Complete Industry

Resume Guide

For PhDs

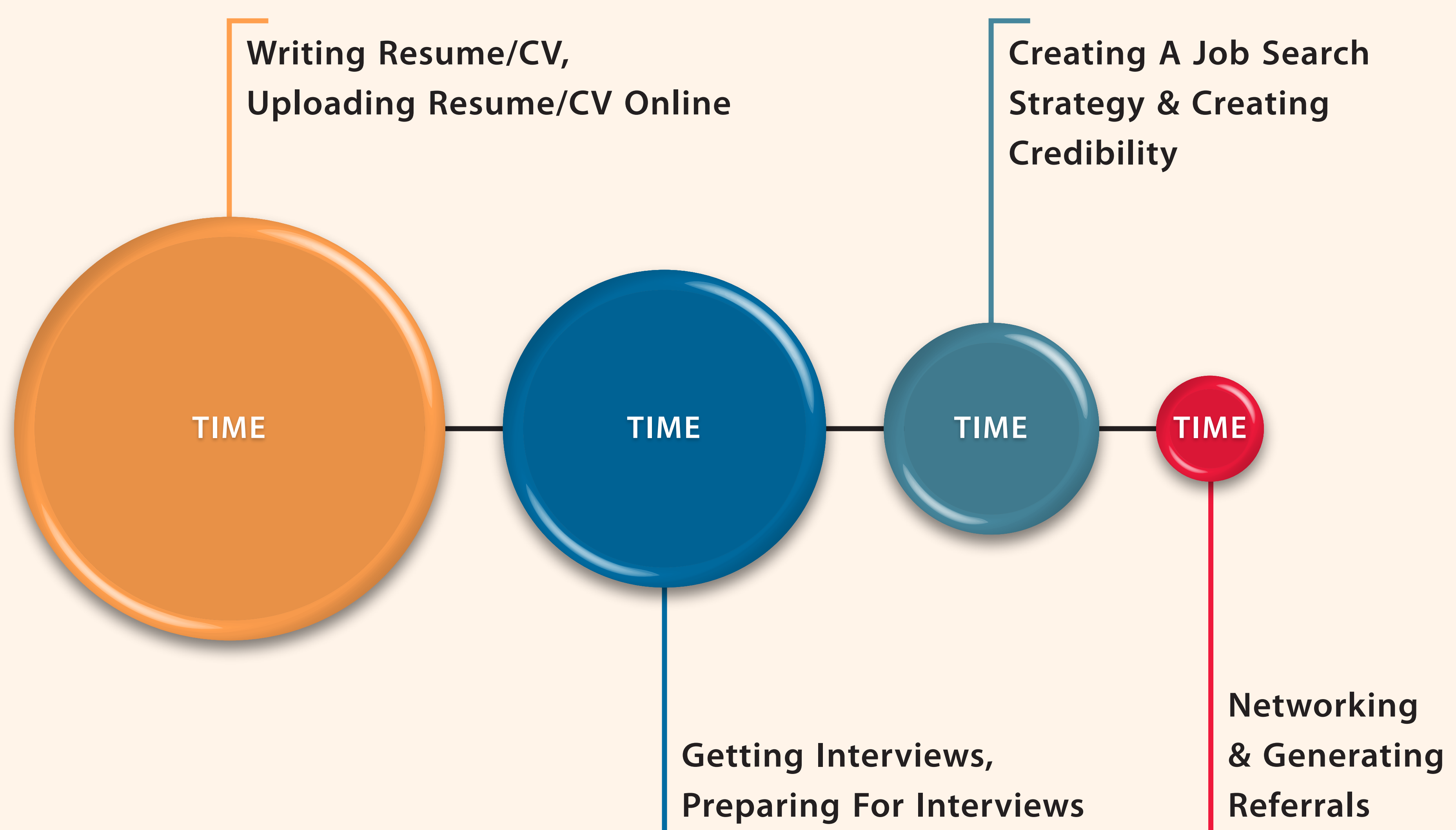By Cheeky Scientist

Complete Industry
Resume Guide

Introduction

There is more to getting a job than writing a resume. Many PhDs think that just because you have a PhD your resume will get noticed. Well, bad news, this isn't how it works.

In order to get hired you need to have the right job search strategy. Many PhDs spend all their time looking through job boards, writing resumes and submitting job applications online. As a PhD, you probably spend very little time, if any, networking with industry professionals.

Your Job Search Workflow Probably Looks Something Like This...

