

FREE GUIDE

The Job Search & Resume Guide

How to write applications that get replies —
resume, LinkedIn, applications and interviews.

Resume

LinkedIn

Applications

AI help

Interviews

Follow-up

Thejas

Digital with Thejas

About this guide

You are looking for a job — your first one, or your next one. You have sent applications and heard nothing back. Nobody taught you how this actually works: not college, not the job portals, and definitely not the “just be confident” advice from relatives.

This guide fixes that. It is a practical, plain-language system for the whole search: a resume that survives the skim, a LinkedIn profile that gets found, applications tailored in minutes, and interviews you walk into prepared.

How to use this guide

- **Read in order the first time.** The chapters build on each other: understand how hiring works (Ch. 1), fix your resume (Ch. 2–5), then your visibility (Ch. 6–8), then interviews and follow-up (Ch. 9–10).
- **Every chapter ends with a “Do this today” box.** Do those ten things and your applications will be sharper than most of the competition.
- **Chapter 11 is a mirror.** Seven mistakes almost every applicant makes — check yourself against it before your next application.
- **The bonus section is for later.** Quick tips to come back to whenever you have a spare ten minutes between applications.

Three promises

- ✓ **No jargon.** If a term matters (like ATS), it is explained in one plain paragraph.
- ✓ **No fake numbers.** No scary made-up statistics — just what typically works and why.
- ✓ **No dependence.** Everything here you can do yourself, for free, starting today.

TIP

Keep your current resume open as you read. By Chapter 5 you will have rewritten most of it — and it will be noticeably better.

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How hiring actually works

Before fixing your resume, understand who reads it — and how.

The recruiter skim

A single opening often attracts hundreds of applications. The first pass is not a careful read — it is a quick skim. The reader is checking three things: **does this person match the role, do they have the key skills, and is the evidence easy to find?** If the answer is not obvious quickly, they move to the next resume — not because they are careless, but because there is always a next resume.

This changes your job. Your resume does not have to tell your life story. It has one job: **survive the skim** and earn a proper read.

ATS, in one plain paragraph

Many companies use an **ATS (Applicant Tracking System)** — software that stores applications and lets recruiters search them by keywords, the way you search your email. It is not a robot that rejects people; it is a filing cabinet with a search bar. What it means for you is simple: use a clean, single-column layout, standard section headings (“Skills”, “Projects”, “Education”), and the same words for your skills that the job description uses — so that when someone searches, you show up.

What this means for your search

- **Clarity beats creativity.** A plain resume that is easy to scan typically wins against a heavily designed one.
- **Tailoring beats volume.** Ten applications matched to the role usually beat fifty copies of the same resume.
- **Evidence beats adjectives.** “Built X, result Y” beats “hardworking and passionate” every time.

DO THIS TODAY

Open three job postings for roles you want. Highlight every skill or tool that appears in at least two of them — that list is your keyword bank for the next four chapters.

Resume fundamentals: one clean page

For freshers and early-career applicants, **one page is enough**. If it does not fit, you are not cutting enough — a shorter resume where everything earns its place reads as confidence, not lack of experience.

The section order that works

#	Section	What goes in it
1	Header	Name, phone, email, LinkedIn link, city. No photo, no full address, no date of birth.
2	Summary (optional)	Two lines: the role you want + your strongest skills + one proof point. Skip it if it would be generic.
3	Skills	Grouped and honest: languages/tools, software, domain skills. Only things you can discuss in an interview.
4	Projects / Experience	Your 2–4 strongest entries, newest first. Bullet formula from Chapter 3. This is the heart of the page.
5	Education	Degree, college, year. Add CGPA/percentage only if it helps you.
6	Extras	Certifications, achievements, volunteering — only if relevant to the role.

Layout rules

- **Single column**, standard headings, one readable font, 10–12 pt.
- **Save as PDF**, named properly: **Name-Role-Resume.pdf** — not “final_final2.pdf”.
- **No graphics for important information**. Skill bars, icons and text inside images cannot be searched — keep skills as plain text.

