

Career tips

Step by step to your dream job



Editorial



Page Personnel recruits candidates in the Netherlands for renowned companies and supports them in their application process. We specialise in helping experienced and young professionals both in terms of qualified temporary employment and permanent employment. Every candidate writes his own story and with each story we extend our experience and expertise.

We would now like to return this expertise to our candidates and help them finding their dream job. That's why we've created a free ebook for you that will guide you through every phase of your job search, with helpful tips from our experts.

We wish you a lot of success with your career and hope this ebook will help you in your application process!

Martijn Goudswaard

Managing Director, Page Personnel

10 questions to reflect on your career

Are you generally satisfied or need a radical change? These questions will help you to reflect on your working life.

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How to optimise your CV so it stands out

Your CV shows your experience, motivation and knowledge. This will give both recruitment consultants and companies more insight into your profile.

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6 steps to the perfect LinkedIn profile

Make sure your online presence is updated as well. What should you include? What are you leaving out? These are the most important tips and tricks:



How to answer tough interview questions

What if the employer asks you sensitive questions? How do you best answer? This is the best way to deal with tricky questions.

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The first 90 days in your job

You are getting responsibilities and colleagues and they are also getting to know you. These tips will help you to make the best impression.

How to negotiate your salary

What do you think is your value? Follow our tips to negotiate your desired salary.

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10 QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON YOUR PERSONAL CAREER

1



Before you start looking for a job, you should know exactly what you are looking for. Are you generally satisfied or need a radical change? The following questions will help you to reflect on your working life.

More than 20 percent of job candidates in the Netherlands are looking for a new position because they don't have any prospects for professional growth.

Are you happy with your current work situation? Do you feel trapped by your own success? Or do you want an exit but don't know where to start? It is possible for us all to discover our individual strengths, tap into our passions – and get paid for them.



Here are ten questions that are useful for you to start reflecting on your work. Use them to help you step back from your current job for a few minutes, and start thinking about the bigger picture of your working life – where you are and where you're headed.

The questions are for unhappy and happy people – because we all need to understand our situation better, even if only to be grateful for what is working and understand it more.

1. Name your 3 'best' work experiences (project, team, role, activity, etc.)
2. Name your 3 worst work experiences
3. Name 3 essential elements of your work ('things' you need to be happy)
4. Name 3 'things' you cannot contemplate working with (job killers, if you will)
5. What skills, talents, and hobbies would you like to have – or develop – in life?

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10 QUESTIONS TO REFLECT ON YOUR PERSONAL CAREER

6. What are your passions? Your real, true passions (in work and outside!)
7. If you had no 'fear of failure', what would you do?
8. What is in the way of you having your ideal career? Why have you stopped chasing?
9. What did you want to be as a child? Have you ever lived the fantasy in some form? Why did you let go of it? How could you give space to those dreams in your life now?
10. List 12 experiences/ skills/ activities/jobs you would like to have in this lifetime, but haven't yet done.

Answer these as honestly as possible. So you can find out more about your true motivations and goals and whether you are on the right track with your current job.

Important

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS: this is the only way to find out what you expect from the future

LEARN: learn from your experiences. What was good, what was bad and how can you do it better in the future?

OBJECTIVES: To have a goal in mind is one of the biggest motivators. Use this motivation to take the next steps in your career.



Martijn Goudswaard
Managing Director,
Page Personnel



“Employers quickly recognise the motivation and inspiration of a candidate. The better you know yourself, the higher your chances of finding a job.”

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HOW TO OPTIMISE YOUR CV SO IT STANDS OUT

2



After you know more about yourself and your career, what's the next step in your job change? First, of course, is your CV, which shows your experience, motivation and knowledge. This will give both recruitment consultants and companies more insight into your profile.

We've all been there: sending CVs out to countless recruiters or hiring managers and waiting to hear something back. In today's digital world, hiring managers receive hundreds of CVs for each open position. If your resume gets more than 30 seconds of attention, you're lucky.

In order to write an appealing CV and cover letter, you need to capture the attention of your reader and communicate a lot of valuable information in those few seconds.

Here are 10 key tips to ensure you make the best possible impression from the first line:

1. Adapt your CV

Customize your CV for the role you want. The standard resumes or models you'll find online simply won't work. Different roles require different skills, whether it's interpersonal, analytical, leadership or communication skills.

2. Highlight the good stuff

Put the most important information on the top. Whether it's a summary of your experience in a nutshell or the knowledge the position requires, make sure it is displayed at the top.

