

HOW TO FIND A JOB IN 30 DAYS

A guide to successful
job hunting

BY
PEDRO SILVA-SANTOS



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How to find a job in 30 days - a guide to successful job hunting

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Introduction

At the end of 2014, I was invited to give a class at the College of Higher Education in Viseu because of the study of flora and fauna that my company (NOCTULA – Environmental Consultants) had been carrying out since 2009.

I hadn't taught for seven years, but I decided to rise to the challenge, relishing the chance to be back in contact with students. But on one condition: that I be given the freedom to make the students feel decidedly, but constructively, uncomfortable. I wanted to challenge them with some of the issues they will be faced with when they try to enter the job market. I hoped to share a few tips and tools they would be able to use to make them stand out from the crowd.

They gave me complete freedom to do whatever I wanted and that was when I put together and presented the first workshop "How to find a job in 30 days". In that first presentation, there were not only students in the audience, but also professional people seeking inspiration and new ideas to improve their careers, as well as retired professionals who wanted to expand their network of contacts.

During the following months, various opportunities arose and invitations came along for me to give the workshop again. In no time at all, I had passed on tips, strategies and tools, promoted debates and moments of sharing about how to get ahead in a career, with **over 1,200 people**.

Several participants actually ‘complained’ that I was sharing so much new information in the workshop that they found it hard to take it all in in one 3-hour session. Others told me they wouldn’t be able to do everything in 30 days without some sort of guidebook. And so this book was conceived! I hope it will be a **useful guide for anyone who wants to put the 30-day plan into action**, which will bring you results that most people will simply never manage to achieve, even after trying time after time.

The name I chose for the workshop, “How to find a job in 30 days”, has also been criticised and people have asked me if I guarantee jobs for all workshop participants within 30 days! This book was not written for those who expect guarantees without lifting a finger. If you think you’ll be getting a job just by reading this book, think again! That simple cause-effect relationship may never actually happen. Although there have been people who found work in under 30 days after coming to one of my workshops, I don’t want you to think I’m going to be giving you some kind of never-seen-before revelation for getting a job with **no effort at all**, whatever the circumstances.

This book will teach you little strategies **which have worked for me and which are so universal and powerful that anyone** who wants to stand out from the crowd can get **results**. If I can do

it, **anyone can!**

I am not special, nor am I any better than the next man (or woman)! I have tried and tested everything that I am going to be telling you about in these pages, so try to learn from what went well and avoid making the same mistakes that I made, which led to a few epic failures.

So how is this book organised? It is laid out so you can work on one topic per day.

For example, during the workshop I usually mention that there is no point in sending your CV to companies before you have a strong and coherent presence on the Internet. Be under no illusion, employers receiving your CV will type your name and email address into search engines like Google and if they find nothing interesting about you, but do find loads of fascinating information about other candidates applying for the same vacancy, who do you think will have the upper hand in those vital first few seconds of looking at CVs?

The idea is to work on one topic per day for one month. Check your web presence, create a profile on the professional network LinkedIn, use Facebook to stand out from the crowd, learn to write a CV, develop strategies to avoid secretaries on the phone and how to behave in a job interview. These are just a few of the things I'll be covering in the 30 days of the challenge.

Introduction

The book "How to find a job in 30 days" also has a website www.job30days.com, where you can access up-to-date information and find resources to help you organise your contacts list and download attractive CV models, among other things. All the

information is regularly updated on the site and on social media.

At the end of each day of the challenge, you will find a link to a practical webpage dealing with the topic of the chapter you have just read. Each page on the site has instructions with images which complement the text, making what is in the book more visual and easier to follow.

At the back of the book, you will find a few lined pages for you to make your own notes on anything that grabs your attention. Do use them!

You have probably thought about trying to lose weight, giving up smoking or learning something new. But you never got round to it, so you didn't see the results you were hoping for.

There is a Chinese proverb that goes like this:

"The best day to plant a tree was twenty years ago. The second best day is today!"

Today is a great day to start something new, so commit to this 30-day challenge and share the results with me by email at:

pedro@job30days.com or on social media.

What do you look like on the Internet?