Writing Resume/CV, Uploading Resume/CV Online

Creating A Job Search Strategy & Creating Credibility

TIME   TIME   TIME   TIME

Getting Interviews, Preparing For Interviews

Networking & Generating Referrals

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This distribution of your time is wrong!

It's not a viable job search strategy!

It will not get you hired!

The number one way to get hired is to network. Most of your job search time should be spent networking and generating referrals. Through networking you will learn about jobs that are not even advertised, and you will learn about the culture of different companies. This will help you decide what companies and positions might be a good fit for you.

Only once you have grown your professional network and gotten a referral does your resume become important. A good resume alone is not enough to get you a job, but a bad resume is enough to keep you from getting a job.

Don't make the mistake of handing over a bad resume after you have done all the hard work of networking. You must know how to write a modern industry resume if you want to get hired.


Get Job Leads Through Referrals & Automatic Alerts

oes your job search consist of scrolling through job boards, seeing a job you know you are perfect for, uploading your resume, and then never hearing back? You are not alone. This is exactly what the job search process looks like for many PhDs. You might think that because you're a PhD your resume is going to get a response, you're wrong. It's a huge waste of time to blindly upload your resume to job postings.

Uploading your resume into the black hole of online portals is not a viable job search strategy and you will very rarely get any kind of response. Instead you should be networking.

The best way to make sure your resume gets a response is by generating a referral. And referrals come from networking. A referral is when an employee at the company you are interested in recommends you for the position. Beyond avoiding the black hole of online job portals, getting a referral has other benefits. With a referral you might learn about a job opportunity before the general public or learn about a position that would never have been advertised at all. That's because 80% of jobs are never advertised.

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40% Of New Hires Come From Referrals (Jobvite)
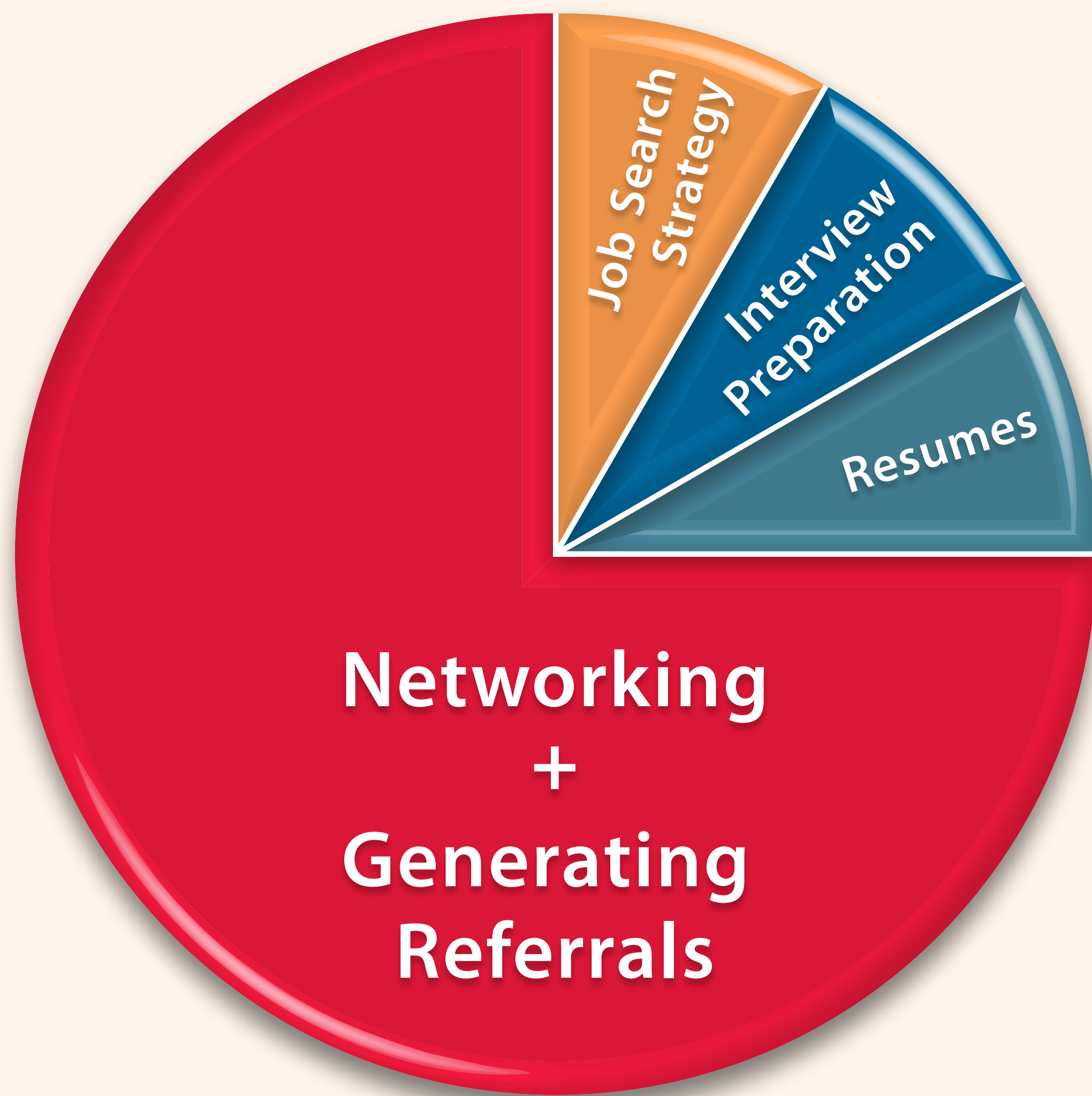
Are You Spending Enough Time **Networking + Generating Referrals?**