What to cut today

- “Career objective” paragraphs (“seeking a challenging position...”) — they say nothing.
- Declarations with date and place (“I hereby declare...”) — an outdated format habit.
- “References available on request” — assumed.
- Soft-skill lists with no proof (“team player, quick learner”) — show these in your bullets instead.
- Hobbies, unless they genuinely relate to the job.

DO THIS TODAY

Reorder your resume to match the table above and delete everything in the “cut” list. Most resumes get visibly better from this step alone.

Bullet points that show impact

The difference between a resume that gets calls and one that gets silence is usually the bullet points. Most people write **duties**. Strong resumes show **impact**.

The formula

Action verb → what you did → outcome or scale

BEFORE → AFTER: a project bullet

Before: "Worked on a website for the college fest."

After: "Built the registration website for the college fest (HTML, CSS, Google Sheets backend); handled sign-ups for 40+ events across 3 days."

BEFORE → AFTER: an internship bullet

Before: "Responsible for social media during internship."

After: "Planned and posted 3 Instagram posts per week for a local retail brand; grew the page from 800 to 2,100 followers in 4 months."

Rules that make bullets work

- **Start with a verb:** built, designed, analysed, organised, led, automated, wrote, tested, presented.
- **One line each.** If it wraps to three lines, it is two bullets or too much detail.
- **Quantify where you honestly can** — people, events, money, time saved, marks, downloads. If there is no number, name the concrete outcome instead.
- **Never inflate.** Every bullet is a potential interview question. Write only what you can talk about for two minutes.

DO THIS TODAY

Take your three most important resume bullets and rewrite each one with the formula: action verb + what + outcome. Read them aloud — they should sound like things you actually did.

No experience yet? You have more than you think

“Every job wants experience, but nobody gives me a chance to get it.” Every fresher feels this. Here is the reframe: employers do not literally need job experience — they need **evidence you can do the work**. Experience is just the most common form of evidence. It is not the only one.

Six sources of evidence you already have (or can build fast)

1. **College and personal projects.** A final-year project, a small app, a market study, an event you ran. Presented well (Ch. 3), a good project reads like work.
2. **Internships — of any size.** Even a one-month unpaid internship gives you real bullets: what you did, what you produced, what you learned.
3. **Coursework and certifications with output.** A certificate alone is weak; a certificate **plus something you built with it** is strong.
4. **Clubs, fests and volunteering.** Organising a 500-person event is logistics, budgeting, negotiation and teamwork — say so in those words.
5. **Freelance or family-business work.** Managed billing at the family shop? Designed posters for a neighbour’s business? That is real work — list it.
6. **Self-initiated proof.** Pick a real company, do a small unsolicited project (a redesign, an analysis, a content plan) and attach it to your application. Few people do this; it stands out.

Present a project like experience

Give each project the same structure a job would get: a **name and one-line context** (what it was, for whom), then **two or three formula bullets**. “College fest website — built for the cultural committee” is a role. Treat it like one.

DO THIS TODAY

List every project, internship, club role and side task from the last three years — mess allowed. Then circle the three with the best evidence for the role you want. Those go on the resume.

Tailoring each application in 10 minutes

The same resume sent everywhere is the single biggest reason applications go quiet. But tailoring does not mean rewriting from scratch — it is a 10-minute routine once your base resume is good.

The 10-minute routine

1. **Read the job description once, slowly** (2 min). Underline the skills, tools and phrases they repeat — repetition means priority.
2. **Mirror their words — honestly** (3 min). If you know a skill they call “data visualisation” and you wrote “charts and dashboards”, use their phrase. Same skill, searchable words. **Never add a skill you do not have.**
3. **Reorder for relevance** (2 min). Move the most relevant project to the top; move the most relevant skill group first.
4. **Rewrite the summary line** (2 min). Name the role and their top two requirements you genuinely meet.
5. **Rename the file and check** (1 min). Name-Role-Company.pdf; one last skim for typos and the right company name.

