

This is the first chapter of Erin Devlin's
Get the job you really want.
Click to purchase the full book.

Get the job you *really* want

Erin Devlin



Praise for *Get the job you really want*

This is an important book.

It is outstandingly well written, and it is much needed right now. It provides a crafted plan and a toolbox of resources for job seekers and careerists alike.

I have been in the business of helping people manage their careers for several decades, and I loved this book.

The book is laid out logically and clearly, and can be read beginning to end – or dipped into according to your need.

Erin's writing is lucid and passionate but, more than that, it is based on a deep reservoir of experience in the field. Erin has helped a vast number of people with their career evolution. She does it every day. The result is a book that is erudite and informed, but also pragmatic rather than academic. That is its appeal and unique value.

I enjoyed the clear and concise advice, and the many valuable examples and anecdotes found throughout.

The real beauty of this work is how practical and accessible it is. If you are a graduate looking for your first job, you will find priceless tips as well as wise words to save you from costly errors in your job search. Equally, if you are a professional heavyweight with your career well on track and the next step looming, this book will give you an edge in a competitive market. I found myself nodding in agreement all the way through, but also loving the fact that I was learning plenty as I went along.

There is nothing important left out. I enjoyed the early chapters on goal-setting and career alignment. These alone make the book a must-read. The online branding advice is spot on, as we often see

people harming their job prospects, even their careers, with poor online decisions, or lack of effort in positioning their personal brands. You might be forgiven for thinking the chapters on resume preparation and applying for a job might be a little dry. Not at all! They're so well-explained and written with such enthusiasm for the task at hand that they're fun and highly illuminating. The crucial topic of preparing for and performing at the interview gets terrific treatment, and all of us can learn from the advice here.

This book is easy to digest and packed with helpful advice, and doubles as a motivational primer.

I recommend it to anyone embarking on a job search – indeed, anyone who cares about career progression and wants to maximise their potential.

I have known and worked with Erin for a decade. She is an exceptional businesswoman and leader.

It turns out she is an outstanding author too.

Greg Savage, recruitment adviser, investor and best-selling author of *The Savage Truth* book

Recruitment Ninja! Just one of the titles shared around the corridors of the recruitment agency to which I belong. To achieve this illustrious title, you must have interviewed a minimum of 1000 job seekers. Erin Devlin long ago crossed this threshold! Erin, like many of us in the recruitment industry, is a store of anecdotes, facts and advice that are rarely shared in the written word. *Get the job you really want* is finally the resource that does just that. The 15 chapters bring together decades of recruitment, employment and business experience in a concise and easy-to-read reference. They condense lessons from thousands of CVs, reviews, interviews, negotiations and dream jobs successfully secured.

Erin brings her advice to the page with a gusto that she has displayed throughout her career in the recruitment industry and also her highly successful time within the arts. Just as she successfully climbed the ranks to the Australian Ballet with determination, hard work and collaboration, Erin has used these qualities to bring together a sharp, concise and easily understood checklist for aspirational job seekers.

As a 25-year veteran of the recruitment industry myself, I am delighted that Erin has taken the initiative, as she has done in her six years working closely with me at people2people, to build a reference for everyone engaging in the job market. Whether you are at the beginning of your career, at an unexpected turning point or at an important career junction, you can visit the following pages again and again to inform your job search and guide you along the path to accepting the job you really want.

Mark Smith, Group Managing Director, people2people Recruitment

The competition for the best jobs with the best employers has never been hotter. Finding and securing the right job at the right time, appropriate to your career ambitions, is one of the most important things you will do in your life, and you can't afford to undertake this task without expert help. *Get the job you really want* is the expert help you need in 15 easy-to-read and actionable chapters, complete with examples, checklists, templates and worksheets. Erin has extracted every last piece of her extensive and invaluable knowledge to equip ambitious job seekers with the best, most comprehensive and up-to-date resources and advice to help them secure the job that could change their career trajectory – and maybe even their whole life. This book is compulsory reading for anybody who wants more from their career and is hungry for the ultimate practical guide to help them achieve it.

