.

Over the next few pages we've collated five helpful top tips to consider when revisiting your CV - incorporate these to improve your chances at scoring your next interview!



Top 5 CV Tips

1) CV Length

Aim for 2-3 pages, regardless of your experience. Avoid repetition and focus on your most recent, relevant achievements. If your earlier career roles involve achievements and responsibilities similar to your recent experiences, provide a concise summary to highlight the relevant aspects (see point 2 below for guidance).

By summarising earlier roles effectively, you streamline your CV while still showcasing the breadth and depth of your experience. This ensures that hiring managers gain a clear understanding of your background without unnecessary repetition.



2) Provide Organisational Context

Incorporating contextual details about your working environment can greatly aid hiring managers in understanding your background. Here's how you can provide a succinct summary for relevant roles:

- Briefly describe the company's primary activities and industry focus and specify the sectors it operates within (healthcare, technology, finance, etc.)
- Mention the employee size to provide a sense of scale, whether it's a small startup or a large corporation.
- Highlight any regional or international coverage, indicating the company's global reach if applicable.
- Provide insights into the size of the team you worked with, whether you managed a small group or collaborated with a large department.
- Describe the reporting structure, including who you reported to and if you had any direct reports.
- Indicate if the company is a startup, an established business, or undergoing growth, stability, or consolidation phases.



Top 5 CV Tips

This presents a diverse portfolio of experiences that allows hiring managers to better align your background with their specific vacancy. It also provides valuable insights into your industry exposure, company dynamics, and adaptability, enhancing your appeal as a candidate.

3) Achievements Over Responsibilities

Highlight achievements rather than listing responsibilities. Show how well you performed, not just what you did.

This demonstrates impact, the ability to communicate effectively and commercial value. If you simply copy and paste the job description onto your CV (which still happens), you're simply suggesting the opposite.

For example, instead of stating that you 'managed a team,' you could say you 'led a team of 10 to surpass quarterly targets by 20%.' This approach not only validates your skills but also provides concrete evidence of your contributions and effectiveness in previous roles.



Top 5 CV Tips

4) Tailor Sections for Specific Roles

While keeping the core consistent, customise sections of your CV for specific roles. Highlight experiences that align with each opportunity, showcasing your fit for different company structures and needs.

For instance, imagine you're interested in two distinct HR leader positions with varying organisational structures:

Standalone Role in a UK-based Business:

This role involves spearheading the HR function from inception for a UK-based company, marking its first Head of HR hire. The ideal candidate should adeptly balance strategic planning with hands-on operational tasks. Emphasise your capability to navigate both realms effectively.

Head of HR for a Growing International Company:

Here, the focus shifts to leading HR for an expanding international enterprise, necessitating the establishment of a robust HR infrastructure to support its growth trajectory. Highlight your experience in scaling HR functions and your ability to adapt to diverse organisational needs.

In applying for these roles, tailor your application to accentuate the relevant skills and experiences applicable to each opportunity. Given the high volume of applicants, it's crucial to align your application closely with the specific requirements of each role to stand out in the selection process.

5) Make the First Page Count

Recruiters and hiring manager typically scan CVs quickly, so make the first page impactful. Include relevant experiences, achievements, and context to grab their attention right away.

Extract of a High-Impact CV



**HR Director
Presentus
2016-2024**

Presentus is a unique recruitment-as-a-service, talent and coaching platform, where qualified candidates are placed into specific pools for employers to access.

During my time as HR Director, I have helped the organisation grow from 42 to 165 employees and expand its presence within the UK, US and Middle East. Company revenue grew from 4.3 million to 14 million during that time.

- Created the people and experience strategy with Executive Board to attract, develop and retain talent.
- Helped quadruple permanent headcount within the business over a 5-year period, whilst reducing recruitment costs by 23%.
- Increased staff engagement score from 50% to 78% with excellent staff engagement scores of over 90% in some teams.
- Increased retention of our staff from an average of 12 months (2016) to 3.2yrs (2021).
- Reduced employee sickness by 34% over a three-year period.
- Reduced Time to Hire by 58% from 119 days in 2016 to an average of 60 days in 2022, filling a typical vacancy within 4-6 weeks.
- Introduced a new candidate experience function to deliver excellent experience for all candidates from offer to start date and reduce withdrawal rates by 10%, time to hire by 40 days and the pre-employment clearance experience by 30 days.



