



SUCCESS

A Career Kit
for Professionals,
Managers, Executives
and Technicians (PMETs)

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SUCCESS

A Career Kit For PMETs



Career success is a journey with highs and lows.

This kit is intended as a guide and reference, to help you along that journey, to overcome the lows and capitalise on the highs.

We wish you success in your journey!

Well wishes from
Singapore Workforce Development Agency



THE HUNT FOR JOBS



Job searching is never an easy task. It requires effort, patience and determination. Therefore, it is important to take the first step in the search process, stay positive and focus on the end goal.



Below are some tips to help you get started:

1) Know and discover yourself

Take time to understand yourself – identify and assess your strengths, personality, values, interests, skills, knowledge and passion. Self-awareness is essential if you are considering a change in career direction.

2) Identify your career options

Maintain a flexible and open mind when considering your career options and job requirements. Ask yourself if you are prepared to consider a new industry or job scope.

Look for opportunities in growth industries and do not discount contract positions. These may provide you with the avenue to experience different work scopes and work environments.

3) Explore all opportunities for maximum returns

Do not rely solely on newspaper job advertisements. You may be able to find employment in a shorter amount of time through exploring other job search avenues.

Take the initiative and approach potential employers directly even when they may not have advertised any vacancies. Do also try to get in touch with the hiring department that needs your services (not the HR department).

Do not neglect the smaller organisations (with < 30 staff). They too have hiring needs. In fact, there is usually less competition for the vacancies in these organisations (compared to big organisations)!

Tell all your friends and acquaintances that you are looking for a job. Expand your network and get to know more people. This may multiply your chances in securing employment.

Approach executive search firms for assistance. They may have the right jobs for you (see list provided on page 17).

4) Stay Positive!

Let every NO from an employer be a stepping-stone to greater determination. Never give up.

JOB SEARCH TOOLS - GETTING THEM RIGHT



With the right attitude, strategy and approach to your job search, it is almost half the battle won – you are one step nearer to getting your desired job. The next crucial step is to make sure you have the right tools.

Let's look at some of the essential tools to help you get that job.

Cover Letter

What is a cover letter?

A cover letter goes with a job seeker's Curriculum Vitae (CV) to the employers.

It helps you:

- Introduce yourself
- Sell your strengths
- Showcase your value
- Describe your background and level of expertise
- Supply additional information where requested
- Ask for an interview

How should the cover letter be presented?

Cover letters are formal letters, and should be typewritten in black ink on white paper. Use a reader friendly font such as Times New Roman or Arial and font size at 10 or 12 points. Colourful and fancy typefaces are not appropriate and should not be used.

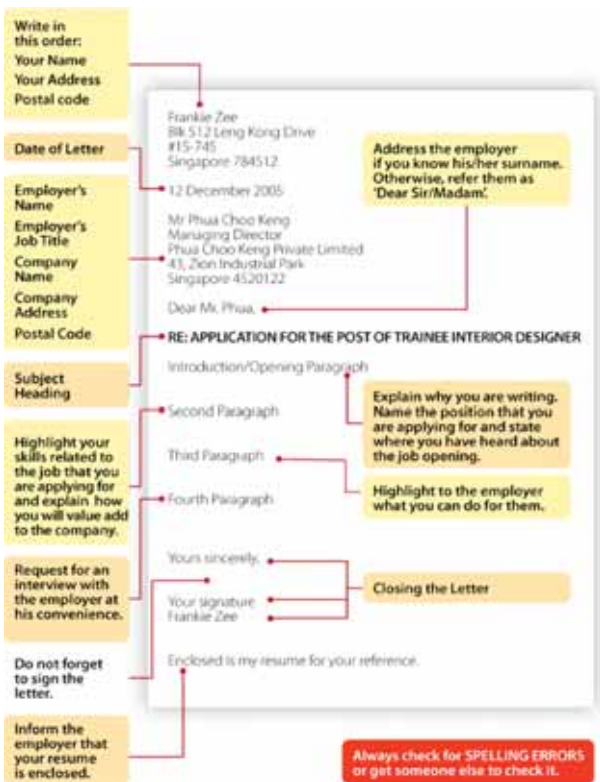
How much information is appropriate?

As a rule of thumb, cover letters should not exceed one page of an A4-size paper as employers are only interested in the information relevant to the position.

More Hot Tips for Writing a Winning Cover Letter!