Ross Clennett, high-performance recruitment coach, trainer, blogger and commentator on the Australian recruitment industry

*For my boys Will, Alex and Tom,
and all the brilliant individuals reading this book.
Your future is bright. Let's go get it.*

First published in 2021 by Major Street Publishing Pty Ltd
E: info@majorstreet.com.au W: majorstreet.com.au M: +61 421 707 983

© Erin Devlin 2021
The moral rights of the author have been asserted.



A catalogue record for this book is available
from the National Library of Australia

Printed book ISBN: 978-0-6489803-6-0
Ebook ISBN: 978-0-6489803-7-7

All rights reserved. Except as permitted under *The Australian Copyright Act 1968* (for example, a fair dealing for the purposes of study, research, criticism or review), no part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, communicated or transmitted in any form or by any means without prior written permission. All inquiries should be made to the publisher.

Cover design by Simone Geary
Internal design by Production Works
Printed in Australia by Ovato, an Accredited ISO AS/NZS 14001:2004
Environmental Management System Printer.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Disclaimer: The material in this publication is in the nature of general comment only, and neither purports nor intends to be advice. Readers should not act on the basis of any matter in this publication without considering (and if appropriate taking) professional advice with due regard to their own particular circumstances. The author and publisher expressly disclaim all and any liability to any person, whether a purchaser of this publication or not, in respect of anything and the consequences of anything done or omitted to be done by any such person in reliance, whether whole or partial, upon the whole or any part of the contents of this publication.

Contents

<i>Foreword</i>	xi
Part I: Get ready, get set	
Chapter 1: It's good to have a goal	3
Chapter 2: You are valuable	17
Chapter 3: What an employer can offer you	31
Part II: Your online profile	
Chapter 4: Let's start with LinkedIn	47
Chapter 5: Build your personal brand online	57
Part III: CVs, resumes and cover letters	
Chapter 6: Put together a great CV	71
Chapter 7: Make yourself stand out	89
Chapter 8: Cover letters with impact	103
Part IV: Search and apply	
Chapter 9: Your job search	117
Chapter 10: Recruitment agencies	135
Chapter 11: Screening and assessment	151
Part V: Interview for success	
Chapter 12: Prepare for your interview	169
Chapter 13: Interview with intent	181
Chapter 14: Manage job offers	193
Chapter 15: Set yourself up for success	205
<i>Thank you</i>	214
<i>References and resources</i>	219
<i>Useful websites</i>	223
<i>About the author</i>	227

Foreword

This book is like insider trading for job seekers – it's so good you'll feel as if you've been tipped off by the employer.

Job hunting is a fine art. In this book, Erin not only gives you the paint, she gives you the canvas, the easel, the brush strokes and even the gallery to sell your masterpiece – the masterpiece which is you!

Never before has the job market been harder to navigate than now. Economic, technological, environmental, health, business and social changes have all combined to deliver a truly complex, and occasionally demoralising, experience for job seekers regardless of age, gender, race, qualification or experience. This book is extremely timely and important, not just because it brings real world advice and insights, but because the advice is highly relevant, easy to apply and extremely generous. Erin Devlin is the recruiter you want as your agent, and now you have her.

Erin has written a guide to finding the right job that has a warmth and understanding that you won't find anywhere else, in my opinion. When you read this book, you feel as if Erin knows you and what makes you tick. She knows that life and passion can work both for and against you, and that job hunting can make you feel vulnerable and empowered, all at the same time. These are the defining features of this publication, which make it so truly valuable.