3. Don't waffle

Go to the point and bring it down to a maximum of two pages.

4. Use numbers to your advantage

Add numbers when you can for emphasis: KPIs, revenue, and by what percentage you exceeded your goals.

5. Be creative

Come up with an eye-catching headline to catch the eye of the reader.

6. Update it regularly

Giving your resume a good scrub every one and then is the most efficient way to keep it accurate and up-to-date over time.

This [interactive tool](#) tells you what recruiters find important in your CV



6 STEPS TO MAKE THE PERFECT LINKEDIN PROFILE



You have thought about your career and adapted your CV to your goals. What now? Make sure your online presence is updated as well. What should you include? What are you leaving out? Here are the most important tips and tricks:

With 7 million users in the Netherlands, and half a billion worldwide, LinkedIn is by far the most important online career platform. This makes it all too easy to be overlooked by recruiters. In this article, we'll show you how to enhance your LinkedIn profile in just 6 steps.

1. Choose your profile picture

Dogs and cats are cute, but they don't belong on your CV. So, why should they appear on your LinkedIn profile? And save your holiday pictures for your Facebook profile, unless you work in the travel sector.

These days, everyone is a photographer, but it's worth going to a professional to ensure your photo is top quality.

Update it every 5 years, or invest in a refresh when you are actively job-hunting. Don't look too serious: a smile shows warmth and self-confidence.

2. Write your profile slogan

LinkedIn automatically fills the profile slogan with your current job position and employer – which already shows you how important this is, not only for your contacts in general, but also for recruiters and employers.

To stand out, use this field as it's meant to be used – as a slogan. To give you an example: "Marketing Manager connected to Content Strategy, SEO and Social Media." A developer might add specialties such as Java, Mobile and UX/UI.

Focus on your career goals, because you can build on these keywords once you get to the LinkedIn description.



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6 STEPS TO MAKE THE PERFECT LINKEDIN PROFILE

Are you looking for inspiration to find the perfect profile slogan? Or do you want to see what a great LinkedIn profile looks like? Then you can have a look at [LinkedIn Top Voices](#), a list of influencers on LinkedIn.



3. Craft your LinkedIn description

After your profile picture and slogan, the description is the first thing recruiters see of you, and will influence their first impressions. Choose 3 key words – for example, ones from your profile slogan – and build your text around these blocks. Describe your career goals and how you plan to achieve them

In a similar way to Google, LinkedIn uses SEO keywords to connect professionals with one another, which is, after all, the ultimate goal of this network.

4. Present your skills on LinkedIn

Let's take as an example LinkedIn skills. For an SEO Manager, 'SEO' is not a special skill but a minimum requirement for the job.

If, however, a web designer or marketer adds SEO to his or her skillset, the candidate's value for the employer rises. Thanks to smart technology, LinkedIn offers suggestions for popular skills as soon as you start typing. Moreover, it will ensure you are writing your profile using the most searched-for terms.

5. Give and get recommendations

LinkedIn recommendations are vital to add credibility to your profile. Quality not quantity is important here.

We are not talking only about recommendations you

receive. Your shared recommendations assure an improved LinkedIn profile as well. How? This way, the recruiter or employer can see your personal relation to your former or current workplace from your point of view.

Turn it around: ask a former boss for a LinkedIn recommendation and offer one as a thank-you in return.

6. Join groups

Active membership of several LinkedIn interest groups further emphasises your expertise and passion for your profession. Depending on your sector, it can be of real interest to hiring managers to know that you are actively networking and could bring your contacts along with you.

What's more, relevant contacts can be your entry ticket to a job interview. By joining conversations, you can share your knowledge with a group and learn new things, maybe even participate in creating new trends in your sector.

Follow these tips in order to appear more often in LinkedIn search results and catch the attention of recruiters as well as hiring companies. New job opportunities will arise and you will be closer to your dream job.

Important

Follow these tips to:

To appear more often in the search results: Recruiters and companies appreciate this.

To build your professional network: good contacts connect you with relevant people you did not know before.

increase your opportunities to new job offers



HOW TO ANSWER TOUGH INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

4



Your online presence has been prepared, your resume convinced an employer - and you're about to be interviewed. But what if the employer asks you sensitive questions? How do you best answer? This is the best way to deal with tricky questions.

Well done! You have been selected to meet with the company you applied to work for. They are obviously interested in you, your CV or what your recruitment consultant has said about you. Your foot is in the door but how do you deal with the next stage, the interview and the hard questions they may ask?

Even the most confident of candidates gets thrown by the most simple of interview questions. There is no right or wrong way of dealing with these.