1. Make your cover letter unique, personalised and warm. Always address your cover letter to a specific person. In other words, avoid "Dear Sir/Madam" and use "Mr Tan/Miss Lee". Never commit a spelling mistake in that person's name.
2. Do not try to hard-sell or exaggerate. Be straight forward but confident. Use simple language. A cover letter basically answers the following questions in the employer's mind:
 - Who are you and why are you writing to us?
 - How do you fit into our needs and how can you value-add to our organisation?
3. Avoid having a generic cover letter for all the job positions that you apply for. Always customise cover letters to fit the job applied. It's worth the effort!

Sample Cover Letter





Curriculum Vitae (CV)

What is a CV?

A CV gets you interviews, which may in turn get you job offers.

- It is the personal advertisement of a candidate's capabilities and experiences.
- It captures the employer's attention and distinguishes a candidate from other job seekers.

What makes a good CV?

- Concise and to the point.
- Consistent and emphasises skills and accomplishments.
- Professionally presented: i.e. well typed out, neatly formatted with standard margins, no usage of fancy fonts, dramatic graphics or fancy coloured paper.
- Accurately written with no spelling, grammatical, punctuation or typographical errors.

How long should a CV be?

- As a rule of thumb, it should not exceed three pages of an A4-size paper.

Can the same CV be used to apply for all jobs?

- Tailor the CV to fit the job. Highlight the most relevant accomplishments, skills, qualifications and experiences for the specific position.
- Decide on the type of CV format to use – Chronological, Functional or Combined.

- ✓ Chronological - details your work experience in reverse chronology, beginning with your current job. This is a format preferred by many recruiters as it gives them a quick overview of your experiences. However, for someone making a career switch or who is fresh out of school, this may not be appropriate as it tends to emphasise your lack of relevant experience.

- ✓ Functional - organises your experiences and accomplishments by skill areas. It may also state the past positions and companies but there are no work descriptions. This format may be helpful to those wanting a job switch or have had diverse work experiences.

- ✓ Combined - it includes elements of both the chronological and functional formats. It organises your experiences by skill areas and provides information on previous companies and employment dates while containing brief work descriptions.

What is the next step after completing the CV?

- Never send out your CV and cover letter immediately after preparing them. Take some time to review them. Get at least two people to vet the final draft. Revise if necessary, then send them out.

More Hot Tips for Writing a Winning CV!



Since employers receive hundreds of CVs, they usually spend a few seconds to look at a CV and make up their mind. So, prepare a CV that quickly (in a few seconds) tells employers how you meet their needs. That will be possible if you:

1. Carefully study the employer's needs before preparing your CV. This is the starting point. Don't neglect it. Ask yourself: What are the employer's needs? What is the kind of education, experience, skills and knowledge they require?
2. Then ask yourself: What do I have to offer? Spend some time to think about all your assets and strengths: your experiences, achievements, education, skills and knowledge.
3. Prepare a CV that shows an employer how you meet the organisation's needs.
4. Be specific where possible: Instead of saying, "was responsible for sales of product A", say "sold 20,000 units of product A (worth 8 million dollars) in one year".
5. Mention your responsibilities, but focus on what you did to live up to those responsibilities or exceed them. In other words, highlight what you actually did and accomplished.
6. Avoid the temptation to include more information than necessary as this can be counter-productive (e.g. there is no need to include information on your primary school or detail the results of all the modules taken in your tertiary education).
7. In citing skills or hobbies, include only examples that would contribute to the overall job objective.
8. Use a proper email address (e.g. johnnytan@hotmail.com instead of iLoveMusic@music.com).
9. Most importantly, be truthful about the information you put into the CV as you will be required to justify your 'claims' should you be selected for an interview with the employer.



The Interview

Interviews are part of the job application process and you may need to attend multiple interviews before you get your desired job.

Below are some tips to ace that interview:

Before the interview – Preparation is the key

- Ensure that you have a copy of your CV and a portfolio of certificates and testimonials (to bring along for the interview).
- Confirm the date, time, venue and contact person for the interview, and research on the route and time needed to travel to the interview site.
- Before going for an interview, spend some time studying the potential employer's business and their needs. Then ask yourself: How could I be of value to them?
- Prepare a list of possible interview questions with answers. Some of the common questions employers may ask are:
 - ✓ What do you know about our company?
 - ✓ Why should we hire you and not someone else?
 - ✓ Why do you wish to take up this job / join our company?
 - ✓ Why did you leave your last job or why are you looking for a career change?
 - ✓ What are your strengths and weaknesses?

