

THE SKILLS YOU NEED GUIDE TO

# GETTING A JOB



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# INTRODUCTION

## **GETTING QUALIFICATIONS, EVEN A DEGREE, IS UNFORTUNATELY NOT AN AUTOMATIC PASSPORT TO A LIFETIME OF GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT.**

It is a very good start, because it demonstrates that you have a certain amount of knowledge and an ability to work.

### **But finding a job can still be a huge challenge.**

New graduates or school leavers in particular often find it hard to get their first position because they are unlikely to have experience of the type of job for which they are applying. They therefore struggle to demonstrate that they would be able to do the job.

And even once you have a job, keeping it for life is not often an option. Most people will hold jobs with a variety of employers and move across different employment sectors through their working life. Statistics from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics show that the average number of jobs per lifetime is now more than 12.

The coronavirus pandemic has also had big consequences for the employment market. Some sectors have ground to a halt almost completely, whereas others have seen unprecedented growth. Furlough schemes may have staved off job losses for a while in many countries, but there is probably a reckoning on the way. Our perceptions of sectors have also changed considerably, with many of us gaining new respect for those in caring professions, and planning career changes as a result. It seems likely that there will be a lot of people looking for new jobs in the next year or two as a result of the pandemic. What's more, many of the processes for job-hunting have also changed as a result of restrictions on personal contact. New options such as remote interviews seem likely to remain with us into the future because of the level of convenience and value that they offer.

In the longer term, it is estimated that artificial intelligence and automation will result in large numbers of jobs disappearing—but new and different jobs being created that will require new skills.

### **Now more than ever, we must all be flexible in our working patterns.**

We should be prepared to change jobs and/or sectors if we believe there are better opportunities elsewhere, and we should also be prepared to develop new skills when necessary to meet the requirements of the job market.

This means that all of us need to be prepared to develop transferable skills, skills that we can use in more than one job, and to become experts in marketing ourselves for the job market.

**This book is designed to help people to understand how to develop those skills, and particularly how to present themselves effectively to potential employers.**

It starts with a discussion of the ‘skills gap’—the gap between the skills available in potential employees, and the skills required by employers—and moves on to explain the concept of transferable skills. It then provides practical advice about presenting yourself well in an application for a job, and in person, remotely, or on the telephone at interview. It touches on changes to the job market and recruitment practices as a result of the pandemic, such as the rise in remote interviews, and how to present remotely.

Much of the advice is chiefly aimed at those looking for their first job. However, there is likely to be useful advice for anyone starting a job hunt, particularly if you have been out of the job market for a while, or if you need to change sectors or roles as a result of the pandemic.

**We hope that it will be helpful.**

The Skills You Need Team

# 1

## THE SKILLS GAP

**The phrase ‘skills gap’ is one that is often used, and some might say over-used, in the news media.**

But what does ‘The Skills Gap’ really mean? And is it as important as the news reports would have you believe?

This chapter takes a look at some of the evidence and suggests ways in which you can develop your core skills to avoid falling foul of the ‘skills gap’.

## PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

**Research shows that the most important factor in being able to learn and improve your skill is your mindset.**

Those with a 'growth mindset' believe that they can improve their skills, and are prepared to work to do so. Employers therefore look for people with this type of mindset, those who are keen to develop and learn.

To stay ahead of the competition, organisations need to continually learn and develop better ways of doing things. Employees who are open to learning and embraces change will be more successful than people who are afraid of learning and resistant to changes in the organisation. Most jobs involve change, some more frequently than others, and employers want people who are adaptable, flexible and patient, and who respond well to change.

The last year has highlighted the importance of being able to embrace change, often at a moment's notice. It is unlikely that employers have failed to appreciate this.



### **A GUIDING FACTOR: EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE**

One factor underpins all of these areas and skills: emotional intelligence.

This is defined as the ability to understand and regulate your own and others' emotions, both individually and in a group. It consists of a number of skills, both personal and interpersonal, ranging from self-awareness, through self-control and motivation, to empathy and social skills like customer service, influencing others, and leadership.

People with high levels of emotional intelligence tend to enjoy more satisfying and successful careers and relationships, so this is an area well worth working on.

**The full eBook  
is available at  
[www.skillsyouneed.com](http://www.skillsyouneed.com)**