

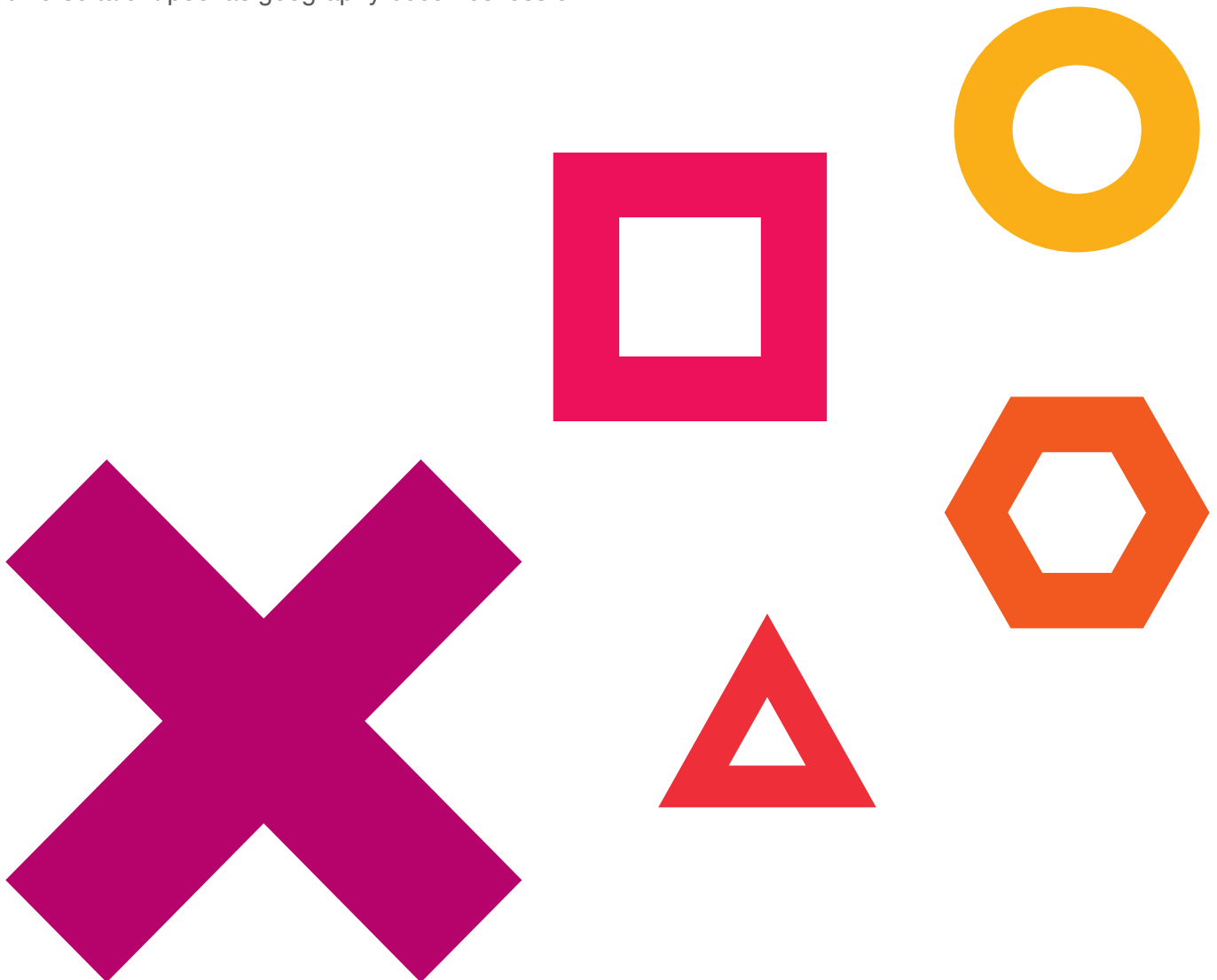
The top tech tools to make use of when seeking a job in 2019

Introduction

Whether it's your first step on the career ladder or the next rung on your journey to the top, getting a job in an increasingly competitive climate isn't easy – regardless of your skillset or past experience. The unemployment rate may be at a record low, but the high calibre of Candidates - and the tools they have at their disposal – makes for a tough battleground. What's more, where local talent was once the only competition facing hopeful applicants in their job search, technology has enabled Employers to recruit Candidates from around the world.

Today, Candidates are up against a wider, more diverse talent pool as geography becomes less of

a critical factor in recruitment. Fortunately, it's not all bad news. Technological advances have also given us a raft of digital tools that can boost your chances of securing not just any job, but one that is right for you.



The job search on your mobile

There are many tasks that can be simplified through the use of a smartphone app – whether we're ordering food, hailing a taxi, managing our finances or monitoring our health.