Interview Preparation

Fast forward and congratulations, you've successfully secured an interview - great!

From researching the company to handling certain key questions, there's plenty you prepare for to ensure you make a great impression during an interview and secure your dream role.

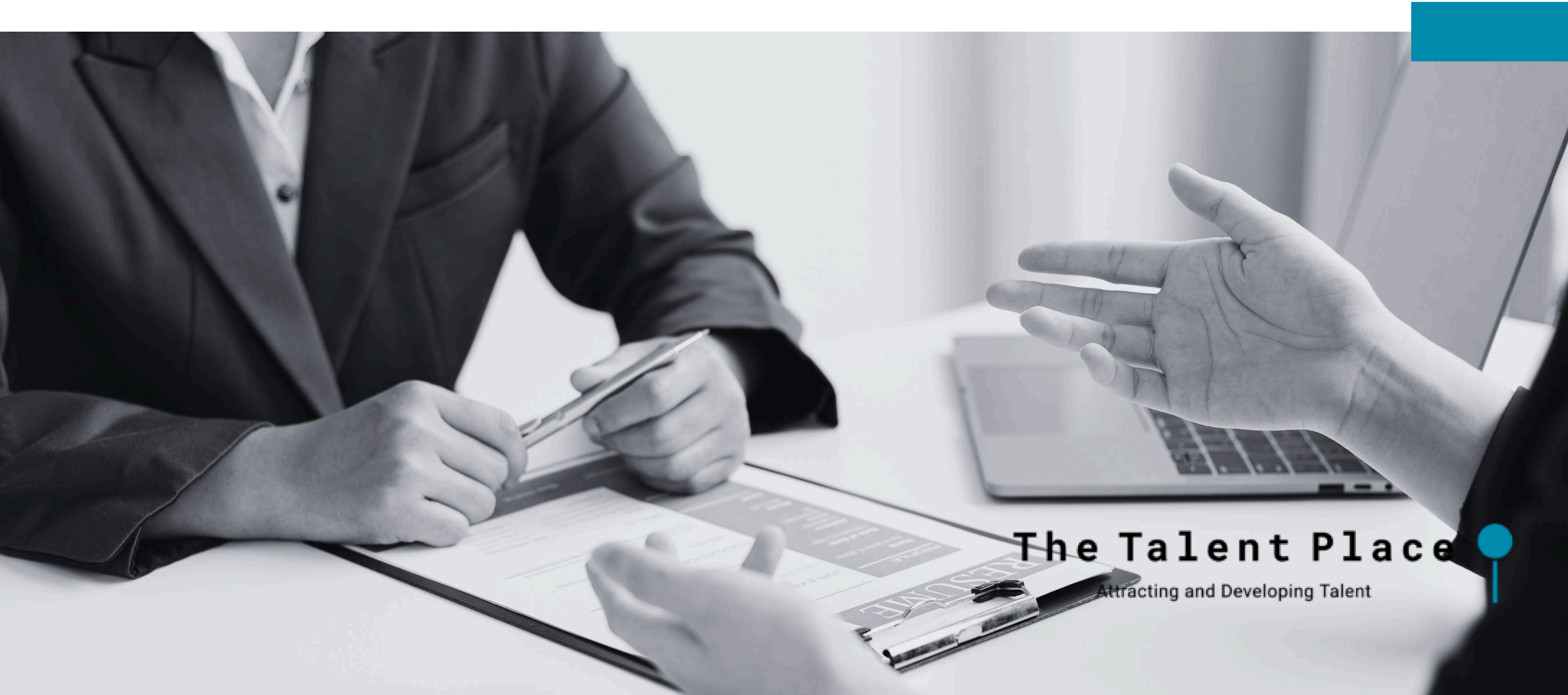
A large part of skill in interviews is unwavering confidence and positive mentality. Knowing and valuing yourself for your strengths and talents is key to marketing yourself.