Most of these unadvertised job openings will be in small and medium sized companies. These companies are in the fastest-growing part of their growth cycle which means that they are hiring people so rapidly they don't have time to post all the available jobs online. They hire mostly through word-of-mouth. To get access to this vast job market, you must network.

But, networking takes time. Building the rapport needed to get a referral takes time. So, you should begin networking as soon as possible. In your job search, you should be spending most of your time networking with the goal of generating referrals.

In addition to networking, there is a simple action you can take right now to improve your job search. You can start leveraging technology in your job search, by setting up job alerts and notifications. For this to work you need to know what job titles you are interested in and what keywords to look for. For example, you could create an alert for the

names of the companies you are interested in or for the names of the specific positions you are interested in, such as research scientist, senior scientist, IT engineer, psychologist position, principal scientist, etc.

It's essential that you stay on top of the newest job postings using alerts and networking because large companies can receive upwards of 2,000 applications per position. *Do you think they are going to look at all 2000?* No, they definitely are not. They are only going to look at the first 10% submitted or at the highest 25% of the job applications, as determined by applicant tracking software. So unless you know about that position through an informational interview or other form of networking, you're going to be way behind.

Main Takeaway: At the bare minimum you should set up keyword alerts and sign up for appropriate email job notifications, but the main part of your job search strategy should be networking in order to get job referrals.
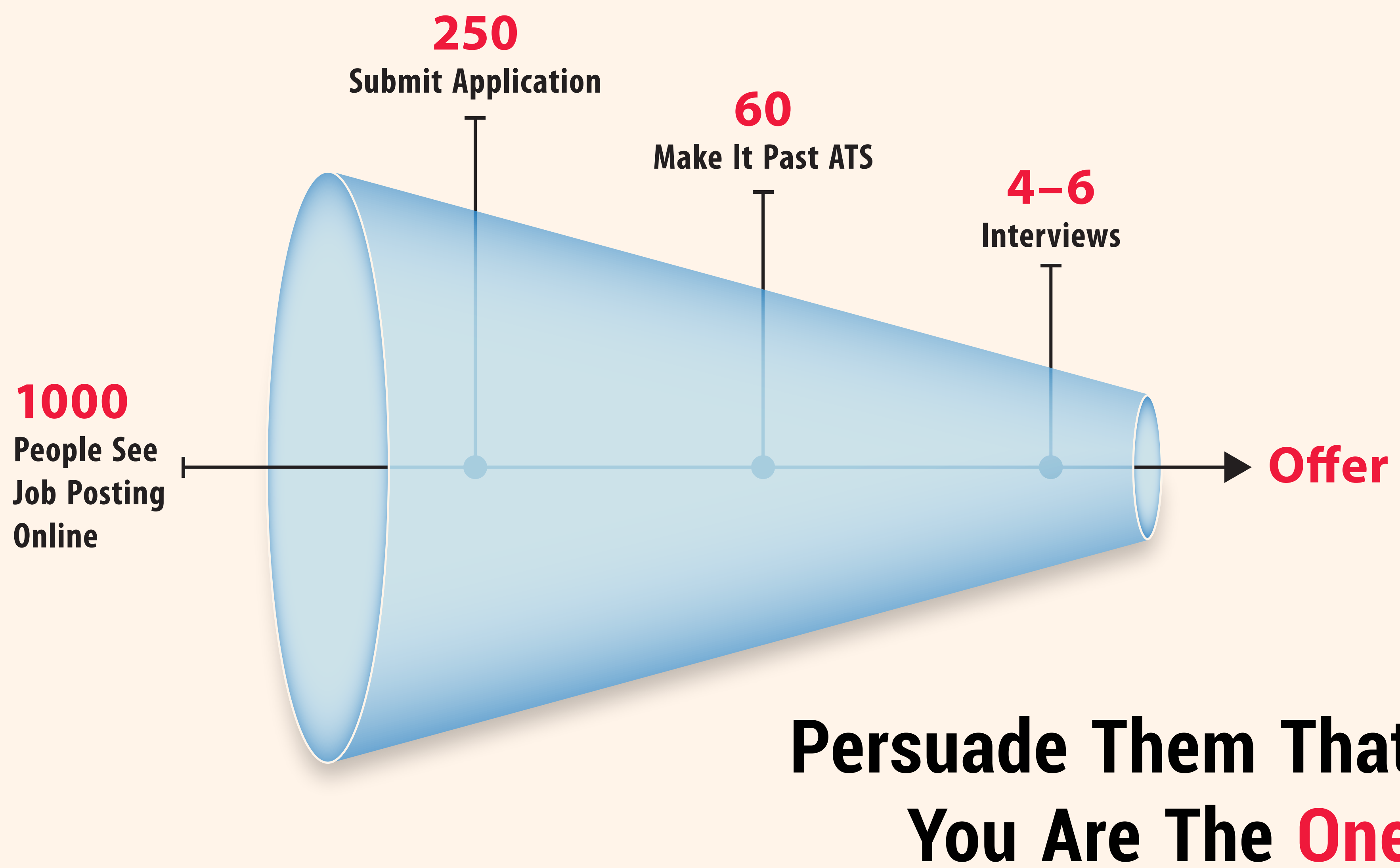
Write A Persuasive Document

Your resume is not an objective peer-reviewed document. It is a persuasive document designed to demonstrate that you are the best candidate for the position. This doesn't mean you lie on your resume but it does mean that you position your experiences and accomplishments according to the result you are trying to achieve — getting hired.

And remember, your resume is not the same thing as your CV.

Your CV is a lengthy document covering the complete timeline of all your research, and listing every single accomplishment you have made in your entire career. In industry, they do not want to read your CV. In fact, if you submit a CV, it will most likely be thrown away.

What you should do is write a succinct resume that highlights your most relevant accomplishments and aligns them with an industry relevant result. You are trying to convince the hiring manager that you are the best candidate. Think about your resume from the hiring manager's perspective. The hiring manager does not want to see a 2-page list of

1000
People See
Job Posting
Online

250
Submit Application

60
Make It Past ATS

4–6
Interviews

Offer

Persuade Them That You Are The One

your publications. They want to see that you have the skills they need and that you will fit well into their team. Your resume should leave no doubt in the hiring manager's mind that you have the relevant skills and that you are a good fit for their company.