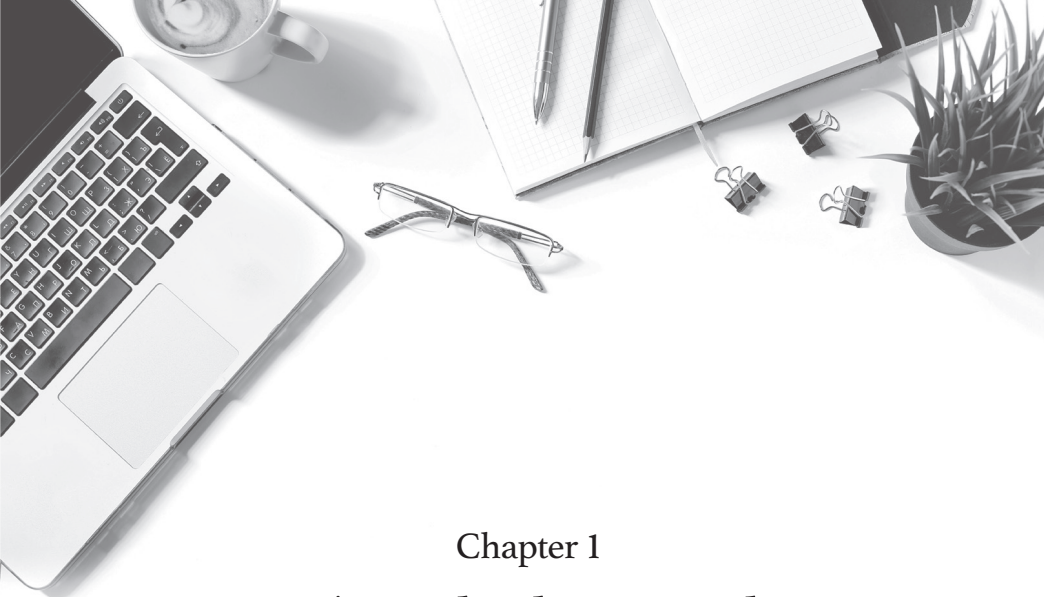
As the Chief Executive of Australia and New Zealand's industry association for the recruitment and staffing industry, I know how important it is to care for candidates during the job hunting process. It is critical that recruiters communicate in a manner that can be understood, absorbed and leveraged so that, regardless of the outcome, the candidate can learn and grow. Having known Erin for many years, it is a delight to see her articulate and generous communication style find its way onto the pages of this, her first publication. Erin will always give you time and clarity, regardless of who you are, and this book is no exception. After reading it for the first time, Erin's book actually made me want to try my hand at finding a new job, even though I love what I do. It inspires and challenges you to be better and prouder of who you are and what you can offer. Very few books on job seeking have the capacity to do that.

No matter what your next move may be, whether it be your first or twelfth permanent role, your eighty-second contract role or your first advice to your son or daughter, you will be the smartest person in the market if you take this book off the shelf and share it with those who you want to see succeed in work and life.

Charles Cameron, Vice-President of the World Employment Confederation and Chief Executive Officer of The Recruitment, Consulting & Staffing Association of Australia and New Zealand (RCSA)

Part I

**Get ready,
get set**



Chapter 1

It's good to have a goal

- **Align your career plans with your life plans.**
- **Determine your career direction.**
- **Set S.M.A.R.T. goals to underpin your career success.**

As children and young adults, we're told we can do anything in life. Our socials are peppered with catchphrases such as 'Just do it', 'Believe in yourself', and 'With hard work you can have, be or do anything'. And I love this – the positivity, the joy in it. This attitude of ambition will get you very far in life. To be truly kind to ourselves though, and to succeed in our careers, we must bring our vision into focus and break it down into bite-sized chunks that can help form the building blocks of our success.

You *can* be the owner of your own multimillion-dollar clothing business, the social worker making someone's life better, the environmentalist saving the planet, the accountant keeping order or the doctor saving lives. To get there, you'll need patience, focus and a plan.

Getting to know many successful people over the years, I've noticed that not one of them has landed where they are by accident. They often come from humble beginnings, but have set goals along the way, made intelligent career moves and taken risks. They have been deliberate, focussed and strategic. I have observed a number of common strategies and steps that they've taken, many of which I will share in this book.

Getting a job is one thing. Getting the job you *really* want is another. This where we start – looking at you and what you want in your life and at work. Your career is only one part of this picture. If you are reading this book to gain employment, looking to advance your career or return to the workforce after a break, it's a great time to stop and reflect on what you actually want in your career and life. So let's take a look at the big picture first.

The life you want to live

Every great career is built upon a foundation of learning and a series of tiny decisions made right over a lifetime of hard work. When we think about future careers, we often think about them as being separate from our 'personal lives', but the reality is that the two intersect and influence one another more than we think. By looking at our lives holistically and understanding what it is that we want in the future as a *person*, not just as an *employee*, we set ourselves up with a great chance of bringing our work and home lives into harmony.