We've put together an incredibly helpful '[Six Step](#)' Guide to strategising coach you through your entire job search which is designed to give you the confidence and structure you need to proactively pursue your ideal career.

We continually offer free resources and content aimed at enhancing the recruitment experience for both employers and candidates. Subscribe to our newsletter at www.thetalentplace.co.uk to access all of these for free!

Additionally, we will soon be listing HR vacancies and providing information on how to apply for our leadership groups. You can also book personalised coaching sessions to help you achieve your career goals.



Section Two: MARKET

In the MARKET section, we will cover diving headfirst into the world of 'personal marketing assets' and helping you craft a self-marketing strategy to market yourself towards employers in the best possible way. We'll help you understand how to set up a digital online presence, maximise the assets you have, set yourself apart from other candidates whilst exercising creativity and how best to leverage your personal brand/identity to showcase your strengths.

Begin this stage by asking yourself some candid questions:

'Are you doing everything within your power to correctly promote yourself?'

If the answer isn't a definitive yes, then it needs to be.

'Do you have a self-marketing strategy?'

If not, then you need to craft one, and the good news is - we can help.

It's time to take stock of your arsenal.

- What 'personal marketing assets' do you have to hand?
- Are you utilising each skill, experience, or piece of content you have to its full potential?
- Are you sharing them proactively, or just waiting for employers to stumble upon them?

First things first. If they're not in one place, then collate your 'personal marketing assets'.

Get all your metaphorical ducks in a row. Whether it be on a LinkedIn profile, a website, or only within your own personal files – get them organised in preparation of using them during your job hunt.

Remember your 'personal marketing assets' fundamentally represent your professional self. Many employers will view your online profiles, prior to shortlisting to get a sense of your character, values and attention to detail. They exemplify to them what you can offer them as a candidate.

So, treat them as such!

The Trophy Cabinet

Think of them as trophies in the case of 'you'. This way, you can begin to showcase them with pride. Any employer should be able to look at them and instantly understand what each of these 'personal marketing assets' showcase, and what they say about the person behind it.

Now that you're entering the 'MARKET' stage, it's time to polish them and make them shine.

Don't be afraid of a little spring clean. Just as you must polish, you also must dust.

Ask yourself: 'Does this asset showcase my worth and the ROI in hiring me?' If not, get rid of it.



Similarly, to how an old sports trophy from school might only have sentimental value to yourself and others probably don't care. In comparison, employers won't care about irrelevant, or even contrasting experiences in a different industry to the one in which you're currently applying.

If there's transferable skills you can make a case for keeping around a seemingly irrelevant 'personal marketing asset'... but a word of caution, if something is to be considered an asset, it needs inherent worth.

An employer won't necessarily do the legwork to see correlations between seemingly unconnected experience and the position/skills they're hiring for. So, if you take this route, you'll need to make its relevance abundantly clear.

At this stage in your candidate journey, you should have a bank of 'personal marketing assets' from across your career. These assets can range from a list of skills and experiences you've built over your professional life to actual tangible pieces of content and case studies that showcase them.

Now, it's time to strategise.

Your Digital Presence

Your whole self-marketing strategy should start with you flicking the little switch at the back of your head, changing you out of the 'reactive' mindset and into the 'active' one. If you want your role of a lifetime, then nothing less will do.

Instead of waiting around for employers to come to you and discover your wealth of assets, do everything in your power to bring your portfolio to them.



This, more often than not, begins with [digital presence](#).

In the 21st century, we live in a time of unprecedented connection.

Through the power of the internet, within a couple of clicks of a mouse and taps of a keyboard you can be on the personal page of the Hiring Manager for the company where your dream role resides.