The honesty line

Keyword matching is translation, not fiction. You are helping a busy reader (and their search bar) find skills you truly have. The moment you add a skill you cannot demonstrate, you have converted a future interview into a future embarrassment.

DO THIS TODAY

Take one job posting from your Chapter 1 keyword bank and run the full 10-minute routine on your resume. Time yourself — it gets faster every time.

LinkedIn for job seekers

Recruiters search LinkedIn the way you search Google. Employers also typically look you up after you apply. A tidy, active profile does two jobs: it gets you **found**, and it **confirms** the impression your resume made.

Headline: the most valuable line

Your headline follows you into every search result and comment. “Seeking opportunities” says nothing and is invisible to search. Use: **role you want | key skills | one specific thing**.

HEADLINE EXAMPLES

“Aspiring Data Analyst | SQL, Excel, Power BI | Final-year B.Com, Mangalore”

“Frontend Developer (Fresher) | React, JavaScript | Built 3 live projects — links on profile”

The rest of the profile, quickly

- **Photo and banner:** a clear, friendly headshot — phone camera and plain wall are fine. Skip the graduation-gown group photo crop.
- **About:** 4–6 first-person lines — what you are learning or building, your strongest skills with one proof, and the role you are looking for.
- **Featured section:** pin your best project, portfolio link or certificate so visitors see proof first.
- **Open to Work:** turn it on. “Recruiters only” if you are currently employed; the public green ring is fine (and typically helpful) if you are a fresher.
- **Experience & projects:** copy your resume entries — same formula bullets, same honest keywords.

Be visible where your target companies are

- Follow the companies you want to join and the people who work there.
- Comment something thoughtful on their posts a couple of times a week — a real observation or question, not “Great post sir”.
- When you connect, add a two-line note: who you are and why you are reaching out. Notes get accepted far more often than blank requests.

DO THIS TODAY

Rewrite your headline with the formula and switch on Open to Work. Then follow five companies you would genuinely like to join.

Cover letters & application messages

Most cover letters are read in seconds, if at all — so stop writing a page. A short, specific note typically beats a long, formal one. The same structure works for emails, LinkedIn messages and the “why should we hire you” box on application forms.

The 4-line structure

1. **Who you are** — one line, matched to the role.
2. **Why this company** — one specific, true detail (a product, a project, a value). This line proves the message is not a mass mail.
3. **One proof** — your single most relevant project or result.
4. **The ask** — clear and modest: a conversation, a consideration, a reply.

TEMPLATE: application message (email or LinkedIn)

“Hi [Name], I’m a final-year [degree] student applying for the [role] opening. I’ve followed [company]’s work since [specific thing — a product, post or project], and the role fits what I’ve been building: for example, [one-line proof — your best project + outcome]. My resume is attached — I’d be glad to talk if there’s a fit. Thank you for your time.”

Rules

- **Under 120 words.** Respecting the reader’s time is itself a signal.
- **Name the company and role.** “your esteemed organization” announces a copy-paste.
- **One proof, not five.** Pick the single most relevant thing and let the resume carry the rest.
- **Plain words.** Write the way you would speak to a respected senior — warm, direct, no “utilise” where “use” works.

DO THIS TODAY

Write your version of the 4-line template for one real opening and save it as a base. Each new application then only needs lines 2 and 3 changed.

Using AI to help — without sounding like AI

AI chat tools (ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini) are genuinely useful for a job search — as a **drafting assistant and practice partner**, not a ghostwriter. Recruiters read many applications; the generic AI voice is easy to spot and easy to ignore.

What AI is good at

- **First drafts:** turning your rough notes about a project into a tight formula bullet (Ch. 3).
- **Tailoring help:** comparing your resume against a job description and listing which of the JD's words you already qualify for.
- **Mock interviews:** generating likely questions for a specific role and grilling you on your own resume.
- **Proofreading:** catching typos, grammar slips and inconsistent tenses.

Two copy-paste prompts

PROMPT 1

"Here is my resume: [paste]. Here is a job description: [paste]. List (a) the skills and phrases from the JD that my resume already supports, (b) where I should use their exact wording, and (c) requirements I genuinely don't meet — don't suggest faking those."