Main Takeaway: You know that you are the right person for the job, so use your resume to write a persuasive story proving to the hiring manager that you are indeed the best candidate.
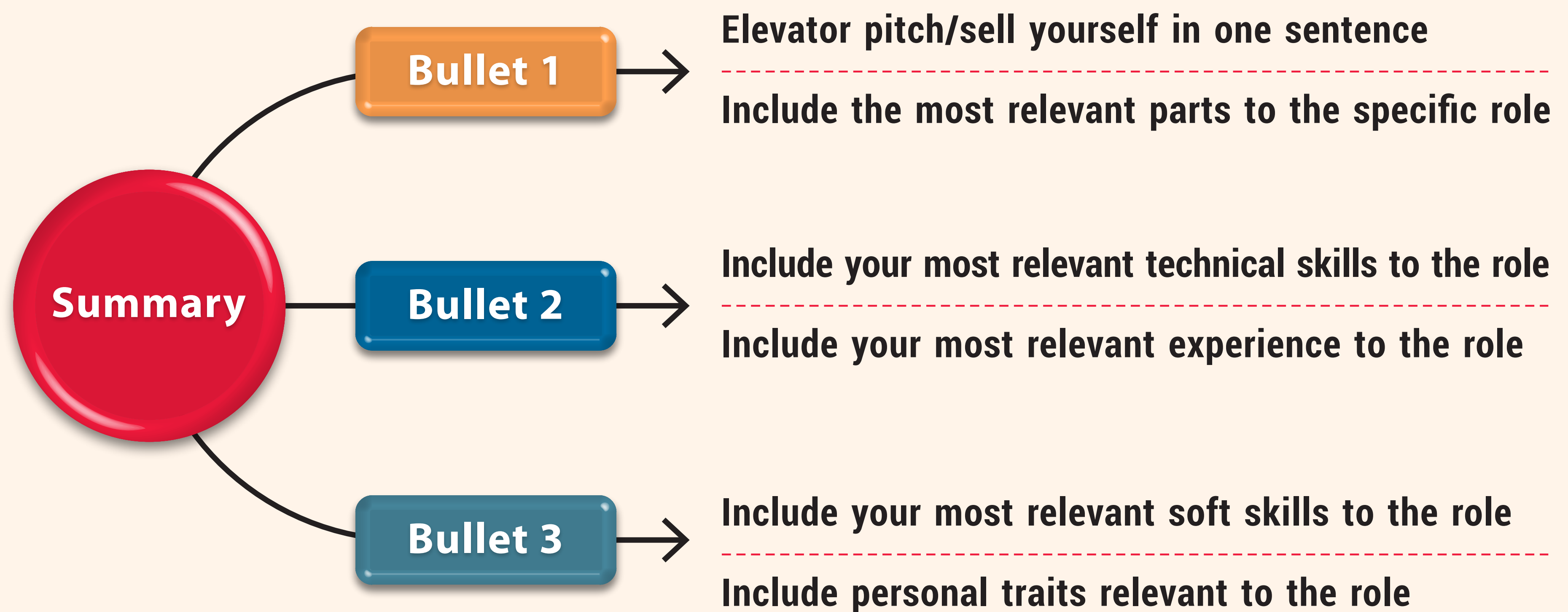
Focus On A Strong Professional Summary Statement

Long gone are the days of the objective statement. In a modern industry resume, the objective statement has been replaced by the professional summary section and this is the most important part of your resume. For a PhD level resume, your professional summary needs to be perfect. This is the first part of your resume that the hiring manager will see. If your professional summary is not perfect, the hiring manager will probably never even look at the rest of your resume.

Your professional summary section should have 3 bullet points, not 2 not 4, 3 bullet points. These should be the best bullet points on your entire resume. Each of these professional summary bullet points has a specific focus.

Your first bullet point is your elevator pitch. It should contain the most relevant accomplishment you have for the job you are applying for, written in a way that positions you as the best candidate for the job. Use this bullet to reveal your passion for the job but always tie this passion to a tangible industry relevant result.

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Professional Summary

Summary

Bullet 1
→ Elevator pitch/sell yourself in one sentence

Include the most relevant parts to the specific role

Bullet 2
→ Include your most relevant technical skills to the role

Include your most relevant experience to the role

Bullet 3
→ Include your most relevant soft skills to the role

Include personal traits relevant to the role

Your second bullet point should focus on the best technical skills that you have for the job. *Which of your accomplishments best highlights the key technical skill required for the position?* This is the accomplishment you should talk about in your second bullet point. This bullet point demonstrates that you will be able to get the job done well.

Your third bullet point should focus on the best transferable skill that you have for the job. In industry, the company culture and team environment are very important. A company's success depends on the ability of its employees to work together and achieve goals. This bullet point is where you show that you will fit into the company culture and that you are pleasant to work with.

Sample professional summary, Research Scientist:

✓ Forward-thinking biomedical research scientist with a strong background in cellular/molecular neurobiology and stem cells leading to successful generation of induced-pluripotent stem cells (iPSCs) from parkinsonian patients in <1 year.

✓ Excellent team player and strong builder of prolific collaborations in different aspects of basic and applied research to long-lasting research projects >10 peer-reviewed scientific publications.

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✓ Creative and self-motivated individual with easy-integration in a multicultural environment with unique combination of detail-oriented mindset, driven personality, analytical skills and proven ability to meet tight deadlines by working in a fast-paced work environment leading to discovery of novel targets in Parkinson's disease research.

Sample professional summary, MSL:

✓ Accomplished neuroscientist with 10+ years of experience in leading and managing pre-clinical R&D projects aimed at the identification of novel therapeutic strategies for neurodegenerative diseases.

✓ Effective and confident science communicator, both oral and written, making complex scientific concepts accessible to audiences of various backgrounds, thereby engendering trust and respect of peers and collaborators.