Make no mistake, when used correctly, social media can be your single greatest ally during the '[MARKET](#)' stage of your candidate journey. Not only will it help you network and build connections, but it will also help you construct, practice, and maintain your personal brand whilst acting as the central 'hub' of your self-marketing strategy.

But let it be known, creating an online professional persona and profile that aligns with your personal brand AND makes you appealing to potential employers is no small feat. It's something that takes time, dedication, practice, and consistency - so, best start now!

You have a whole world of knowledge, as well as some of the most powerful search tools and databases in the history of mankind at your fingertips. Use them to your advantage - research, network, and market yourself.

[Know your dream role?](#)

Great, now find companies that are hiring for this position.

[Found those companies?](#)

Great, now follow them and start proactively engaging with their content.



Your Digital Presence

Correct engagement is all about drawing the line between persistence and annoyance. You want to put yourself on employers' radar, but not for the sake of it. Liking and sharing is one thing, but commenting and re-posting with your own text is another.

Make every interaction meaningful. If you're not adding insight to the discussion and just giving meaningless input – your engagement simply won't matter.

It's imperative to be **strategic and intentional** with your digital presence. Actively think about the language and text you use. Your words matter as they represent you. Every sentence written should reflect your own unique 'personal brand', so you need to be constantly aware of the copy you're writing and whether it aligns.

For Example:



If you want to be thought of as 'INSIGHTFUL', don't comment on a company's post with a 'surface-level' response.



If you want to be thought of as 'AUTHENTIC', don't contradict yourself as this will paint a picture of you as 'fake'.



Biographies

Another representation of your personal brand and often the first bit of text that an employer will read about you is your 'biography'.

Hence, knowing how to write a good one that strategically hits your objectives is key.

Never underestimate the power of networking. As the old adage goes, "it's who you know", so get your feelers out and start making connections. You'll never know who you might meet. It could very be the person who leads you to your next role.

Once you've established a presence and engaged with potential employers, it's time to take it to the next level. You've already set yourself above the average candidate, but how can you take the next step whilst [exercising creativity and outside-of-the-box thinking](#)?

