

Ready to start a CV search?

Need to manage applications?

Where do you start?



## Searching for and Managing CVs / Applications

Ten Tips written by Hadie Perkas, MD,  
Skylight Search Consultants



In my first set of tips, I offered ten to help you scope out the role you are recruiting for ( See **How to Write an Engaging Job Description / Advert** download). You should now have a full job spec with a full list of duties and you have highlighted your **critical** and **desirable** skills. Now is the time to start your search based on this criteria and cross check these with profiles you have found through your own resourcing, applications you have received from adverts and any relevant CVs from recruitment agencies.

### Searching/ Resourcing

1. **Keywords** – these are the essential ingredients to finding a long list of people that could be part of your final shortlist. You can use them on various CV search sites and social media platforms such as LinkedIn. You need to decide what ones are critical. No doubt these will come from your ‘critical’ skills/ experience list but don’t narrow it too much. For example, for a Business Development Manager I would suggest at least 5 keywords which include 2 skills (Sales AND Business Development), 2 types of industry experience (retail AND Gift Cards) and one industry type (Financial Services).
2. **Boolean Searches** - You will need to play around with each keyword and use Boolean Searches to give you the best advantage of producing the best results in the least time. See this link <http://libguides.mit.edu/c.php?g=175963&p=1158594>
3. **Cross-checking on social media** – a CV found online should be cross-checked with the LinkedIn profile and vice versa –to fill in gaps. Often someone who is on LinkedIn will have a CV stored on a CV search site which could also help with contact details, so if you have access to any of the CV site big players, then this is a great tip. Also, search on Facebook to get an all-round picture of the type of individual you are interested in. This will open up your eyes to people’s behaviour outside of their professional life giving you that all important decision of whether they fit in with the culture your company aspires to have. On another note, if you are looking for a B2B Business Development or Sales person, they should have a decent LinkedIn profile as this is the best platform to build relationships and market themselves and the firm they are working for. I would question their suitability if they don’t despite having a good-looking CV!
4. **Passive or Active?** – How much time do you have to fill this vacancy? If you are in a rush, the only candidates you will have access to (the good ones at least) are those who are already interviewing at your competitors or worse, at offer stage. Passive candidates are in no rush to be found as long as your job isn’t either. BUT, the best candidates are passive who are probably sitting quite happily well paid and successful in the top 20% of the best 80% of potential employees who you really need in your business. So, getting their attention will be long-winded, a risk and ultimately not guaranteed. If active is your route then a vast majority of applications you will receive (not all) will be the lesser skilled and have only one motivation (to find another job). The recruitment agencies that you use will attract the same candidates or will delve in to their most current rolodex of candidates and hope that one of them matches your requirements. However, if passive is your ideal route (these are the potential employees who want The Challenge over anything else, not just a job – see my previous downloadable tips) but you have time constraints, then I would strongly suggest you invest in your own resourcing team who can carry out specific headhunting searches on a regular basis or invest in a search firm who has the resources and the contacts already to secure you a Grade A shortlist in the shortest amount of time available
5. **Qualifying CVs – What are you looking for?** This is the lengthiest and most time-consuming job of the recruitment process and requires a lot of patience as many candidates will be attracted to the role you advertised, but aren’t sure themselves if they are quite right for what you want. Some will also present their CV as if they are the perfect fit.





6. **Timing** – be quick. Don't wait for the closing date. Or better, don't stipulate one in the first place. I can't stress enough how drawing out the initial process is detrimental to a business. Deliberation will cost you the best candidate on the market and you will have to settle with the 2<sup>nd</sup> favourite (which is OK, but not who your competitors have). Secondly, a long drawn out process will only put candidates off. Acting timely and with enthusiasm is one of the strongest ways to attract candidates to your business.
7. **Elimination** - A good CV will have jobs in chronological order from most recent to earliest and will highlight their duties via a bullet point list, which is where you will start your matching process. Even if they aren't in a bullet point list and they aren't showing much loyalty to their past employers, don't eliminate them just yet! Better CVs will showcase their achievements under each role. Superb candidates will use their achievements in their personal profile and offer personal references who can qualify them. Also, do not eliminate any candidate who isn't working in your industry at this stage.
  - a. To start with you need to have to hand your list of 5 critical skills and your 5 desirable skills & experience which you created as part of your job description.
  - b. Work through the last five to ten years and underline or tick each skill in red pen that matches both lists. Remember that people use different language that may mean the same thing as you.
  - c. CVs with less than 7 red ticks or underlines can be eliminated.
  - d. CVs with more than 7 ticks or underlines should be classed as potential
  - e. Next, use a process of elimination based on what is important to you – think about industry experience, level of achievements, software packages and specific skills to the creativity of the personal profile, the investment in self-development (education, qualifications, course, training) and don't forget to read their interests – this shouldn't be missed and study how well the CV is written – has the candidate really sold themselves? Have they gone to lengths to communicate who they are and what they are good at? If it has 7 red ticks or underlines and feels good, then move them to the definite pile.
8. **Communication** - Determine who is responsible for approaching candidates and the channels you will use. For candidates on your definite pile, an initial email to register your interest is preferable with the suggestion of a telephone interview as a popular way to break the ice. Skype video calls are also the norm these days as the first stage in the process and is a good space for both parties to decide if they are a good fit. For candidates who haven't made the shortlist, it is crucial you manage this. You may have stipulated how unsuccessful candidates will be contacted in the advert or you have a standard email response set up (with a token of thanks from the MD, for example). Whatever you choose as your initial road to contact, make the contact quickly and do it professionally. This is the start of the employee journey and critical to your employer branding so it must be handled with great care.
9. **Interviews** – tips on the content of interviews and how to deliver one is my next downloadable advice document, but getting them organised is essential but can be tricky. If you are the hiring manager, it will be easy to suggest a date (and I suspect you could be flexible with times and be available out of hours if necessary) but if you are a recruiter who has to become the calendar administrator for the interviewers, this can take time and this is where problems arise with engaging candidates. My tip here would be to get that initial Skype interview scheduled in with yourself and if you are pleased with the outcome, ask the candidate to conduct a short video of themselves promoting why they have applied for the role with a synopsis of their CV. This video can then be sent to the interviewers in question with two or three recommended dates for an interview and out of courtesy, they will be forced to make a quick decision on their availability.
10. **Keep track** – if you have a candidate application tracking system in your firm, great. If not, you will need to keep track of who you have spoken to, what you both said, where you found them and what the outcome was. This is important if you have kept communication open with good candidates who decide not to pursue the role further or who withdraw their application as you can turn to them at a later date with a more suitable proposition. It will also help with identifying the channels which attract the most candidates and the best candidates for future sourcing activities.



For all your permanent recruitment solutions call:

0203 488 1539

[info@skylightsearch.co.uk](mailto:info@skylightsearch.co.uk)