Digital technology has transformed the way we live and work – mobiles have become the one tool to rule them all – and it's not just Millennials who are glued to their phone screens. When it comes to the job hunt, research has shown members of every age group are conducting their search predominantly through mobile devices.

This hyper-connectivity has changed the game, no longer do we sit for hours at a computer or drain the ink of a pen circling ads in newspapers. The adoption and proliferation of mobile devices allow job seekers instant access to available openings and opportunities at the touch of a screen. If you're entering the market in a search for a new job, you will more than likely use your mobile for multiple reasons.

Job boards in your pocket

In 2019, job boards are still a staple in the Candidate arsenal and sites such as Glassdoor are also gaining popularity due to the level of Employer insight available. Rather than dedicating hours at a time to search, job seekers can browse through listings on the go, utilising lunch breaks and the commute to scroll through opportunities on their mobile devices.

With instant access to job listings and a number of filtering capabilities available, you can fine tune your search to see only the most recent or relevant opportunities or set up alerts to send the latest ads straight to your mobile. Of course, no job board alone can act as a one-stop-shop: in most cases, a multi-channel approach is your best bet in finding a role that meets your requirements.

There's an app for that

If you're one of the 94% of smartphone owners that use their phone to surf job boards, there's a good chance you prioritise constant and quick access to the latest

opportunities. Thankfully, the number of apps that exist today to connect job seekers to relevant vacancies is ever-growing, allowing you to keep on top of the search even while on the move.

LinkUp is a great example of this – an app which drives job seekers directly to vacancies listed on Employers' websites to save time and present you with opportunities that may not be listed elsewhere. Dubbed the 'Tinder for Jobs' an app called 'Quickly' lets Candidates swipe through opportunities and receive QuickView interview requests from potential jobs.

Beyond the search itself, there are a wealth of Apple and Android apps designed to aid in your applications. Pocket Resume, for example, lets you create, maintain, and email your CV straight from your mobile device. Similarly, Interview Prep Questions is an app that uses flashcards to prepare you for questions you may face in an interview should your application succeed in impressing Employers.

LinkedIn to the rescue your value

With more and more Employers using LinkedIn to advertise vacancies and source talent, failing to capitalise on this key channel during your job search could see you miss out on opportunities. Most Employers today have completed their company profile and linked staff profiles to their page, so this platform can prove valuable to Candidates seeking insight on the company brand and potential future colleagues.

Beyond the job board function, LinkedIn users credit the professional social media site for enabling them to connect with key industry contacts. By fostering meaningful relationships with these individuals, there's a good chance you will be in the forefront of their mind should they have an exciting opportunity within their company. But don't forget, LinkedIn is a two-way-street – if your profile is lacking and you don't provide your connections with a reason to keep you in mind, it's unlikely you'll draw much benefit from your online professional network.

Building your personal brand online

When sourcing talent online, hiring managers are naturally drawn to Candidates with a strong personal brand. It's not hard to see why; after all if an individual can demonstrate credible expertise in a particular topic, they automatically earn trust with a recruiter. While we shouldn't judge a book by its cover, it's near impossible not to feel reassured when a Candidate's online presence seems to tick every box.

Of course, personal branding is nothing new. In a time before the internet, Candidates would rely on their CV and cover letter to do the talking; their personal brand was an amalgamation of their professional reputation and the language used in their application. In the digital age, landing your dream job is a whole new ball game.

Today, it's not just about having the skills, it's about how you share it with the world. Thanks to the mass-adoption and evolution of social media platforms, recruiters have a new avenue by which to measure Candidate fit. Hence, promoting yourself in the right way is critical if you are to make a good impression.

Whether you're looking to jumpstart your career or are in the market for a new role, a well-crafted online personal brand can be the most powerful weapon in your job search efforts. But where to begin?

Optimise your social media profiles

Your personal brand should act as a showcase of your values, skills, professional experience and personal interests; it's the image you present to prospective Employers and how most hiring managers will come to know you. With this in mind, your first step should be to build your LinkedIn profile, taking into consideration the impression it will give to hiring managers at first glance.

While professionalism is key, there's no need to completely erase your personality in order to appear attractive to Employers. Above all, your social profiles should be authentic; they should represent who you are beyond the names and dates on your resumé. Beyond

professional experience, your profile should give your target audience insight into who you are and what you are passionate about within a professional context. The more fresh, up-to-date and engaging the information, the more likely a hiring manager is to get in touch in regard to an opportunity.

Demonstrate your expertise

While an optimised profile complete with an engaging introduction and a professional photo is an essential component to a successful job search, blogs provide an opportunity for Candidates to show hiring managers and relevant connections that they walk the walk. You don't need to post every day; but taking some time to research a subject within your specialist area and create a short, engaging post to share with your connections can make all the difference in earning their trust.