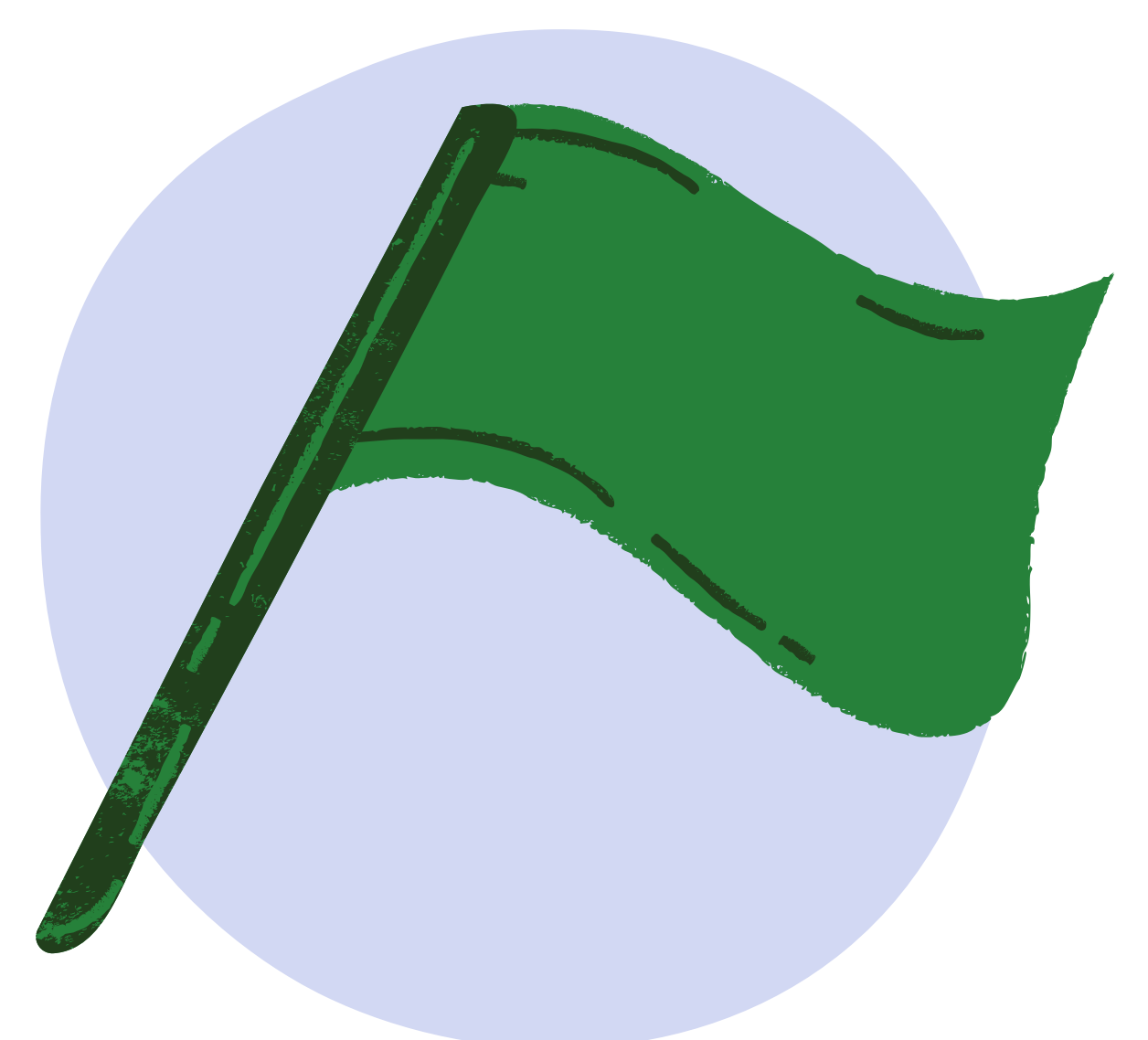
Sharing relevant industry news and engaging with somebody else's content and insights is one thing but creating and publishing your own thought leadership on the industry that you're applying for, as well as its critical topics and pain points, is another.

In doing so, a plethora of information is conveyed by you to any prospective employers.

It plainly states your critical thinking skills and knowledge on your chosen industry, as well as the fact that you think about these problems and have your own ideas on how to solve them.

Simply put: it's [a huge green flag](#) and instant showcase of the ROI of hiring you.

It is hugely attractive to the employers that work within these industries and deal with these problems on the daily.



Section Three: ENGAGE

In the ENGAGE section, we will cover how to effectively communicate in the business world and how to ensure you make yourself essential within an organisation. Want to know the secret? It's by assimilating a company's vision and truly aligning your personal values with its objectives. We'll also touch on the vital nature of forging and fostering lasting workplace relationships and how resilience and persistence are two of the key pillars to success.

The time has come to move into the fast lane. If you've followed this guide, then all the groundwork has been laid.

You've **PREPARED** meticulously. You've **MARKETED** optimally. Now, it's time to step into the spotlight and **ENGAGE**.