- Your image matters! It will affect how you are perceived by the potential employer. So do ensure that you are appropriately dressed for the interview. Here's a quick look at the basics:

	Ladies	Gentlemen
Clothes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jackets (with matching pants / skirts) are recommended. • Avoid fabrics that wrinkle easily. • Avoid bright colours like red, orange, purple. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dark coloured pants with a solid coloured wrinkle-free long sleeve shirt. • Jackets are recommended for senior management positions. • A matching tie. (no loud prints please!)
Shoes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heels with covered back. • Avoid slip-ons, platform and open-toe shoes. • Match shoe colour with pants/skirt. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dark coloured leather shoes and socks.
Jewellery / Accessories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid wearing too many or loud and big jewellery. • Stick to the classic look. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other than wedding ring and watch, avoid jewellery and accessories.
Hair, face and nails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neat pleasant hairstyle. • Avoid heavy / dramatic make-up. • Nails should be well trimmed. If painted with nail polish, should not be chipped. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neat and tidy hair. Avoid using too much gel. • Clean shaven, with light after-shave scent. • Nails should be clean and well-trimmed.

On the day of interview

- Bring all the required documents.
- Arrive at least 15 minutes before the interview and allow at least 2 hours for the whole interview process.
- Switch mobile phone to silent mode or switch it off.
- Inform the company and try to arrange for another interview session if you are unable to attend the interview due to unforeseen circumstances.

At the interview

- Offer a firm handshake, maintain good eye contact and don't forget your smile!
- Listen attentively and show genuine interest.
- Do not act like a desperate job seeker but as a confident "solution provider" to the potential employer's needs.
- Do not speak too much or too little. Try to keep your answers between 20 seconds to 2 minutes. Do not rush your answers, speak clearly and confidently. Most importantly, do not interrupt the interviewer.
- An interview is a two way process. Always ask a few questions about the role, responsibilities, expectations and challenges. Employers appreciate candidates who are curious and ask appropriate questions.

Some questions you can ask are:

- ✓ What are the career advancement and training opportunities?
- ✓ What are some of the objectives you would like to see accomplished in this job?
- ✓ What are some of the challenges one would have to face in this position?
- Do not criticise your present or previous employers or colleagues! Employers will think twice about hiring people who badmouth their employers and cannot get along with their colleagues. Focus on your contributions to the company instead of the unpleasant encounters.
- Do not bring up the remuneration package unless asked.
- Above all, be yourself!



After the interview

- Thank the interviewer and offer a firm handshake.
- Follow up with an official "thank you" note (maybe an email) to the interviewer and reaffirm your interest in the position.
- Do not be discouraged if you do not hear from the employer. Treat every interview as a good learning experience!
- Be patient! For most senior positions, you may be required to go through several rounds of interviews. Customise your preparation for these interviews according to the personnel you will be meeting.
- If you have a job offer – Congratulations! Understand your job duties and responsibilities in greater details. Find out more about the people you will be working with. It will help you adapt and transit better in your new workplace.
- Should you need to turn down a job offer, do it tactfully. Maintaining a good relationship is helpful for future networking purposes.



NETWORKING IS KEY

Networking is a proven and effective way of securing jobs. A good network would allow you to know about jobs that may not be advertised and open doors to many opportunities.

Who is your Network?

- Family, relatives, neighbours and friends
- Ex-bosses and colleagues
- Business associates
- School alumni
- Anyone who may have a connection that will help

How do you network?

1. Make a list of all the people in your current network. Contact them systematically. Share your situation and seek their help and advice.
2. Attend industry exhibitions / seminars / conferences and other social events. Introduce yourself to company representatives, trainers/speakers, and other participants. Exchange namecards and remember their names. If they come from an industry that you are interested in, find out from them more information about the industry and the type of available jobs. Sound them out (subtly) about any openings in their companies. Be genuine in your engagement with them.
3. When you make an appointment to meet someone to discuss job opportunities, make it a point to arrive on time. And always leave without exceeding the time granted.
4. Help others. They will in turn help you.

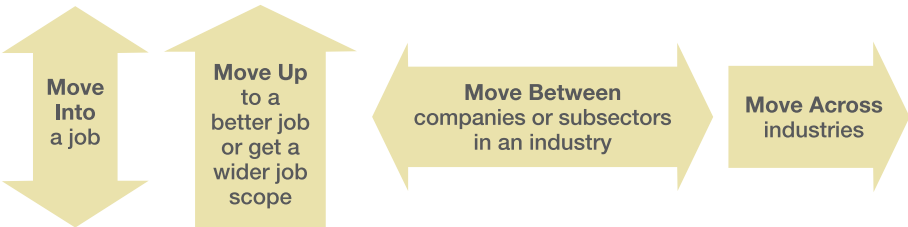
HONE YOUR SKILLS

Skills are one of the key considerations when employers assess an individual for a job position. Having the right skills enhances your employability and career opportunities.