Connect with key contacts

Boasting 500m+ members, LinkedIn makes for the perfect place to connect with key contacts across your chosen industry. But beware, this is by no means an invitation to blindly send hundreds of connection requests. When it comes to building and growing your professional network, quality of connection is far more important than quantity. Before you send a connection request, ask yourself how the particular contact could be relevant to your career.

If you're stuck on where to look, groups can make for a great starting place. Not only will you gain access to relevant industry contacts, you can utilise the group to learn more about your sector and spark discussions about upcoming trends or common challenges. The more value you can offer you people, the more likely they are to want to connect.

Training programmes and systems

Finding a job in a competitive Candidate market can be a minefield. One moment you're feeling confident about a role you've applied to and are planning your escape, the next you're back to square one.

If you're struggling to position yourself as the perfect Candidate for a particular vacancy, adding more strings to your bow by way of training will give a recruiter a reason to call. Naturally, your primary concern may be the time it will take to complete a training course – especially if you are currently in Employment.

Complete online training in your downtime

Luckily, the digital age has given us a few options to improve our career prospects without dropping our existing commitments. A quick Google search for online training courses within your particular discipline should return a long list of results, most of which will provide you with a valuable qualification to add to your CV.

The good news? Not all of these courses will be mind-numbing, click-next experiences: some use game mechanics to keep users engaged, others use video and whiteboard animation to help explain complex subjects in a more digestible way. Completing modules in your spare time shows to a prospective Employer your commitment to self-improvement, so don't forget to add certifications and badges to your CV and LinkedIn profile.

Swat up with relevant webinars

Keeping up to date with industry trends can prove challenging in a business landscape characterised by constant change. Through online training, you can expand your knowledge base, sharpen your skills and stay ahead of the curve rather than behind it – and it need not take longer than half an hour of your day. By keeping in touch with your LinkedIn connections and signing up for email alerts with relevant companies, you can tune into webinars and Q&A sessions aimed at industry professionals.

Take on a part-time online course

If you want more than a quick exercise here and there, signing up to a distance learning course such as those offered by providers like the Open University could prove highly beneficial in strengthening your skills and getting ahead of the competition. Courses such as these can usually be completed alongside Employment as a part-time commitment, giving you the freedom to upskill and improve your career prospects without returning to full-time education.



Showcase your skills with a visual CV

Standing out to prospective Employers isn't easy. Considering the average recruiter spends just nine seconds reading each CV they receive, a Candidate has only an incredibly small window in which to impress their reader.

Within these 9 seconds, your potential boss needs to see the skills and abilities you have, as well as the unique value you will add to the business. If you're in the process of updating your CV for a particular application, take a step back, put yourself in the shoes of the recruiter and ask: "What would I look for as proof that this person is perfect for the role?"

Enter the visual CV.

While a written CV is always a key component of any job application, presenting your skills and experience in a way that's visually attractive and engaging can be the key to cutting through the noise in an oversaturated market.

Lights, camera, action: filming your video CV

Employers don't usually ask Candidates to submit a video CV as part of the application process, but Candidates looking to differentiate themselves from the competition can find success with this format as it shows off their personality. If you're camera shy, you don't need to film yourself for your video CV – even a simple slideshow of your notable achievements, past work experience, hobbies and interests can set you apart from the competition.

Done well, a video CV can help you to get noticed - but bear in mind that certain hiring managers will not view videos for fear it might lead to bias in the recruitment process. Before you start penning a script and filming, take some time to consider whether a video CV is the right format and a good use of your time.

Creative programmes to modernise your CV

In 2019, you don't need a degree in programming or decades worth of Adobe experience to produce a creative, visually engaging CV. If you're looking for a way to grab the attention of a prospective Employer with a visual CV, there are a raft of digital tools available to take advantage of.

Today, online platforms such as Vizualize.me, Canva and Cakeresume allow you to quickly create eye-catching CVs through existing templates that take the format of attractive PDFs, infographics or websites as opposed to flat documents.



Conclusion

Over the last 20 years, we have grown as a business to become one of the leading independent Recruitment agencies in Oxfordshire, and in 2018 have opened our first London office, to service Clients in London.

Often compared to a full-time job, the search for the perfect role takes time, courage and commitment. Yet, job hunting in the digital age certainly has its perks. As well as a raft of new tools to take advantage of, we can harness social media to act as a shop window into our personal brand. Where CVs and cover letters may once have sufficed in gaining the competitive edge, the most eager Candidates today are taking advantage of all the technology available to get noticed by prospective Employers.

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