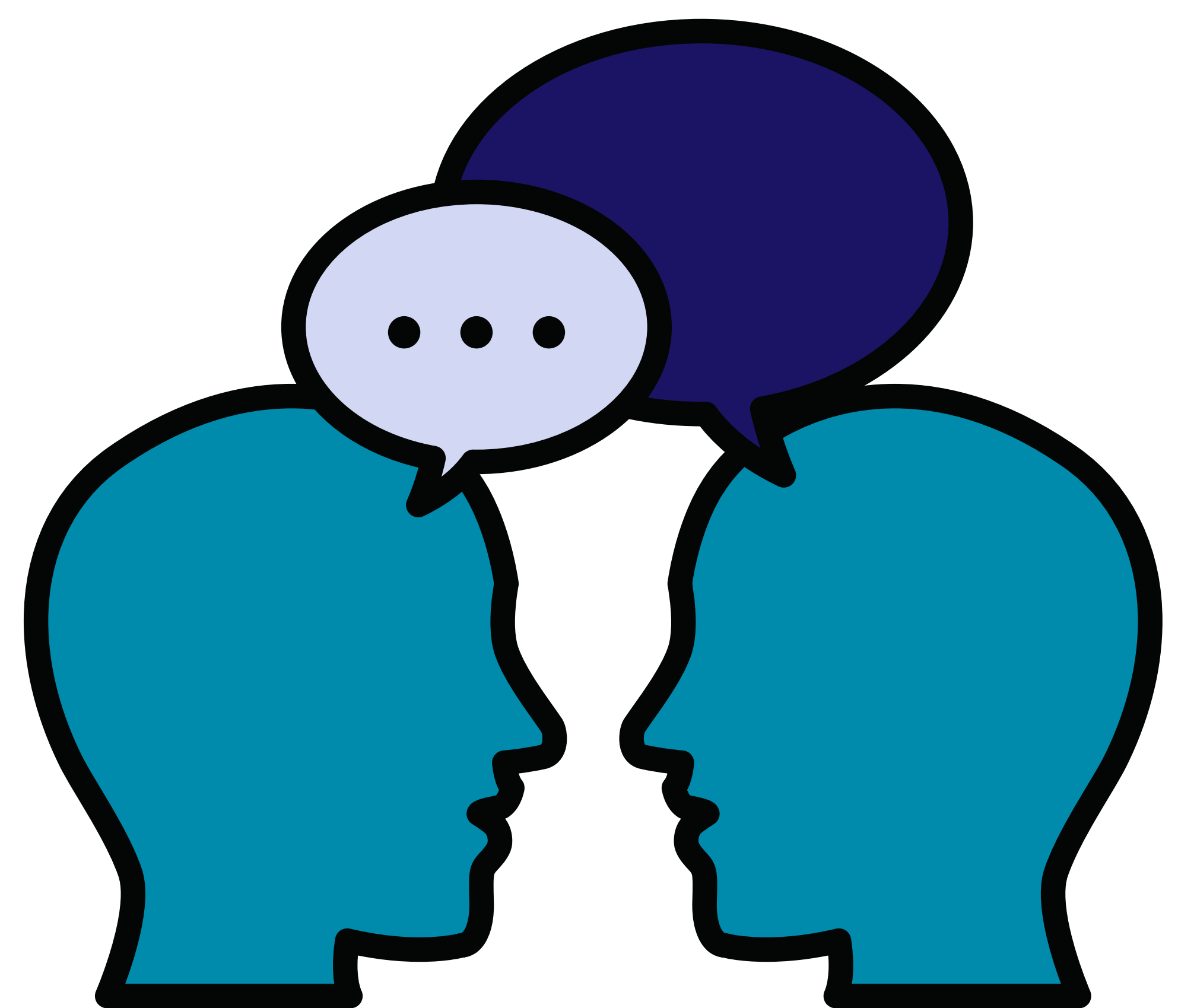
This crucial final stage in your candidate journey demands your full attention and energy.

Tenacity and persistence will be paramount in your active pursuit of that dream role we had you imagine at the start of the guide. Everything you've learnt in the first two phases into practice and actively start going after that role you want, interacting and speaking with potential employers.

The '**ENGAGE**' stage underscores an important premise - you're not looking for a job; you're on a journey to build a rewarding career. Therefore, your moves need to be calculated and your efforts consistent.

A vital pillar during this stage will be communication. Mastering the art of it, either verbally or in writing, is a vital factor in not just securing your dream role but excelling within it.

Communication, in the realm of business, is an irreplaceable asset. In fact, when done well, it's the cornerstone to any successful career and the key to building progressive, professional, and long-lasting relationships.



Communication & Culture

In a world where people are the driving force, it becomes critical to communicate effectively to attain shared goals. This is especially true in the fast-paced, dynamic landscape of the business world.

If we take a look at a granular level, the definition of the word 'engage' literally means to fully participate and to get involved. Getting invested in your candidate journey, and once you find that job, rolling up your sleeves and getting your hands dirty in the company. The '**ENGAGE**' stage of this guide encompasses that principle.