Skills include mindset, ability, foundational vocational skills, industry knowledge and occupational skill sets.

With the right skills, one can:



Skills Programme for Upgrading and Resilience (SPUR)

To help workers cope with employment challenges during the downturn, as well as build skills and capability for the upturn, the tripartite partners comprising the Ministry of Manpower (MOM), Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA), the National Trades Union Congress (NTUC) and the Singapore National Employers Federation (SNEF) implemented the Skills Programme for Upgrading and Resilience (SPUR) on 1 Dec 2008.

Taking advantage of the extensive Continuing Education and Training (CET) system established over the years, SPUR offers training programmes to help Singaporeans upgrade their skills (up-skill) to do better in their current job or acquire new skills (re-skill) to switch careers.

How can SPUR help you?

As a two-year programme, SPUR benefits you in the following ways:

a) Higher Course Fee Support

Government has increased subsidies on training course fees to 90% for courses supported under SPUR.

b) Job Search and Training Facilitation at the career centres in the Community and Development Councils (CDCs) and NTUC's Employment and Employability Institute (e2i)

In addition to advice on the skills you need, the centres can also advise on individualised pathways, taking you from training to possible jobs.

c) More Skills Upgrading Pathways

There are currently over 800 courses and a full range of skills upgrading programmes available.

PMETs like yourself can tap on courses under the **Professional Skills Programme (PSP)**, which brings together the entire range of skills upgrading and job assistance initiatives targeted to meet the needs of PMETs. PSP is included under SPUR and will receive enhanced funding under SPUR.



PSP comprises:

i) Professional Conversion Programmes (PCP) for PMETs

Enable PMETs to switch to a range of new occupations such as registered nurses, occupational therapists, preschool teachers, property officers, media and digital media professionals, workplace safety and health managers etc.

PCPs are currently available for the following sectors:

- Aerospace
- Construction
- Creative
- Early Childhood Education
- Food & Beverage
- Healthcare
- Infocomm Technology (ICT)
- Logistics
- Retail
- Security
- Social Services
- Tourism
- Training
- Workplace Safety & Health

ii) Skills Upgrading Programmes for PMETs

Help PMETs to improve their skills and employability within the same industry. These can be generic skills or sector specific training and include industry-specialised training as follow:

- Financial industry professionals can specialise in risk management or product control through the Risk Management Institute (NUS) and Financial Training Institute @ Singapore Management University (SMU).

- New or existing operations / customer service managers can take the WSQ* Diploma in Tourism to pick up skills to manage their businesses more effectively.
- Engineering professionals in the pharmaceutical and biologics sectors can take the Specialised Training Programme in Pharmaceutical Manufacturing (Validation) to become validation specialists.

iii) Tertiary Course

Diploma, Advanced Diploma, Specialist Diploma courses conducted at the local polytechnics, and selected post-graduate diplomas, part-time degrees and Master courses under PCP will be included under the enhanced SPUR programme. Programmes that will be introduced over next few months include:

- Master of Science Programme in Integrated Circuit Design at NTU-TUM (Technical University of Munich) (IC design engineers)
- Double Master of Science Programme in Logistics and Supply Chain Management at NUS-Georgia Institute of Technology (logistics and supply chain specialists)
- Graduate Diploma in Systems Analysis at NUS Institute of Systems Science (project managers, systems analysts, software engineers and other ICT professionals)
- Bachelor of Social Work at SIM University (social workers)

* WSQ: Singapore Workforce Skills Qualifications



iv) Leadership and Management Skills Training for PMETs

The Leadership and People Management WSQ is being implemented and will commence in May 2009. It covers skills essential for PMETs such as driving change, building relationships, achieving results, developing people and personal effectiveness. Enrolment and course details will be provided at a later date.

Leadership and People Management WSQ complements existing Employability Skills System (ESS) courses for PMETs such as Communication and Relationship Management, Learning and Personal Development, Problem Solving and Decision Making, and Workplace Safety and Health.

v) Career Workshops for PMETs

These workshops aim to equip PMET job seekers with pre-employment skills to increase their chances of securing employment. Participants will learn how to write effective CVs, perform at interviews and enhance job opportunities with effective networking.

For a list of courses under SPUR, visit www.wda.gov.sg.



JOB PORTALS AND SEARCH FIRMS

Job portals and search firms are good sources for job vacancies and information. Aside from job vacancies, job portals also offer useful tips on writing cover letters, CVs and interview preparation. Search firms on the other hand, can provide you with career advice and refer you to the “unadvertised” jobs in their databases.