Reflection

Growing up in Melbourne, Australia, I took a liking to dance as a young girl. I loved the social element and how I could move my body, and I really enjoyed performing with my friends. Little did I know that it would lead me towards a professional career as a ballerina. Going on to dance with the Australian Ballet gave me joys that I can't even describe, but it also took my career in a direction that was different to what I had envisaged for myself.

I loved my family and my friends; I loved food, art, sport, music and getting out into the community. Suddenly, as a professional dancer, I felt out of balance and out of touch with the things that were so important to me in life. And while I had the privilege of going on stage in front of thousands of people and making them smile, I longed for more balance, flexibility and leadership in my career.

Take a step back from your own life. What do you love most about being in the world? Is it your family? Your health? Giving back to the community? Earning money? What *is* it that's important to you? Remember, you can apply for any job that you like, but if you don't know what it is that you want, you won't love what it is that you do.

What if you *don't* know yet? What if you aren't sure?

Reflection

I had no idea that I would eventually end up running a recruitment business, or that I would absolutely love it. I didn't know that I would travel the world as cabin crew in my twenties and see some of the most spectacular places on earth, but I did, and I loved it.

You don't have to know *exactly* what it is that you want to be or what you want to do, but one thing is for sure: be clear about *what is important to you in life*. This will play into your career. It will play into your job search and it will ultimately influence your happiness and success.

Success – and how you define it – depends on who you ask, and when. To one person, success is becoming a waiter in a five-star resort in a beautiful part of the world; to another it's working close to home to spend more time with family, and to another it's building a name for themselves in business. All are successful in their own way and in their own time.

Let's explore further what career success means to you. You can use the 'life and career vision board' and 'vision statement' exercises over the page to get you started.



LIFE AND CAREER VISION BOARD

Using an art board, the space here, or a platform like Pinterest, you can pull together images that resonate with you relating to your life and career, or write some descriptive text. Examples might include a businessperson winning an award, a mother holding a baby, a traveller on top of a mountain or a social worker reaching out to someone in need. Choose images and words that resonate with you.



VISION STATEMENT

Create a vision statement for yourself which reflects you and what you want your career to look like in five or ten years' time; e.g. 'To be a world-class solar panels expert, furthering the use of renewable energy'.

Interests

To love what you do, look for jobs that will align closely with your interests. Think about how you spend your time and what you enjoy doing. Do you love working with your hands? Creating order? Socialising? Achieving goals? Whatever it is that really interests you, ensure that it is present in jobs that you are considering. Take some time now to list your key interests below:

INTERESTS

What do you love doing? How do you spend your spare time?

Motivating factors

When we are considering a job, we are likely to be driven by motivating factors that encourage us to say yes. By compiling the list below, you can clarify what it is that is important to you in a job, incorporating some of your interests and lifestyle preferences.

MOTIVATING FACTORS

From the list of motivating factors below and on the next page, circle those which are important to you, or list additional options. Choose your top ten and rank them in order of importance. Keep them handy when assessing job opportunities to help you choose a job that you'll enjoy.

- Caring for the environment
- Social good
- Giving back
- Community engagement
- Making money
- Status
- Business ownership
- Entrepreneurship
- Leadership opportunities
- Making people happy
- Having order and structure
- Being creative

- Lots of social interaction
- Meaningful work
- Being rewarded or recognised
- Standard hours
- Flexibility
- Work-life balance
- Being seen as an expert
- Close to home
- International travel
- Autonomy
- Work friendships
- Growth and development
- Being innovative
- Career progression
- Working with technology
- Ability to challenge
- Problem solving
- Realising potential
- Great work environment
- Stimulating work
- Being physically active
- Other?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Strengths

Even if singing in the shower is one of your interests, it may not be something that an employer is willing to pay you to do (harsh but true). Being honest with yourself about what your strengths are and what you're good at can help align you with jobs that suit your natural abilities. List your top three to five strengths opposite and keep them front of mind as you assess jobs. Working in a job that utilises these strengths will be less strenuous and more enjoyable, and will lead to better outcomes for you and your employer.