Truly thriving within an organisation implies deeply resonating with its internal vision and values. Employers commonly refer to a new recruit needing to be a '**cultural fit**' – an individual who not only possesses the necessary skills and experience for a role, but also aligns wholeheartedly with the company's ethos and environment.

To an extent, adaptability has to play a role in assimilation here. Whilst companies want someone who can readily embrace their work culture and environment, they also heavily value 'the individual'; someone who comes with their own ideas and fresh takes. Toeing the line between the two different approaches is a subtle art and one which is key to success.



We're not suggesting that you compromise your principles and beliefs and sell your soul. **Be receptive** to learning new methodologies and approaches, but don't completely set aside your own core values and way of working. You may be surprised to discover that a different perspective may be exactly what they're looking for.



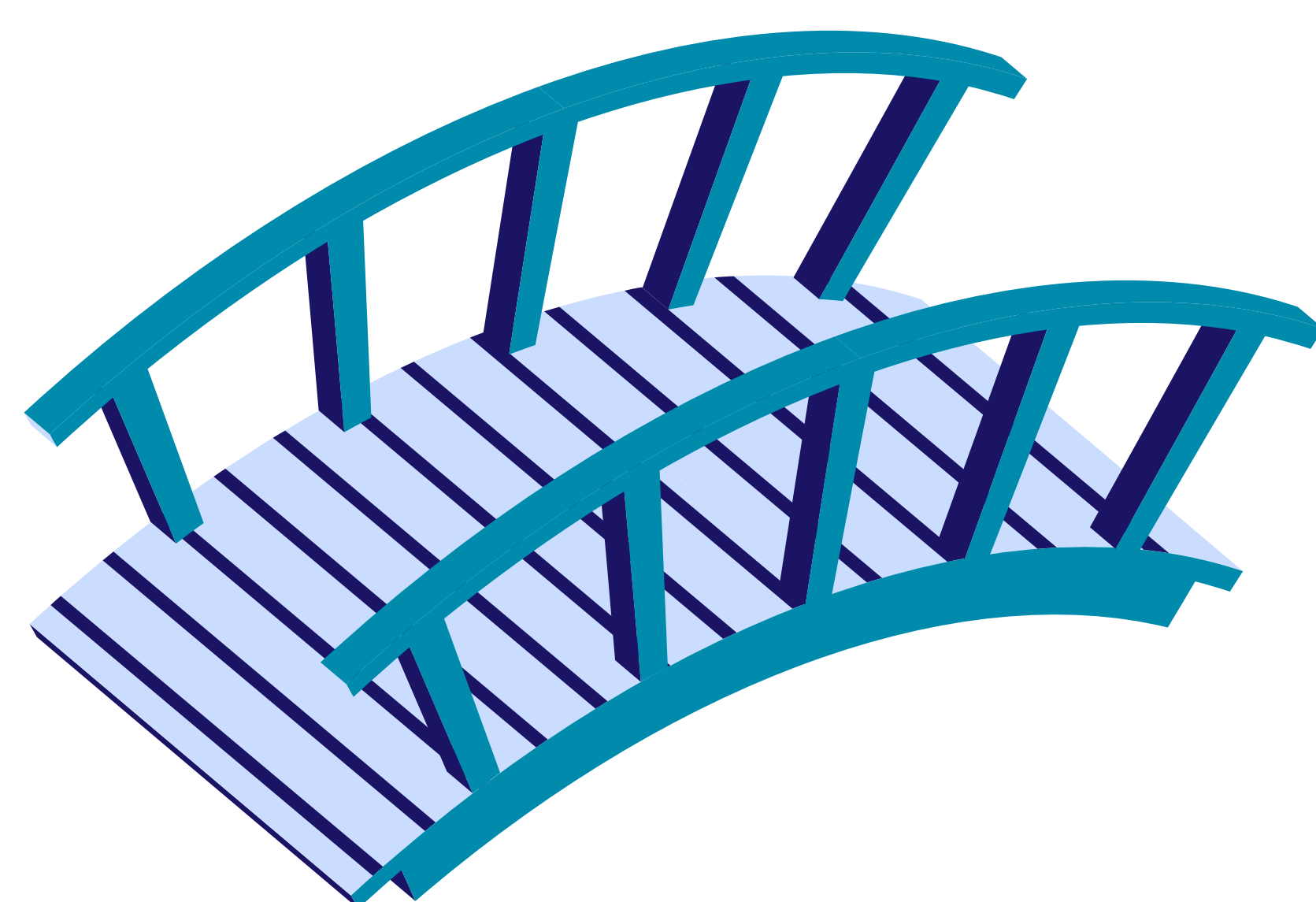
Forging Relationships

Dive into your role and try to fully understand the company's mission, culture, and objectives at a fundamental level. Familiarise yourself with its vision and embed it in your work ethic. This will demonstrate your genuine engagement and interest in both personal and shared success.

On top of this, forging long-lasting relationships is pivotal for your ongoing progress within the workplace. Building these relationships takes time and investment and is a lot like building a physical bridge.

Trust, honesty, integrity, reliability, and consistency form your building blocks in this context. Every good interaction you have with an employer is a beam or a nail, strengthening the rapport you share, much like it would a real bridge.

Similarly, to well-built structures, a robust employee-employer relationship can withstand the test of time and endure the harshest storms.



Ensure you show up, follow through on your promises, and maintain a steady work ethic and over time, this sort of consistency will give you a reputation of reliability and trustworthiness.

It's important to note that any relationship starts at the point of first contact. With regards to an employer, this could be your CV, an email, an interview, or any other form of interaction. Whatever it is, if you wish to conquer the last stage in your candidate journey and engage successfully, you must do so from the outset.

Remember, **engaging effectively in the business world is not a one-time effort**. It's a continual process that requires persistence, adaptability, and a genuine desire to contribute to the collective success of a company.