You may find the following sources[#] useful:

Online Job Portals

Best Jobs

<http://www.bestjobs.com.sg>

Job Seek

<http://www.jobseek.com.sg>

Job Super Mart

<http://www.jobsupermart.com>

Jobscentral

<http://www.jobscentral.com.sg>

JobsDB

<http://www.jobsdbs.com>

JobsNET

<https://pes.wda.gov.sg/jbs/Logon/index.aspx>

Jobstreet

<http://www.jobstreet.com.sg>

Monster

<http://www.monster.com.sg>

Singapore Jobs Online

<http://www.singaporejobsonline.com>

Singapore Recruit

<http://singapore.recruit.net/>

Social Service Sector

http://www.ncss.org.sg/social_service_jobs/index.asp

Vawch

<http://www.vawch.com/>

VOG – The Singapore Public Service Job Portal

<http://www.vog.gov.sg>



Search Firms

**Achieve Career Human Resource
Consultancy**
<http://www.achievecareer.com>

Amrop Hever
<http://www.amrop.com>

Beacon Executive Search Consultants
<http://www.beacon-search.com>

Boyden International Pte Ltd
<http://www.boyden.com>

Charterhouse
<http://www.charterhouse.com.sg>

Chris-Allen Search Pte Ltd
<http://chrisallensearch.com>

Drake International Ltd
<http://www.drakeintl.com>

Garner International
<http://www.garnerasia.com>

**Global Manpower Professional
(GMP) Group**
<http://gmpprecruit.com>

HR Executive Appointments
<http://www.hrmsingapore.com>

Hudson
<http://jobs.hudson.com/sg>

Korn/Ferry International
<http://www.kornferry.com>

Manpower
<http://www.manpower.com.sg>

Michael Page International
<http://www.michaelpage.com.sg>

PeopleSearch
<http://www.pplesearch.com/>

Robert Walters
<http://www.robertwalters.com>

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MANAGING DIFFICULT TIMES



The recession not only brings about a loss of employment or unexpected financial losses but also other losses such as loss of self-esteem, loss of trust, loss of control over your life and loss of pattern of daily life.

These losses can be very stressful for the individual as well as the family.

Some common effects of stress include:

- Changes in eating and sleeping habits
- Decrease in attention span or loss of concentration
- Feelings of frustrations, hopelessness, guilt and denial
- Becoming irritable and edgy
- Conflict or withdrawal from family members and friends

How to Cope

You are unlikely to be able to control the circumstances that led to the recession. However, you have control over deciding how to respond to the situation that you are now in. These are some positive steps you can take to better cope with the challenges.

- Accept that the loss has happened to you. Stay calm, as this is a time to plan and make decisions
- Realise you are not alone. Find support in like-minded individuals / groups with similar experiences
- Seek help in the form of advice, information and consultation that will help you take your next step
- Work out possible alternatives. This can be a good time to try new things
- Realise that the difficult period will eventually pass and focus on what you can do to overcome the challenges
- Manage your expenditure by living within your means and being free from debt
- Seek professional help if you still have difficulties managing the challenges

Some useful avenues and helplines you can tap on:

Coping Tools / Helplines

Type of Assistance Available	Where to seek Assistance
Employment & training assistance <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employment and training advice for the unemployed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Central Singapore CDC Career Centre www.centralsingaporecdc.org.sg• North East CDC Career Centre www.northeastcdc.org.sg• North West CDC Career Centre www.northwestcdc.org.sg• South East CDC Career Centre www.southeastcdc.org.sg• South West CDC Career Centre www.southwestcdc.org.sg
Managing finances & debts <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outstanding credit card bills• Debt management information• Credit counselling• Assistance to set up debt repayment plan	Credit Counselling Singapore Call 1800 CALL CCS (1800 2255 227) Email: enquiry@ccs.org.sg www.ccs.org.sg
Counselling on family or marital problems	Family Service Centres (FSCs) Call 1800 838 0100 for an FSC located in your area of residence
Managing depression	The Samaritans of Singapore Call 1800 221 4444 Email: pat@samaritans.org.sg www.samaritans.org.sg



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The Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA) seeks to enhance the employability and competitiveness of our workforce to meet the changing needs of Singapore's economy. Working with industry, unions, employers, economic agencies, professional associations and training organisations, the agency's efforts are targeted at supporting industry growth by building a pipeline of workers through training and skills upgrading, and raising industry standards through enhancing manpower capabilities.

For more information, please visit <http://www.wda.gov.sg>

LEARNING FOR LIFE ADVANCING WITH SKILLS