When you type your name into a search engine like Google what comes up?

Make sure you do an anonymous search so that the cookies in your browser don't affect the results. This is the only way you will be able to see what other users get when they do a search of your name. If you are using 'Chrome' as a browser, click Ctrl+Shift+N to surf anonymously and you will get the same results as other users.

If in doubt about what to do, see the step-by-step images I have put on the website:

www.job30days.com/day1

Will people be able to find any information about you on the first page of results of an internet search? If someone Googles your name, they want to find articles or comments written by you or about you. Remember, they will probably also find all the offensive comments you have made on forums, blogs and Facebook.

So **what exactly are the first results you get when searching for your own name?** It's quite likely that they won't be what you were hoping for – but despair not! Among the sites, images and links that you got, I bet you found an awful lot that had nothing whatsoever to do with you, right? Were there lots of hits with the same name, but for people other than you? That is a sign your name is fairly common.

Define your “professional name”

Most people have fairly common names, which makes it hard for you to stand out on the Internet. That was exactly the problem I had when I began organising my online presence, so I decided to create my own **personal brand name**, rather like an actor's stage name.

My full name is Pedro Miguel da Silva Santos. “Pedro Miguel” must be one of the most common combinations of names ever searched for on the internet (at least in Portuguese, that is!), competing closely with “José António” and “Ana Maria”, among others. My surnames “Silva” and “Santos” are the equivalent to “Smith” or “Brown” in English, so I knew my name was doomed to certain failure from the outset. What I then did was to try out different combinations of my name with hyphens and this is what I came up with:

“Pedro Silva-Santos”

Since then, I have standardised the way I write my name on everything and everywhere and now my name appears at the top of internet searches whenever someone types in “Pedro Silva-Santos”.

I could also have used “Miguel da Silva”, by leaving out my first and last names, or even simply “Silva Santos”, which would sound great after my professional title: “Dr. Silva Santos”!

Choose a **simple, attractive combination** for your “professional name”.

Set up a good email address

Now do a search for your email address on Google. What do you get?

After you have decided on your professional name, choose the best possible combination for your professional email address. Avoid things like Smith97@... as the name is meaningless. Think about it: who is going to search for “Smith97”?

I suggest you set up a Gmail account (Google’s email service), as it’s both a credible and a powerful platform. What’s more, when you set up a Gmail account (<https://accounts.google.com/SignUp>), it automatically creates a profile for you on Google+, a social media platform I’ll be looking at on day 3 of our challenge.

If there aren’t many decent options available, you can always shorten your name. Using my full ‘stage’ name, my email address would be: **pedro.silva-santos@...** However, I felt it was just too

long and complex and would cause me too many headaches spelling it out over the phone or writing it out for people. So I tried shortening it to **pedross@...** I also know a company who only use the first and last initials of the workers' names (so Paddy Greenleaf becomes = **pg@...**), which might also work for you.

I will never forget an application that came across my desk a few years ago from a graduate looking for a job in one of my companies. The CV was pretty credible, but the email address was, to say the least, a little intriguing: pussy69...@...!

Obviously, I don't need to share the whole address with you, but I can tell you what happened next. I put the email address into a search engine and what I got back was a load of explicit photos on a blog, asking for "a lot of action"!

Had we been recruiting for an erotic restaurant, they would have been the perfect candidate for the job - and there was certainly quite a large network of followers! However, that wasn't what we were looking for at the time, and that particular CV never even made it into our database.

Your photograph and Internet Presence

Once you have standardised how you write your name and your email, it's time to choose the one **photograph that you are going to use on all the digital platforms**, your business card, your CV and anywhere else. Using the same photo across all platforms will make it easier for you to be identified in social media and in different contexts.

At first, I used this photo on social networks and my business cards:



When I gave people my card with this beach photo on it, meetings would always start with a smile. It was an **excellent way to break the ice**. However, I did later decide to change my photo so that people wouldn't think I was trying to get a job in a massage parlour or as a life guard!