 **STRENGTHS**

What are you good at? What are your natural abilities?

Career direction

Even if you're clear on your career direction and profession, it still pays to develop your values, understand your motivations and set career goals. For those who are still at the point of exploring professions, the key to selecting a job you love is to align it with your interests, motivations, values and goals. As you move through the next couple of chapters, assess each of these elements against potential jobs and professions. You'll want to take yourself through a process of self-assessment using the exercises I've provided, career exploration and career identification, and then make a plan.

'I just don't know what's out there' is the comment I hear most when working with professional athletes who are transitioning from a career in sport to a new job. Fortunately, there are many great ways to explore potential professions and jobs. First, I suggest they take some time to look up different jobs online and understand the purpose of each, what the main tasks and duties are, and what the work environment is like. They can then match these up to their job motivations, their life and career vision board, and the values that we will go on to explore in Chapter 2. I also encourage them to take a career assessment test (CAT) to get some ideas. CATs can assess a person's personality, interests and motivations, and suggest jobs to explore further.

You may not be a former elite athlete, but these are good places to start.

Talk with people who work in the areas you have an interest in. Perhaps you have a family member or friend who knows someone in the area of work you are considering? If not, you can reach out directly to people in the field to explore further. Work experience, shadowing, internships, charity volunteering and temp and contract work can also be great ways to get a feel for a new work environment and job before committing to further study or work options.

If you would like to explore professions and potential jobs further, you can also meet with a career counsellor or practitioner. They can guide you towards some pathways to explore and answer many of your questions. Your local career development association may have a list of practitioners which you can look up. I have put together a list of online resources that you can access to explore your career direction, which you can find in the 'Useful websites' section at the back of this book.

Changing careers

It's okay not to be linear. The U.S. Department of Labor has reported that the average person will change jobs 12 times during their working life. Often this can include a career change or two. Whether it's learning something new, earning more, giving back or achieving particular goals, there are many reasons for a career change. This is something I can relate to closely, for I could never have imagined the career changes I have experienced in my life till now.

Reflection

I accepted my first contract with the Australian Ballet at the age of 12. Walking out on stage in their production of *Swan Lake* was like a dream come true. Over seven years, I danced professionally in productions such as *Romeo and Juliet*, *Études*, *The Nutcracker*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, *Don Quixote* and a range of contemporary triple bills.

Leaving this behind, it was time to explore the world as I embraced my new job as cabin crew for Emirates airline. Living in the Middle East and working with crew from over 130 different countries was an amazing way to open up my mind to new cultures and experiences. I learnt about teamwork, quality and great customer service. And although I thought that I had left my previous career behind, it was an old ballet injury – recurring stress fractures – that brought my jet setting life to a close. I had pushed my body to the limit for so long, it was time to finally treat it kindly.

Landing back in Australia, I registered with a recruitment agency for temp opportunities and they offered me a job with their own agency directly. It was the start of a career that I love. Since then, I've built and merged businesses, grown and developed teams, completed a post-graduate qualification, and had the privilege of working with hundreds of savvy and intelligent job seekers and employers. They have taught me a huge amount about life, business and what's important.

I can think of an accomplished, award-winning television producer who has now gone on to become a hospital-based physiotherapist, helping people recover from trauma and return to what they love doing; a documentary producer who worked in disability services and is now a teacher helping students to flourish; and an international singer who supported artists like John Farnham, Julio Iglesias, Tim Rice and Tina Turner, who went on to charity work, coordinating fundraising efforts and helping people in the community. There are many more examples of people who have undertaken a career change – maybe you're considering one yourself.

Utilise the career direction exercises in the previous section to explore different professions and understand what will be involved if you do make the change. Later in this book, we'll look at how you can get your foot in the door if you decide to take a new career direction and how to market yourself effectively to employers. It takes courage, focus and determination to change careers, but the results can be incredibly rewarding.

Setting career goals

When assessing what it is that you really want from your career and job, it's helpful to break it down into specific goals, such as becoming an expert in your field, owning your own business or mastering a particular skill. These goals underpin your career plan and are important to establish before you start applying for jobs.