✓ Outstanding soft-skills allowing for the development and maintenance of professional relationships with key opinion leaders (KOLs) at University A, University B, and Hospital C.

Main Takeaway: Your professional summary should contain 3 clear, concise, and professional bullet points that convince the reader you should be called for an interview.

Write Results-Oriented Bullet Points, Not Descriptions Of Your Job Duties

For a PhD-level industry resume it is not enough to just list the tasks and duties you performed in your previous experiences. Listing the things you did on a day to day basis might show that you have specific technical skills, *but so what? Did performing those tasks actually lead to any sort of accomplishments, any results?*

All employers care about are the results you've achieved. You might be thinking that you haven't achieved any results. That's your imposter syndrome talking. As a PhD, you have achieved lots of results.

Your publications are a result. Your presentations are a result. Attending conferences is a result. Any collaborations that you've set up are a result. Any grants received by your lab is a result. Even if you did not directly write the grant, you can say that part of your work resulted in securing grant funding. Patents are a result. Discoveries in general are a result. Methodologies that you've optimized or innovated are results.

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As a PhD you have achieved many results that were only possible because of your expertise. When writing your resume, highlight the results that are most relevant to the job you want. Also, it is essential that you quantify these results. Use numbers. You could write the number of publications you have, the number of conferences you attended, the dollar amount of funding that your research contributed to etc. Numbers make your results relatable and tangible.

Main Takeaway: In industry, they care a lot about results so your resume must include tangible industry-relevant results.

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Highlight Your Transferable Skills, Not Action Verbs

Whoever has convinced you that you just need a better action verb in order to get hired is wrong. There's no employer being wowed by the use of the word 'maximized' or 'dedicated' in a resume. This is an old misconception. Action words do not make your resume better. It's not how things work anymore, certainly not for PhDs.

Instead, in a PhD-level resume, every bullet point should start with a transferable skill. Transferable skills must be the first part of your bullet point because they are the most important type of skills that employers are looking for. In a survey of the top 500 companies in the world, they found that the most important asset employers look for when hiring people are their transferable skills.

Transferable skills are your non-technical skills, sometimes called your interpersonal skills or soft skills. As a PhD, you clearly have lots of technical skills but employers don't know if you have the transferable skills to work effectively at their company. You need to use your bullet points and your experiences to demonstrate that you do have the

necessary transferable skills. Even your hobbies/awards section should highlight your transferable skills.

Academic PhD Tasks	Industry Transferable Skills
Completing and planning an entire PhD project	Project management
Expert in the use of many different instruments and supplies	Market and product knowledge
Choosing the best product for your experiment based on experience	Commercial acumen
Constantly reading journal articles to make sure you don't get scooped	Knowledge of current industry trends
Managing to stay within the meagre academic budget	Resource management
Collaborating with difficult PIs and colleagues	Conflict resolution
Presenting your work at meetings and conferences	Communication skills

But what are some of the transferable skills that hiring managers are looking for, and how do you demonstrate that you have those skills?

Here are a few examples:

Product and market knowledge. If you're in a lab, you have used instruments and reagents. Companies make those supplies. That means you have product knowledge. You also have market knowledge. You've probably used supplies from more than one company. For example, you might know the advantages an antibody from one company has over the same antibody from another company. That means you understand the competitive marketplace.

As a PhD, you also have commercial acumen. Commercial acumen is just your ability to make decisions based on your product and market

knowledge. Throughout your research, there's no doubt that you chose to use a certain product for a certain experiment based on your experience. That's commercial acumen.

Other transferable skills you would have gained during your PhD experience include: project management, resource management, conflict resolution, problem solving, communication skills, leadership skills, legal and regulatory awareness, client-facing skills, and time management.

Main Takeaway: As a PhD you have many transferable skills, and you must highlight the transferable skills that are relevant to the job you are applying for, at the beginning of each bullet point in your resume.

6

Include Company & Position Specific Keywords

The job posting for a position tells you exactly what an employer wants. They have chosen the words used in the description carefully and they want someone who is capable of doing exactly what is written in the description. In order to demonstrate that you are the ideal candidate, your resume needs to use the exact same words that appear in the job posting.

Using the exact same words that appear in the job posting in your resume is not plagiarism. It's what you should be doing. It's smart!

