**Transcript**

**Alexandra Denning:** You’ve decided that you’d like to look for a job, fantastic! Some of the things you might be asking yourself are:

* How do I find out which companies are hiring?
* Who do I need to speak to?
* What are the steps for applying for a job?

Today we’re speaking with three recruiters about these questions to help you kick start your job search. We have with us today Shraw Shekhar, Phillippa Whiteman and Laura Patten from Randstad Recruitment who’ve kindly volunteered to help us answer these questions. I’m your host Alexandra Denning, one of Vision Australia’s employment consultants and it’s my pleasure to welcome you all.

Alright, let’s start at the very beginning. I’ve decided that I want to get a job but where do I go to look for one? Is it best to hand out copies of my resume or should I go online? Shraw, what do you think?

**Shraw Shekhar:** I’m going to break up the question in two sections. So the first one, where do we look for the job? There’s two types of ways to look for these jobs. So one, through job boards and when I mean job boards, we’re looking at seek.com, we’re looking at atsooner.com or even LinkedIn. These job boards will definitely highlight the type of companies that you’re looking for, the role responsibilities and on top of that, what exactly the key selection criteria is going to be.

The second thing that I would definitely recommend is to referrals. So, through your friends who have networks in end connections - whether that's you know through some of their previous employers or their current employers, you never know the opportunities that you might find unless you actually speak to them and do it that way.

Another area that I think all three of us can definitely agree on is branding yourself on LinkedIn or any way possible on your resume or on LinkedIn, definitely brand yourself. So what we mean by that is definitely highlight the key skills that you've got already, do up your portfolio in a way that is going to stand out from the crowd and I think that's going to make a big difference. Whether it could be a small little thing, in terms of making a more creative CV or it could just be in person when you're talking to that person, what's going to make you stand out from that from that crowd?

The second area when you mentioned you know whether you should hand out those resumes or go online, it really does depend on the industry. I think if we're talking about the hospitality and the retail industry, definitely handing out your resume is going to make a big difference because you're going and that you're presenting yourself to them in person and that's what you're going to be doing on a day-to-day basis and that's definitely something that they would recommend. I think if you are trying to do it online that will be more towards the white collar industries and what I mean white collar, we're talking about your financial services, your banks, energy companies, your education sectors - those applications are more preferred to go online so I think definitely these three areas would definitely help an individual get where they want.

**Alexandra Denning:** Okay, so you mentioned browsing job ads online. I find that when I do that I see a lot of positions being advertised by recruitment agencies such as Randstad so Pip, could you explain for us what exactly a recruitment agency does.

**Phillipa Whiteman:** Of course, so recruitment agencies act on two parts. We act on behalf of an employer and also on behalf of an employee.

From an employer's part, we work with them to assist getting them through a large number of applications that they receive through their job adverts and organise everything from the initial stage of interviews, screening candidates over the phone for that first stage interview process right through to organising the reference checks and placement for the company.

From an employee perspective, where we come into play which is the most important part of our role, I feel I'm as a recruiter is that we act as a second person to be in front of the client on your behalf. So what we can do is bring your resume to life. We actually are able to get in front of the clients whereas normally you'd just go through an application process and land an application with a number of other applicants that are hunting for the same role and we can actually speak to the client where your strengths are, the way we can bring to a role. We then actually work with you to guide you through that process. So we actually work as a partner for you to hold your hand through the process making sure that if you have any questions throughout that we can work with the client on your behalf to help you secure that role. So that's probably where that agency part is a really powerful piece, that you've also kind of got a second person walking through that recruitment process with you.

**Alexandra Denning:** Okay and so that would mean if you've got a question about what skills you should be focusing on in your resume or something like that, you could speak with the recruitment consultant and get a few tips and some guidance on that.

**Phillipa Whiteman:** Of course. So when you put your application through with a recruitment agency we go through and we will do an initial phone screening with yourself. Then we'll bring you in for a face-to-face interview within our office to assess your suitability for this particular role. From there what we will do is work with you to see where your strengths and your weaknesses are and how we can create those weaknesses into an opportunity with a client. So we work with you. We will tailor your resume if we do need to, to make sure that stands out from the rest of the applications in that process.

**Alexandra Denning:** Now often the positions that you're advertising as a recruitment agency, they won't say in the advertisement who the employer is. So what does that mean for me when I'm writing my application, whom should I address my cover letter to? Laura could you give us your thoughts on that one?