Research profiles of people who you admire. Examples might be a scientist who is conducting world-leading health research, a florist brightening people's days or a marketing consultant involved in lots of creative projects. Whatever it is, don't just think of the *idea* of it – actually find some real-life people who you want to emulate or draw inspiration from. Of course, you'll forge your own journey, but having people in sight that make you want to take action can help create focus and shape your career goals.

Use a formula, like George T. Doran's S.M.A.R.T. goal acronym, that can give you a clear vision to work towards. S.M.A.R.T. stands for Specific, Measurable, Assignable, Realistic and Time-based. For example, you might say:

'I'd like to be an expert in the field of ski instructing and be hired by one of the world's top five resorts in the next six years.'

Or:

'I'd like to own a business that solves a key social problem in the community in the next ten years.'

Or:

'I'd like to be a respected accountant, in a mid-tier firm, close to home, where I can spend quality time with my family, in five years' time.'

These are all great examples of career goals. You may have just one overarching goal or several that you'd like to explore. Remember

that goals can be malleable and may change over time as your needs, wants and desires change. Initially, making money might seem like the most important thing to you; but later, giving back or championing diversity initiatives may become more important.

You can make micro-goals too, like 'Learn how to use Adobe InDesign to an advanced level within the next year' or 'Attain my Six Sigma Black Belt in the next three years'.

 **CAREER GOALS**

What are your short- and long-term career goals?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Take action

For each career goal that you've set, think about what you need to do to achieve each goal. Is there some training or a university course that you need to complete? Are you required to obtain a particular certificate or qualification? Are there areas of interest that you'd like to explore further through research, conversations or work experience? Decide what action steps are needed to propel you towards achieving your career goals. Work out a timeframe, as well as practical and logistical steps to undertake each action.



ACTION ITEMS

What action steps do you need to take to achieve your career goals?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Make a career plan

‘A goal without a plan is just a wish.’

~ Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

As you move through this book, you can start to form your career plan and strategy. You may not realise it, but you’ve already taken many of the steps in this chapter that you need to make this happen. If you are still in the career exploration phase, then your plan may include the top three professions or jobs you are interested in exploring and what steps you will take to assess them further. If you know what your chosen profession or job is, then your plan will focus on the steps you need to take to obtain it.

Update your plan as you gather more information and move through this book from start to finish. Use the headings and template below, or take your career plan online to make it a living, breathing document. From the earlier exercises in this chapter, add in your life and

career vision board, and your top motivations, interests, strengths and career goals. In Chapter 2 we'll assess values, which you can also add into your plan. As we explore different topics, from online branding to CV preparation to interview techniques, add in the practical steps you will need to take to achieve your career goals. Knowing what it is that you want for your own life can help give you a laser-like focus for your career. Better still, making a plan to help you get there can put your success in motion.

CAREER PLAN

Vision

- Life and career vision board
- Vision statement for five or ten years' time

Interests, motivations, strengths and values

- What's important to you in a job?
- What are your interests?
- What are you good at?
- What are your values?

Profession

- Chosen profession, or jobs and professions to explore

Goals

- S.M.A.R.T. goals that underpin your career vision

Action

- Action steps you need to take to achieve your career goals
- Include education, training, work experience and exploration steps
- Include skills, knowledge and certifications you need

Status

- Include status updates as you take steps towards your career goals



If you would like to access a free career plan template, scan the QR code here, or visit people2people.com.au.



Coffee break

Before applying for jobs, decide what is important to you by developing a life and career vision, and understanding your interests, motivating factors, strengths, values and career direction. Explore jobs, or deepen your knowledge of the profession you have already chosen. Set some S.M.A.R.T. goals and make a career plan. Putting this into action can set you up for success. Most importantly, keep your goals handy as you start to consider jobs. Ensuring that your career plan, goals and action steps are aligned with possible opportunities can help bring you closer to working in a job that you love.

Now that you've given some thought to where your job search will ultimately lead you, and you're starting to visualise what your future will look like, let's take a closer look at you. In the next chapter, you can explore why you are valuable and why an employer should offer you the job that you *really* want.