At the Talent Place, we know how to help you stand out from the crowd as well as tailor your language and tone to fit the type of role and industry you're applying for. Not sure where to start? Ready to invest in your career? Book in your career coaching session here – www.thetalentplace.co.uk



Resilience & Persistence

By mastering [the art of communication](#), aligning with your company's vision, and fostering meaningful relationships, you can not only secure your dream job within a company but also create the foundation for long-term success in your career. Another key word to carry with you during the closing phase of your candidate journey is resilience.

In a competitive world where 'no' is often more frequent than 'yes', a little resilience can make all the difference. Expect rejections and be ready to bounce back from them with buoyancy. Every single one is an opportunity for growth and learning, not a setback. Embrace learning at every stage. Just as the business world is ever evolving, you should also be.

Continuous learning and development showcases your adaptability and your eagerness to improve and grow – qualities that employers highly value. [Persistence and resilience will set you apart](#) in the crowded recruitment market.

Embrace learning at every stage. Just as the business world is ever evolving, you should also be.



Lastly, it's crucial to keep a level of self-awareness throughout this entire process. [Understand your strengths and leverage them](#) to your advantage. Recognise your weaknesses and strive to improve upon them.

Engage actively in your personal growth and with the right preparation and marketing, the world can truly be your oyster and the dream job you've been searching for can be yours.



Conclusion

Now it's time for you to implement these insights and engage with the world around you. Get out there and show them what you're made of! Make your presence known and felt.

Remember, the journey doesn't end once you land your dream job. On the contrary, that's when the real work begins.

Keep pushing, stay persistent and remember every step you take is one towards a career that aligns with you, your personal values, and your goals.

This marks the end of our guide, but the beginning of your journey!

Embrace every opportunity, learn from every challenge, and keep growing. We wish you the best of luck in your ongoing candidate and career journey.

For more information and how we can support you, visit our website at www.thetalentplace.co.uk.

Stay subscribed to our newsletter for the latest insights on HR vacancies, Career Coaching options, networking opportunities and more.