**Laura Patten:** Often the business isn't disclosed as to who you're applying to. What we'd probably say is you can keep who you're addressing the letter to quite generic, so “Dear Sir/Madam” or “Dear Hiring Manager” because in this case you wouldn't actually know. What's probably more important to us is the content of the letter. So this is almost your snapshot to understand that you understand the role requirements, you've got a passion for the business and you've got an aligned skillset and suitability for the role. So don't get too hung up on who the letters are addressed to and just make sure that your evidence and your passion and yeah, your suitability for the role.

**Alexandra Denning:** And from there who are some of the key people that I might need to know about during a recruitment process or who are some of the people that I might meet?

**Laura Patten:** There's a variety of different people that you could meet throughout the process and the process will differ and depend on the role you're going forward to and the client you're interviewing with a recruitment agency you're using. So you can't necessarily, I guess it's a set process but I can say that you're most likely to meet a recruitment consultant who will first of all assess your skillset, your culture fear and they will then represent you to the client. At this stage, you will meet an internal talent acquisition. So they're trained to go through competency-based interviewing. They'll have a good understanding of what the business is looking for because they'll recruit across the whole business in a variety of different areas. Once you've then passed that stage, you'd go through to the hiring manager. So this is almost the last stage and this is the person where the role sits in their team, so they’d be directly working with the hiring manager. The hiring manager might want to meet the person twice, talent acquisition then might want to meet with you twice. The recruiter might want to meet with you again so it can be a variety of different stages but you're likely to cross paths with all these people before having an offer. If you are going through an agency, the offer, the negotiation and the process would then go back to the recruitment consultant to deal with the candidate.

**Alexandra Denning:** Okay, so quite a few people that you'll get to meet with there and I guess you can ask them different questions about the organisation and what it's got to offer.

**Laura Patten:** Yeah definitely, and they'll all be trained in different ways and to assess different suitability for the role as well. So it's good to have a few different points of contact. I think the recruiter is a really good buffer as well because you can probably ask a few more honest questions and questions that you might not feel as confident with asking the employer and the recruiter can kind of be that buffer inbetween which is really positive.

**Alexandra Denning:** Now, I've noticed on these job ads that there are sometimes different kinds of applications that you need to submit. Could you tell us a little bit about the different styles of applications that employers and recruiters are asking candidates to prepare at the moment. Do you want to give us some thoughts on that?

**Laura Patten:** Of course. The key areas where they are really looking to see from you is where your CV comes to life but also to replicate what they're looking for in that job application advert right through to the opportunity to really showcase your talent and your skillset. So where you might come across that is the preparation of a cover letter, where then you might identify certain keywords that are advertised in the application process to put that into your cover letter. Where we kind of spoke previously is looking at when you're working with a recruitment provider or the internal recruitment teams within clients. Quite frequently, they are looking at a key selection criteria, where they identify what are the key skills that are required to be successful in this particular role and do you identify and showcase that within your resume?Your resume will showcase only a certain part of your role where with your cover letter, you can use to really emphasise on those key deliverables for your clients but also working in an area where you might have to work with a key selection criteria form and actually identify that where they might ask you to answer the key selection criteria using the STAR technique. So the STAR technique is one which is an emerging trait particularly within the education and government sectors and where we see quite a lot where they do ask for this. The STAR criteria to make it really simple for everybody, is to assess it as what was the situation, what was the task, what was the action and what was the results within the scenario. So you can really bring that area to life. So that's an area as well that you'll find within their behavioral-based interview questions to identify those traits.

One of the areas that we're really seeing taking more trends on at the moment is video interviewing. So we're seeing more and more applications where they may ask you to complete a video interview which is actually becoming in a really good favor for job seekers primarily because it gives you that opportunity for you as well to bring your skills and your talents to life and get an idea for the recruitment provider and their internal team where your strengths are. It gives you a really good opportunity to sell yourself where some people might find that they are better to sell themselves within a written form whereas this actually gives you the opportunity in a personal context as well.

**Alexandra Denning:** Okay, so there's a whole range of different types. I think we could do a whole other podcast on those. So for now I would just like to thank all of you for your time, sharing your expertise with us today and to those of you listening and if you're thinking that you'd like to look for work - whether it's your first job or your tenth job, you can connect with Vision Australia's employment consultants like me to help guide and support you to achieve your goals. You can find more information at our website. It's [www.visionaustralia.org](http://www.visionaustralia.org).

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