PROMPT 2

"I'm interviewing for [role] at [company type]. Ask me 8 likely questions one at a time — a mix of basics, my resume, and situations. After each answer I type, tell me one thing to improve."

The "edit your voice back in" rule

Whatever AI drafts, you rewrite before sending: read it aloud, replace every word you would never say ("leverage", "synergy", "I am writing to express my keen interest"), and add one real, specific detail only you could know. And the hard line: **never let AI invent experience, skills or numbers**. It will happily do so — and you will be the one answering for it in the interview.

DO THIS TODAY

Run Prompt 1 with your resume and one real job description. Fix the wording gaps it finds in list (b) — honestly.

The interview prep system

Interview confidence is mostly preparation wearing a suit. One evening of structured prep typically puts you ahead of candidates who “wing it”. Here is the system.

Step 1: Research (about an hour)

What to check	Where	What you are looking for
The company	Their website + LinkedIn page	What they do, who their customers are, anything recent (launch, award, expansion) you can mention.
The role	The job description	The 3 skills they repeat most — expect questions on each.
Your interviewer	LinkedIn, if a name was shared	Their team and background — useful context, maybe common ground.
Likely questions	AI chat (Ch. 8) or a search	Typical questions for this exact role; practise answers aloud.
Your own resume	Read it as a stranger would	Every line is a possible question — be ready to expand each into a short story.
Logistics	The invite email	Format, platform or address, names, what to carry; test camera and mic for online rounds.

Step 2: Prepare five stories (STAR, in plain words)

Most behavioural questions (“tell me about a time when...”) can be answered from a small set of prepared stories. Structure each one as: **what was going on** (Situation), **what you had to do** (Task), **what you actually did** (Action — spend most of your time here), and **what happened** (Result). Prepare five: a challenge you solved, a team situation, a mistake and what you learned, something you led or organised, and the project you are proudest of.

Step 3: Prepare questions to ask them

“No questions” reads as low interest. Ask two or three like:

- “What would a successful first three months in this role look like?”
- “What do people who do well in this team have in common?”
- “What are the biggest challenges the team is working on right now?”

DO THIS TODAY

Write out one STAR story tonight — the project you are proudest of — and say it aloud twice. Aim for under two minutes.

Follow-up & rejection resilience

Silence after an application or interview usually means **busy**, not **no**. A polite follow-up often surfaces your application again — and at worst, it changes nothing.

When and how to follow up

- **After applying:** about a week later, one short message to the recruiter or the posting contact.
- **After an interview:** a thank-you the same day; a status check after the timeline they gave you passes (or about a week).
- **How often:** one follow-up, maybe two. After that, let it go and keep the relationship warm for next time.

TEMPLATE: polite follow-up

"Hi [Name], I applied for the [role] position on [date] and wanted to check in — I remain very interested, and my [most relevant skill/project] feels like a strong fit for the team. Happy to share anything else that would help. Thank you for your time!"

Treat your search as a pipeline

A job search is a numbers-and-quality game, and rejection is a normal part of it — even excellent candidates hear "no" many times. The fix is to stop treating each application as a verdict on you and start treating the whole search as a **pipeline** you manage.

- **Track everything in one simple sheet:** company, role, date applied, contact, status, next action.
- **Aim for consistent volume of tailored applications** — a steady weekly number you can sustain, not a burst and a burnout.
- **Review monthly:** lots of applications but no interviews? Fix the resume and tailoring (Ch. 2–5). Interviews but no offers? Fix the prep (Ch. 9).
- **Ask for feedback after a final-round no** — politely, once. Some will answer, and those answers are gold.

DO THIS TODAY

Create your pipeline sheet now — six columns, five minutes. Add every application you remember sending this month, with a next action for each.