When you look at a job description you will notice that certain words are used over and over again, those are the keywords. Those are the words you must use in your resume. Those are the words that the employer has put into their Applicant Tracking System (ATS) software. Those words are the characteristics that the hiring manager is looking for in a job candidate. So, as the hiring manager or the ATS skims your resume, they're looking for those exact keywords and phrases. If those keywords don't appear in your resume, you will not get an interview.

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90% Of Fortune 500 Companies Use ATS
— JOBSCAN

80% Of Resumes Are Rejected In Less Than 11 Seconds By ATS
— FINANCIAL POST

To figure out what the keywords for a specific position are, you can read lots of job postings manually, or you can leverage technology. Copy several job postings into a word cloud software program, which you can find for free. Websites like *wordcloud.com,* will allow you to compile several job postings and figure out what words appear most often in these job descriptions.

Let's say one of the keywords you found is, drug discovery, but you have not done drug discovery. *How will you still include this keyword?* By using the word relevant. For example, you may not have done exactly drug discovery, but you might have done related experiments or have a transferable skill that is related to drug discovery. So you can write, I have XYZ experience which is relevant to drug discovery. Now when the ATS software or the hiring manager looks at your resume they're going to see that keyword, and they're going to think great this person has relevant experience. Let's get them on a phone screen or in for an interview.

Main Takeaway: Including the correct keywords is the best way to beat ATS, which will demonstrate that your skillset is aligned with the requirements of the job.

Limit Your Resume To Two Pages Or Less With Lots Of White Space

Many PhDs want to include as much information as possible on their resume. PhDs tend to think, whoever has the most accolades wins, but with resumes this isn't true. Your resume is not the place to list every single thing you have done over your entire career. The goal of your resume is not to squeeze in as much information and experience as possible. This will look messy and no one will read it.

The goal of your resume is to clearly provide the information that will persuade the hiring manager that you should be called for a phone screen or interview. Clarity matters in industry. *Can you choose the most relevant parts of your experience and highlight them in a clear way?* If your resume is clear, concise, and professional then this is exactly what the hiring manager will think of you.

A hiring manager will only spend 5 to 7 seconds reading your resume. In that small amount of time you want the hiring manager to see your most valuable skills. You do not want them to get bogged down reading unimportant information. This is where the white space comes in.

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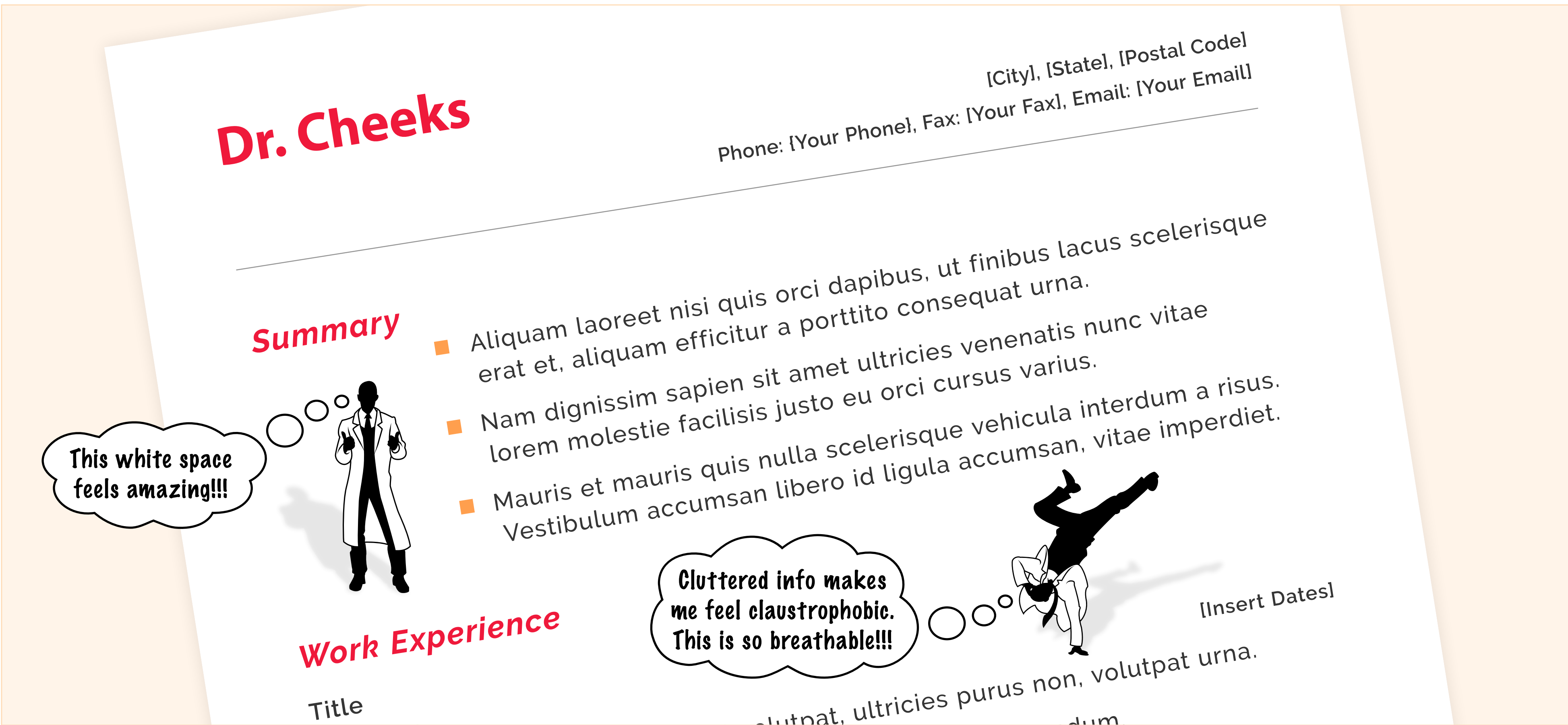
Lots of white space makes your resume look and flow nicely. Your bullet points should be heavily indented and there should be ample space between each section.

