

# A Guide to Standing Out in a Competitive Job Market





**Getting noticed is the key to success when you're looking for a job – and in a crowded market, figuring out how to distinguish yourself from everyone else can be a challenge. Standing out from the competition goes far beyond polishing your CV, crafting the perfect cover letter or preparing for the interview (though we always suggest you do these things anyway!).**

If you're considering moving on from your current role to advance your career in a competitive market, there are ways to rise above the other jobseekers and demonstrate to employers the unique value you can bring.

In this guide, we reveal six effective strategies to separate yourself from the pack.

## SCALE UP YOUR NETWORKING

Networking is always beneficial for your career, but when the job market is crowded, your professional contacts become even more important for getting a leg up on the competition. Some of the key ways to scale up your networking efforts include:



**Keeping in touch** with your existing contacts, even if you're not currently looking for a new job.



**Looking for shared connections** and potential referrals to help you get a foot in the door to companies you're interested in joining.



**Attending networking events** (whether they are in person or online) and joining professional organisations to meet new people in your industry, stay current on the latest trends and get first-hand information on upcoming job openings.

You should also take the opportunity to improve your personal brand by reviewing your online presence and polishing your social media profiles, as this will support your networking efforts and influence what employers see when they search your name online. Your LinkedIn profile should tell a story about your career and complement your CV (not mimic it), so be sure to create an interesting headline, sell yourself in the summary section, and keep your experience high-level and up-to-date. Don't forget to set your status to "open to opportunities," as this lets recruiters know you are looking.

**Recommended Action:** Search LinkedIn for profiles that stand out to inspire your own professional presence, and make it a goal to connect with at least one new contact each week.







## IDENTIFY YOUR UNIQUE SELLING POINT

Your unique selling point (USP) is about what you could bring to the role in a way that no-one else could. This doesn't have to be anything outlandish – often, what makes you unique is the total composition of your skills, competencies and personal attributes, which will be unlike anyone else's.

Think about your individual combination of skills and highlight one or two USPs to leverage when promoting yourself. This could include your ability to improve customer retention levels or your background in delivering cost savings on complex projects. Whatever you decide, make sure to target qualities that are relevant to the specific job you're applying for, and customise them to the audience. It's a good idea to have a few USPs prepared ahead of time so that you can select the right one for the role and use it to create an "elevator pitch" (a brief, persuasive summary designed to sell you to potential employers).

**Recommended Action:** Create an inventory of your skills, competencies and characteristics and develop an "elevator pitch" for who you are based on these unique merits.

## ENHANCE YOUR VALUE PROPOSITION

Demonstrate that you actively look for opportunities to grow and add more value whenever you can – this shows employers that you're a solid investment.

There are a number of ways to enhance your value proposition:



**Further your education** – Consider doing an online course or pursuing a new certification to enhance your CV and potentially qualify you for more advanced roles.



**Engage in volunteer work** – Volunteering is a great way to get experience in new positions and environments, as well as gain a competitive edge.



**Develop your leadership abilities** – Even if you've never had a management position, there are other ways to gain leadership experience, such as by putting your hand up to take the lead on a specific task or support a new starter. Focus on building practical skills such as collaboration, decision-making and mentoring.

**Recommended Action:** Identify industry trends and the typical requirements of roles that are relevant to your experience to determine whether your skills are current. You may need to update them to stay competitive in your industry.



## COME ARMED WITH EXAMPLES

Whether it's for the application or the interview, having examples to back up your skills and experience will give them more sway in the eyes of the hiring manager. For instance, you may have increased sales by 6% or managed a team of 10 people – regardless of what your past roles have looked like, mentioning numbers and concrete results will help to reinforce your track record.

Another way to go the extra mile is to send a link to your portfolio or a relevant project you were involved in. Putting in the effort to provide solid examples will reflect your interest in the role and leave a lasting impression on employers.

**Recommended Action:** Review your recent work experience and select examples to include in your CV or cover letter, and practice talking about them so you can bring them up in an interview.



## BE FLEXIBLE

In a turbulent and competitive market, flexibility will broaden your prospects and help you secure opportunities that will benefit your career in the long term. This could mean:



**Staying open to interim positions or consulting projects**, which will keep your skills fresh and position you for prime roles later down the track, as well as temporary or part-time positions, which could turn into full-time opportunities.



**Considering roles** that are a pay grade or title below your most recent position, particularly at organisations with reputations for promoting from within.



**Being willing to relocate** if necessary to secure opportunities that will keep you on the forefront of your field.

**Recommended Action:** Keep an open mind about the path you take to reach your long-term career goals, and take some time to identify possible options for getting there.





## MASTER THE ART OF THE FOLLOW UP

Competitive job markets aren't just challenging for jobseekers – they can mean a lot of extra work for hiring managers too, who have to sort through a large volume of applications for each vacancy. This is why following up is so important.

If you haven't heard anything in a week or so after the interview, feel free to reach out and check in on a timeline for a hiring decision. Doing so will highlight your enthusiasm for the role and keep you front of mind – just remember that there's a fine line between persistence and pestering, so don't overdo it.

If you're working with a recruiter, they will keep in touch with the employer for you and will be able to provide you with updates on the hiring process, as well as any next steps. While a good recruiter will automatically keep you in the loop about any developments, you can also take the initiative to follow up with them and demonstrate your interest.

**Recommended Action:** Craft a friendly message asking for any news about the hiring process, reiterating your excitement about the opportunity and thanking them for their time – or speak to your recruiter for updates.



## SUMMARY


Standing out from the crowd when the job competition is fierce can undoubtedly be tough, but it's not impossible! By putting this guide to use and understanding your value as professional, you're sure to find your way to the shortlist.

For more advice on standing out as a jobseeker or to learn about the latest Tech job opportunities available in Canberra and Brisbane, [reach out to our team](#) to discuss your options.




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