But we can give you three key things to do when posed with a tricky question:



- Listen carefully to the question
- Think about what they are asking of you
- Be honest

Below we have put these into practice with 10 of the more difficult questions that are commonly asked.

1. Tell me about yourself

This isn't your chance to enter into a voluntary therapy session divulging your life story. At most they would want a very concise summary of your career's highlights so far. Chances are they want to know why you think you are the best candidate for this job. Give a couple of examples to illustrate and ask your interviewer if they'd like to hear more after.

2. How was your education prepared you for your career?

Your education, to whichever level you studied up to, was not just theory. Here they are looking for some indications of your core competencies. This could be teamwork, presentation and communication or even time-management with deadlines. Your answer should be a mix of both theory and practical application and do not forget to give examples.

3. What is your long-term objective?

'To be CEO of this company with a yacht in Monaco' may show your dream vision and confidence however you will also demonstrate a definite daydreamer quality.

If you think about what your interviewer is looking for, this is probably more along the line of 'does this person's long term plans fit into the company's?' You should give achievable objectives here that will pave the way to your dream role.

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ANSWERING TOUGH INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

4. Are you a team player?

Think carefully when answering this. It isn't a closed question so your answer should not be just 'yes'. Good examples will show the kind of team player you are. Try to give a diverse range of examples be it work, school or a sport. Think about when your contribution really helped and when you got through a situation collaboratively with your team members.

5. Have you ever had a conflict with your boss? How was it resolved?

This question isn't asking you to talk about a time when you had a near punch up with your boss, merely a conflict. This could be a disagreement on a project or even a personality clash. Neither of these are necessarily bad things as you are human after all! But your interviewer will be interested in how you dealt with the situation. Can you put personal feelings aside in order to be professional? Will you listen to others' points of view? Do you work collaboratively?

6. If I were to ask your boss to describe you, what would they say?

If you get offered the role, your new employer will take a reference for you so being honest is very important in answering this question. You should use positive feedback from any appraisals or informal chats you have had with line managers in the past. The interviewer may also be looking for an indication of how you will add value to their department and what kind of employee you will be.

7. What qualities do you feel a successful manager should have?

Think about how a line manager has helped your personal development. Also think about that line manager's contribution to the wider business. A good manager will be able to develop a whole team and therefore be a good leader. They should also be able to do this to the benefit of the company and understand where this effort adds value. Use examples on how this has been the case with you and your observations of this.

8. What is your greatest weakness?

Many people still give the classic 'I am too much of a perfectionist'. Listing a strength as a weakness just shows that you are not listening to the question and you may come across as insincere. Select a weakness you have actively been trying to overcome. If you can give real examples and show evidence where you have put this into practice, all the better.

9. Why should I hire you?

Plain and simple: I am the best person for the job. But you need to give more than just that. What differentiates you from other applicants? What makes you want this job above anything else you have interviewed for? Communicate this and you are answering the question.

10. If you had to live your life over again, what one thing would you change?

The best way to answer this is to pick a missed opportunity or a key turning point. Then tie your response to what you are currently doing in your career to correct this missed chance. That way, it isn't doom and gloom and it is another objective you want to meet soon in your career.

Important

HONESTY: Be honest, but pay close attention to your choice of words.

MOTIVATION: Learn from the interviews. What went well, what didn't and how can you do it better in the future?

OBJECTIVES: Having one goal in mind is one of the biggest motivators. Use this motivation to take the next steps in your career.



HOW TO NEGOTIATE YOUR SALARY

5



Congratulations! You've made a great impression in your job interview and are in the final phase - the salary negotiation. This part can be particularly stressful. What do you think is your value? Follow our tips to negotiate your desired salary.

1. Be smart when it comes to salary

Established wisdom is that you should not tell them how much you want during the interviews. Instead, get them to be the first to talk about a figure and see if it matches what you want. If they're very insistent about your naming a figure throw it back in their court with an "I'll consider any reasonable offers/package". Ideally, go through the interview process and let them decide they really want you before negotiating hard.

If the offer they eventually make is too low, then use the leverage of your research into industry salaries, your knowledge of your capabilities and your knowledge of your worth to the organisation to move it higher.

2. If in doubt, consult your consultant

It is during such tricky negotiations that your recruitment consultant should be able to advise you on what's possible given their knowledge of the company.