Check out the updates on the site:

www.job30days.com/day1

Learn to break the ice with strangers

When I was at university, I had a friend who was a specialist at breaking the ice with girls! He developed this great technique: he'd walk up to this gorgeous chick he wanted to meet, full of confidence and say, *"You're Celia's sister aren't you?"*

He always got it wrong, because nobody had a sister called Celia! Confused, they would look at him and say, *"You must have confused me for somebody else!"*

Jokingly, he'd reply, *"Whoops, sorry. You look just like someone I know, with your gorgeous hair and your beautiful face... I could have sworn it was you! My apologies for being so forward."*

The girl would smile and turn away, spend the rest of the day thinking about the encounter and feel all warm and bubbly. The trap was set!

Over the next few days, whenever my friend saw this supposed Celia's sister, he'd wave discreetly, smile and give her a wink and say,

“Hi”. Days later, if he bumped into her in the corridor he’d say, in that ever-so-friendly manner of his, *“Tell Celia I’ve got two tickets for the cinema on Saturday night!”*

No more would be said and they’d each go their own way, smiling from ear to ear. The rest, as they say, is history... And today, my friend really is married to one of ‘Celia’s sisters’!!

You too will have to get used to talking to strangers quite often. Yes, I know your parents have told you a million times not to speak to strangers, but that’s not what I mean! As a child, it’s one thing, but you’re not 10 anymore and nobody is going to kidnap you! At some point we all have to learn to speak to all sorts of people, especially strangers – but remember to speak to everyone, whatever their social status. Show genuine interest in people, whether it’s the waiter who brings your coffee or the cleaning lady at the shopping centre. **Widen the scope of people who know who you are** and what you do. One day you will reap the benefits of this.

I recommend this article on the site, which goes into more detail on this subject:

www.job30days.com/talk-with-a-stranger

Think of a way to start a conversation with anybody, but be you and don’t be offensive or too flashy.

In the article above, there are some great ways to break the ice with people you don’t know: talk to people as if they were your uncle or aunt! Forget the fact you don’t actually know the person! That was the technique used by my university friend to get to know ‘Celia’s sister’.

If you meet somebody famous, talk to them as if you didn't recognise them. Imagine they are your cousin. Famous people are so used to being bothered and hassled that they have very little patience with people who recognise them in public. If they get the feeling you don't know who they are, they are more likely to will lower their guard and start speaking to you more naturally.

It's so easy, isn't it!

Keep up to date on this topic at:

www.job30days.com/day15

Write your CV and a covering letter

Today you are going to compile all your work experience into one document called a CV (short for the Latin curriculum vitae). There is much debate as to what makes a good CV and which model to use for the perfect CV. So let me start by telling you this:

There is no such thing as the perfect CV!

No CV will work perfectly for every single job vacancy.

That said, there are many *imperfect* CVs out there! In fact, there are so many of them clogging up company email inboxes that they have come to be more of a plague. And, as they are practically all identical, none stand out from the crowd of mass-produced CVs piling up in HR departments.

So what are we going to do about this? There is a never-ending list of things to take into consideration, but let's have a look at a few of

the most common questions and some suggested answers:

• I have no previous work experience, so what should I put on my CV?

Everyone has to have a first job. All you need is for someone to give you a first chance to shine.

Have a look at this article about how to overcome this temporary obstacle:

www.job30days.com/cv-without-work-experience

• Should I use the European CV model?

In my humble opinion, no! Because you don't want to use the same format everyone else does.

Only use the Euro model when sending your CV to recruiting agencies. These companies prefer standard CV formats because it helps them to sort the candidates. Since they deal with literally thousands of CVs every month, recruiting agencies get really annoyed with anything that looks a bit different from the norm.

Whenever you are applying directly in response to a job offer or when you send in a CV to a company, use what's known as a 'creative CV model', although I prefer to call them "the-one-CV-that-stands-out-from-the-rest-of-the-pile-of-rubbish-that-goes-straight-in-the-bin" model! Remember, companies will probably have seen hundreds of CVs before they get to yours and they may well be getting frustrated with so many applicants who don't stand out at all!

You'll find some good CV models here:

www.job30days.com/the-best-resume-models-CV

- **How many pages long should my CV be?**

Ideally, only one page, but that is usually not enough to put all you need to. Go for a two-page CV, so you can include everything that is important without any long-winded descriptions.