The 7 mistakes almost every applicant makes

1. **Sending the same resume everywhere.** The 10-minute tailoring routine (Ch. 5) exists because untailored volume rarely works.
2. **Applying only through portals.** The portal is the queue; a human is the shortcut. Pair every important application with a polite message to a recruiter or team member (Ch. 7).
3. **Typos — and the wrong company name.** The fastest way to look careless. Read every application aloud once; check the company name twice if you reused a template.
4. **An unprofessional email address.** coolboy_rahul2003@ undermines a good resume. Two minutes to create firstname.lastname@ — do it today.
5. **Ignoring what the posting actually asks for.** If they ask for a portfolio link, a subject-line format or a short answer, that is the first test — and skipping it is the first rejection.
6. **Being invisible online.** Employers typically search your name after shortlisting. No LinkedIn, or a messy public profile, quietly costs interviews (Ch. 6).
7. **Giving up after silence.** No follow-up, no pipeline, no review of what is not working — the search stalls. Silence is feedback to act on, not a verdict to accept (Ch. 10).

DO THIS TODAY

Pick the one mistake that stung the most while reading. Fix that before your next application goes out.

BONUS

20 quick tips & tricks

Quick wins you can apply in minutes. Come back to this section whenever you have a spare ten minutes between applications.

RESUME

- 01** Keep a “master resume” with everything you have ever done, and cut each application down from it — never build up from a blank page.
- 02** Ask one brutally honest friend to skim your resume and say what you do in ten seconds. If they cannot, fix the top third.
- 03** Export to PDF and open it on your phone — if it is hard to read there, it is hard to read everywhere.
- 04** Update your resume the same week something happens (project done, certificate earned). Memories fade; bullets written fresh are sharper.

LINKEDIN & ONLINE PRESENCE

- 05** Search your own name in a private browser window — that is roughly what an employer sees. Clean up or lock down anything you would not want discussed in an interview.
- 06** Post once when you finish a project: what you built, what you learned, one picture or link. A handful of these a year builds a visible track record.
- 07** Set your LinkedIn location to the city where you want to work — recruiter searches typically filter by location.
- 08** Turn on job alerts for exact titles you want, then apply early — fresh postings typically get more attention than week-old ones.

APPLICATIONS

- 09** Apply even at 70–80% requirement match — postings describe the ideal candidate, not the minimum bar. (Be sensible about hard requirements like licences.)
- 10** Keep a snippets file: your 4-line message (Ch. 7), your follow-up (Ch. 10), your top three bullets — so each application starts at 80% done.
- 11** Read your application aloud before sending — your ear catches what your eye skips.
- 12** Batch your applications: one focused two-hour block beats scattered half-attempts across the week.

INTERVIEWS

- 13** Prepare your “tell me about yourself” as a 60–90 second story: who you are, your best proof, why this role. It is almost always the first question — script the opening, not the whole interview.
- 14** In online interviews, put the camera at eye level and look at the lens when speaking — it reads as confidence.
- 15** If you do not know an answer, say so and reason aloud: “I have not used X, but based on Y I would try...” beats bluffing every time.
- 16** Carry (or keep open) three copies of your resume and a notepad — small signals of preparation.

MINDSET & HABITS

- 17** Set a weekly application target you can sustain, and count actions (applications sent, messages written), not outcomes — actions are the only part you control.
- 18** Keep a “wins file”: nice feedback, good grades, completed projects, kind messages. Read it after every rejection.
- 19** Spend a fixed slice of each week building evidence (a project, a certification put to use) — it compounds; scrolling job boards does not.
- 20** Tell people you are looking — friends, seniors, faculty, relatives. Many roles are filled through referrals before they are ever advertised.

What to do next

You now know more about how hiring works than most people applying alongside you. But knowledge only counts once it is on the page: the rewritten resume, the sharper LinkedIn profile, the tailored application.

One more thing works quietly in your favour: employers search candidates online. What they find is part of your application — whether you shaped it or not. That is where I can help.

GET A FREE DIGITAL PRESENCE AUDIT

I will personally review your LinkedIn profile and what employers find when they search you online — and send you a short, honest report with the **3 highest-impact fixes for your job search**. No generic checklist. No obligation. If you can do the fixes yourself, great — the audit is yours to keep.

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