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Plan a dream job

A great career move doesn't come easy, writes **Daniel Hoy**

HATEVER your dream job, the first step is to make a plan.

Simon Boulton, from Aequalis Consulting, five stages are required. They are:

1. Career audit

You can't plan your next step without knowing where you are right now, where you want to be and what you need to get there.

Identify your need to move, do a "pros and cons" list and an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of your skills, knowledge and experience.

Boost your portfolio with new courses, self-development classes or online tutorials.

2. The job search

Only about 20 per cent of jobs are advertised, so be creative in job-search methods.

Work with a good headhunter/recruiter who you can trust. Industry-specific recruitment firms have a specialist team with up-to-date expertise.

Business gatherings, alumni events, forums and industry conferences or expos are ways to mingle with potential employers and pick up tips and news.

Online professional networking sites such as LinkedIn and

Twitter are good ways to connect with industry people and old contacts.

Check for vacancies on company websites or by calling direct to a department head to introduce yourself.

It's essential that these approaches are well planned.

Professional mentorships can increase knowledge and skills and lead to job referrals.

Industry bodies will have the information you need to explore this approach.

3. The application

Marketing yourself can be tricky and sometimes confronting. Plan your strategy and apply for jobs you can and want to do. Ensure your CV is clear, concise and accurate in layout, grammar and information.

Does your CV present you as the best person for the job?

List job-relevant strengths, skills and qualifications, tailoring them for the specific role.

Layout and presentation are important.

Seek advice on this from recruiters or HR contacts.

4. Blitzing selection process

Look, speak and act the part, and be well prepared.

Dress appropriately, paying special attention to hygiene and grooming.

Speak in a formal language that is confident and courteous.

Adopt a positive attitude and

body language by using a firm handshake, sitting upright and having good eye contact.

Research the company and memorise several examples of your work.

Don't fidget, interrupt or argue when you disagree.

Post-interview, follow up by email within 24 hours.

If you didn't get the job, try to get some feedback and assess how you could improve your approach.

5. Leaving with grace

Before announcing your departure, read the resignation terms in your contract and follow them to the letter.

Before handing in the resignation letter, speak with your direct manager.

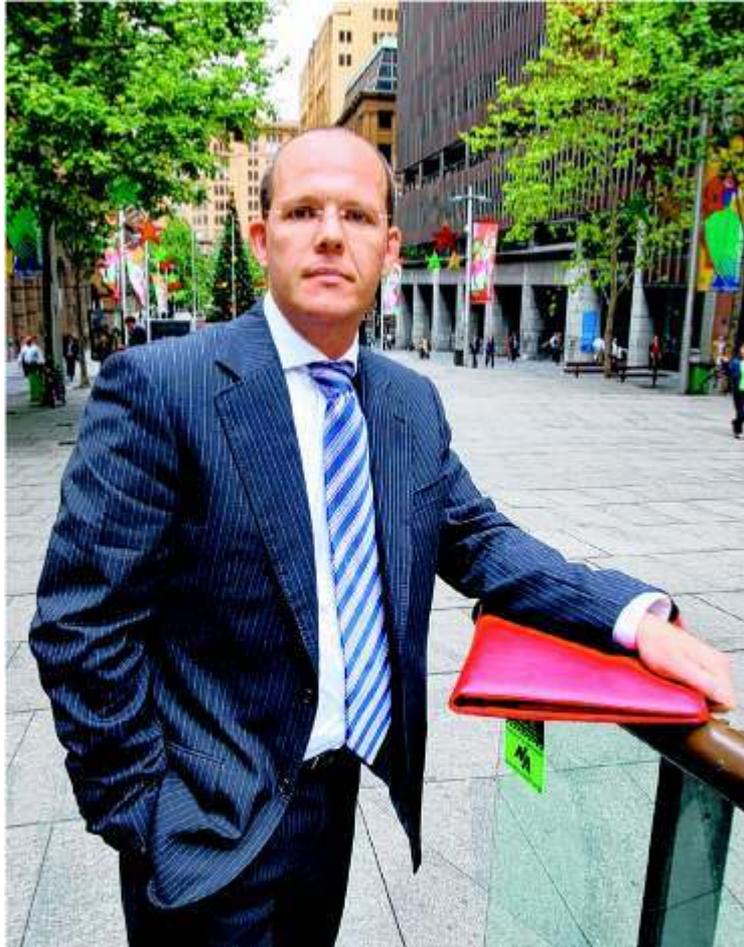
Ensure the letter is concise and positive in tone. State career growth or other personal developmental goals as reasons for your departure and thank the company for what it has done for your career/experience.

For a job referee, choose someone who can confidently explain your strengths and skills and give an honest and factual account of your duties and achievements.

A written reference may be considered less credible but will eliminate misinformation. A verbal reference allows the interviewer to tailor their questions.



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Expert advice: Simon Boulton says it is vital to be well prepared.