- **Should I put more or less personal information?**

What type of personal information do you mean? Stuff about your cats and your favourite chocolate? Absolutely not!

Keep it only to any information that shows how your hobbies and passions may be useful to the recruiter, giving a better idea of who you really are and that you are the right person to fill the vacancy.

For example, if you like children and organise birthday parties every year that your daughter adores, mention that if you are applying for a job in a kinder garden.

- **Should I mention I have children?**

I have been asked this on numerous occasions and I don't have a one-size-fits-all answer.

For example, as I mentioned earlier, if you are applying to work in a kinder garden, it would be a plus to say you have kids. But for most job applications it is not relevant information to put on a CV.

- **Should I mention my marital status?**

This is not a dating site form!

Do your skills change when you get married or divorced?

I don't see the point of putting this on a professional CV. It's something personal you only need to share with people close to you.

- **Should I say I have a driving licence and a car?**

Of course. This could be extremely important.

- **Should I mention my primary and secondary school results?**

I wouldn't put this on your CV. Generally speaking, anything before A-levels (or equivalent exams for getting into university) is of no interest.

- **Should I include a photo of myself?**

Yes, but not one of you at the beach or wearing dark glasses!

Use a photo where you can be seen from the waist up, in which the light is good and there is a plain, light-coloured or neutral background, so the focus is on your lovely smile! Yes, I really mean smile, like you have just won the lottery!

- **Should I include links to my profiles on social media?**

If you have followed and carried out what I have written so far, then it should be enough to just include icons for the sites you are on. Should the recruiter type in your email address on social media, he will find your profile. If you really want to put one of the links in full, use LinkedIn.

- **Should the most recent information be at the top or the end of my CV?**

Most people agree that the most recent work experience should come first. And, I agree, unless you have done something that absolutely fits this vacancy perfectly, despite not being your most recent job. Put that first.

Remember that it will probably take a recruiter 4 to 7 seconds to decide if your CV goes in the bin or not!

- **Should I mention my piano-playing skills if I am applying for a job as a web designer?**

There is a lot of talk about “Cross-sector skills and competences”. Speakers like to use this kind of jargon in training sessions and then make applicants look like idiots as they highlight at the top of their CVs that they were treasurer of the local village beer festival, when in fact what they are applying for is to be a web designer in a software firm. Just think before you make a mistake like that.

If you want to say that you compose music, have been playing the piano since you were 13 and have played in all sorts of bars to show how creative you are, then fine – web design certainly requires creativity and the recruiters may well be impressed. But it depends on the job you are applying for.

There is no one simple answer to this question. Consider whether or not the skills will be of interest to the potential employer for the particular job you are applying for.

• **Should I send a cover letter / letter of introduction with my CV?**

I've got good and bad news when it comes to cover letters...

The good news is practically no one reads them.

The bad news is this: the recruiters who do read your letter will be extremely demanding and will not tolerate bland, meaningless, impersonal texts.

This is an example of the sort of letters recruiters are fed up of getting, yet applicants insist on writing time and time again:

"Dear Sirs/Madam,

I am writing to apply for the position of beautician in your company..."

This is so prefabricated and vague that no recruiter will be interested in reading on!

So how should you grab your reader's attention?

Here is a suggestion - I'm assuming the candidate wants a job in a beauty parlour:

“Hi,

I remember when my mum would get really annoyed with me for using up her best nail varnish, but I had no choice... my dolls had to have beautiful nails!

With time I left the dolls and began painting my friends' nails at school. They said I was really good and so I got more and more into it – before I knew it I was doing my neighbours' nails too. After each manicure, I would give them a relaxing massage using lovely creams and they would be in heaven, which made me happy too!

I enjoyed giving massages and doing people's nails and the service soon became more than just a hobby and I began to see there was a future in it. And so I became a beautician. This meant I could learn and develop techniques for massages, facials, body and skin care, etc...

I have been following the news and updates your studio publishes on social media and could hardly believe my luck when I saw you were looking to recruit a new beautician.

I am available to come and talk to you and to show you what I can bring to your studio to help you become the number one beauty salon in town.”