3. There's more to a job than a salary

A common mistake that people make is purely to focus on the salary, rather than the overall package. Important extras often include:

- Pension benefits
- Private health care
- Flexible working arrangements
- Car allowance
- Bonuses
- Study days

Salary negotiation is a skill that those hiring are usually much more adept at than those they hire, so it is important to work out exactly what you want before even going for interview. Your consultant should also be able to add value at this delicate stage. Here we've got a few useful tips on negotiating your salary successfully.



HOW TO NEGOTIATE YOUR SALARY

4. Ensure you get the full details

If you're close to agreement, ensure you get the full details on the overall package in writing before going back and finalising/negotiating further.

However, only give a definite 'no' if you really are prepared to go elsewhere. Otherwise, always leave room for further negotiation.

Whatever is offered should be in writing so that there is no room for misunderstanding further down the line.

5. Testing the water

The negotiating stance of your intended company could tell you a lot about the organisation and the person who will be managing you. Do they just state a figure, in a 'take it or leave it' fashion with no room for maneuver, or do they have a huge salary range and try to persuade you into taking a low figure. Perhaps they actually display some degree of integrity when dealing with these delicate matters.

Never forget that once you join the company, the negotiations have come to an end and that it's time to perform.

Important

Think about your value before you go into salary negotiation. After all, you do not want to lose the job because your expectations were too high or, conversely, disappointed.

COMPARE YOUR SALARY: What do other people earn.

OFFERS AND BENEFITS: Does the company provide similar experience and expertise as other companies your sector? Do they offer something additional, such as additional holidays, health care or restaurant tickets? Include these factors.

SECURE SURE: Trust is good, control is sometimes better. Have everything presented in writing before you cancel and sign your old job.



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5 TIPS TO MAKE A GREAT IMPRESSION IN THE FIRST 90 DAYS

6



Congratulations on your successful job search! You are now in the company of your choice and ready to take off. You are getting responsibilities and colleagues and they are also getting to know you. These tips will help you to make the best impression.

Impressions are formed on fairly limited information in both directions and as a new starter, it is important that you make the first 90 days count. Starting a new job is very much like visiting a new country. You are the one that stands out, so everything you'll do will be noticed. It's important to keep a positive attitude, and not to comment immediately on everything. That is a mistake especially young employees tend to make.

Here are our top five tips on how to excel during the first 90 days in your new job



Arrive prepared

The first day on your new job needn't be the first time you interact with your new team. In the weeks before you start, take the initiative to contact your new employer and ask for information about your new role and how it fits into the existing team and business goals. Turning up on your first day having already shown an eagerness to get involved and prepare for your new role is sure to impress, but more importantly puts you in a position to perform straight away.

Listen and learn

Absorb as much as you can about your colleagues, their roles and responsibilities and how the company operates. Your ability to recall this information can be an important factor in showing your new employer that you are engaged in your new role and taking a serious interest. It will also allow you to form meaningful personal and professional relationships with your new colleagues, an important step in settling into any new role.

Be proactive

There will in all likelihood be a lot on your plate during your first 90 days, a lot to learn and a multitude of new challenges. However, it is important that you are not too passive in the way you approach new tasks; don't just wait for things to be handed to you.

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HOW TO IMPRESS IN THE FIRST 90 DAYS

Take the initiative and ask for work. There is always a tendency to underwork new employees which can be a good way of allowing them to bed in, however, there is a risk that you do not get to show what you can do and by being too passive it can be hard to make your mark.

Get involved

Just as important as showing that you are willing to take on more work and to be a team player is getting involved in activities away from your day job. Many organisations have formal or informal lunchtime and after-hour activities. This is an invaluable way of getting to know your colleagues, for them to get to know you and for you to enjoy your work. Workplace satisfaction and performance is not just about completing tasks but about collaboration and working relationships. Getting to know people outside of the work setting can really help.

Secure an “early win”

Proving your worth early on is a huge way to build your reputation among your employer and colleagues. Securing an early win is a great way of showing people that you are capable of bringing positive change to your role. The early win does not have to be massive, just a tangible indication that you are capable. That might be delivering a task ahead of schedule, collaborating on a task or achieving a positive result.

The first 90 days will most likely fly by and you’ll be firmly established in your new role before you know it. But keep in mind these tips and you’ll be sure to excel from day one. By preparing ahead you can show your eagerness before you have even started.

Important

ASK QUESTIONS: Be friendly and ask in case of doubt.

BE ACCURATE: Be over-punctual and work exactly.

BE PROFESSIONAL: Show that you are a great professional



“Be yourself. People value authenticity. It’s the best way to find your place in the new team, and build a good relationship with your new colleagues.”

Martijn Goudswaard
Managing Director,
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