In this second example, the applicant shows her passion for health and beauty as well as her admiration for the company she's applying to work for. Do the same!

One last suggestion: if you send your CV by email, **don't send** the cover letter in a separate file. Write the letter in the main body of the email and attach only your CV as a PDF file.

• Should I send my application (CV and cover letter) to my own email address before sending it to the recruiting company?

Yes, I strongly recommend you do this to see exactly how your application will look to the recruiter. See this as one last chance to correct any spelling mistakes, incoherencies or to improve something that isn't quite right. Do this as often as you like until you have got it absolutely spot on.

When you have written your CV, save it as a PDF file with a file name that makes sense. Don't save it as "CVfinalversion.pdf" or "Doc1.pdf".

Here is an example:

CV_Pedro_Silva-Santos.pdf

If you have adapted your CV for a specific job vacancy, you could even include the company name in the file name:

CV_BootsChemist_Pedro_Silva-Santos.pdf

I put regular updates on this topic on the webpage:

www.job30days.com/day20

A final word

I would love to hear your comments about the tips and ideas I have shared in this book.

How have they helped you to find work or improve you career?

Share your opinion on the book's website:

(www.job30days.com)

or on social media:

facebook.com/job30days

instagram.com/job30days

<https://pinterest.com/job30days>

plus.google.com/+job30days-plus

linkedin.com/company/how-to-find-a-job-in-30-days

Don't forget to use the hashtag **#job30days** so I can follow what you're saying.

If you need any help, don't hesitate to get in touch by e-mail on **pedro@job30days.com**

Bye for now,

Pedro Silva-Santos

Thanks

Writing this book has been a team effort – I could never have done it on my own. I needed to surround myself with a team of people who believed from day one that this book had to see the light of day.

To my friend and designer, Ricardo Matias, with whom I have had some pretty juicy arguments, thank you so much for the way you make things I try to do become reality, even some of the dumb things. You have been on board since the beginning of this project and have helped me turn it into something worthwhile.

To Nini, for all your love and understanding on those days I just don't stop talking, and the days I only come home to eat and sleep. This project is yours too, as you constantly helped me to make it better.

To my friend, Paulo Guerra, who freely gave their time to identify points for improving the texts in each chapter. Thank you so much

for your constructive criticism and suggestions, which have enriched the content and made it even more practical, simple and objective.

To Paddy Greenleaf, for his excellent, meticulous translation from the original Portuguese. Thank you for putting so much of yourself into your interpretation of my ideas.

To my parents, for producing such a beautiful son and for never trying to limit my dreams, even when some of my ideas seemed to be utter madness.

And finally, I am grateful to everyone who has helped organise or taken part in the workshops “*How to find a job in 30 days*”. Without you, none of this would exist and the book would never have come to fruition.

Opinions

“It’s an interesting idea to have a website with updates and extra information on each topic. Despite all the tech at our disposal, this is not yet common publishing practice.”

- PAULO GUERRA, Project Manager

“I loved the way the book is written! As I read, I felt as if I was back in the workshop.”

- FABÍOLA FREITAS, Masters in Environment Engineering

“I liked the fact the book is organised on a day-by-day basis and gives example texts that can be used to contact people on LinkedIn. Vague tips on how to succeed abound out there... but this is the first time I have found a step-by-step approach in one document. For me, that is what makes this book essential reading for anyone starting out on their career.”

- NATASHA PÁDUA, Innovation Manager in the food industry and
Founder of the portal www.eatinnovation.com

“Full of practical tips that anyone can use in their day-to-day. One of the most positive things I found was the simplicity with which the author introduces each theme and grabs the reader’s attention.”

- ANA GERALDES, , Lecturer at the School of Agriculture of the Polytechnic Institute of Bragança

“I began working before I finished my degree and ended up not finishing it for the wrong reasons: I took any old job, so long as it meant I was earning some money! On my own it took me 20 years to understand most of what the author has just shared in this book.”

- NINI GONÇALVES, blogger

“This book is obviously written by someone who loves telling stories. I was struck by the clever way he distracts secretaries on the phone!”

- IRINA TAVARES, Secretary