The white space leads the hiring manager's eyes to your results-driven bullet points that will convince them you are the right person for the job. Having too much text will prevent easy scanning of your resume and likely result in its dismissal.

A hiring manager reads your resume from top to bottom, not from left to right. This means that the top of your resume is the most important part. This is where the hiring manager will start reading, this area is called your visual center. The top center of your resume is where your professional summary section goes. By reading just these 3 bullet points that highlight your most relevant accomplishments, the hiring manager should be convinced that you are an exceptional job candidate. The next section of your resume should be your work experience, then your education, then technical skills list, then your awards and hobbies.

Main Takeaway: Your resume should be aesthetically pleasing and easy to read with lots of white space. Clarity is more important than fitting in all your accolades.

Sandwich Your Technical Skills Between A Transferable Skill & A Result

There are three parts to every bullet point: transferable skill, technical skill, result. That is the correct formula for your bullet points. Your transferable skill is first because this is most important to hiring managers. Then include a relevant technical skill. This shows that you are capable of doing the job. The last part is the result. Results are the language of industry. Including a quantified result shows that you understand what is important in industry.

Transferable Skill
- Soft Skills
- Interpersonal Skills

Technical Skill
- Use Keywords
- Include Only Relevant Skills

Result
- Quantitative: Use Numbers
- Industry Relevant

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All of the bullet points in your resume should follow this formula. Below are a few examples of how to apply this formula and create excellent bullet points.

1. *Excellent teamwork and collaboration skills demonstrated by managing a multifaceted biochemical research project, resulting in the development of 3 international collaborations and $1.2 million in grant funding.*

2. *High-level strategic planner with experience in analyzing large scientific datasets as demonstrated by the optimization of 5 high-throughput methodologies, resulting in 2 new medical treatments.*

3. *Knowledge of current industry trends and experience clearly communicating complex topics to diverse audiences, as evidenced by 3 award-winning scientific presentations and the publication of a microbiology textbook.*

4. *Strong leadership skills and experience managing research professionals on collaborative projects resulting in 8 publications and $250,000 in lab grant funding.*

5. *Knowledgeable innovator with expertise in bioinformatics and nanotechnology as evidenced by 3 patents, and the recent discovery of 2 new medical treatments involving composite microspheres.*

6. *Excellent relationship builder with advanced skills in biological and chemical systems as demonstrated by the optimization of 9 different nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy methodologies, and the set-up of 5 cross-functional collaborations, which lead to $1.5 million in grant funding.*

Main Takeaway: Each bullet point should start with a transferable skill, followed by a relevant technical skill, and end with a quantifiable result.

9

Highlight Your Publications As A Quantified Result

Do not include a list of your publications in your resume. As a PhD this might seem crazy! Those publications are what you have been working toward your entire research career. You probably feel defined by your publication record. But in industry, these publications matter so much less than in academia. You need to realize that your future employer does not want to see a list of your publications. If you include a list of your publications, you will look like an academic who is not ready to become an industry professional.
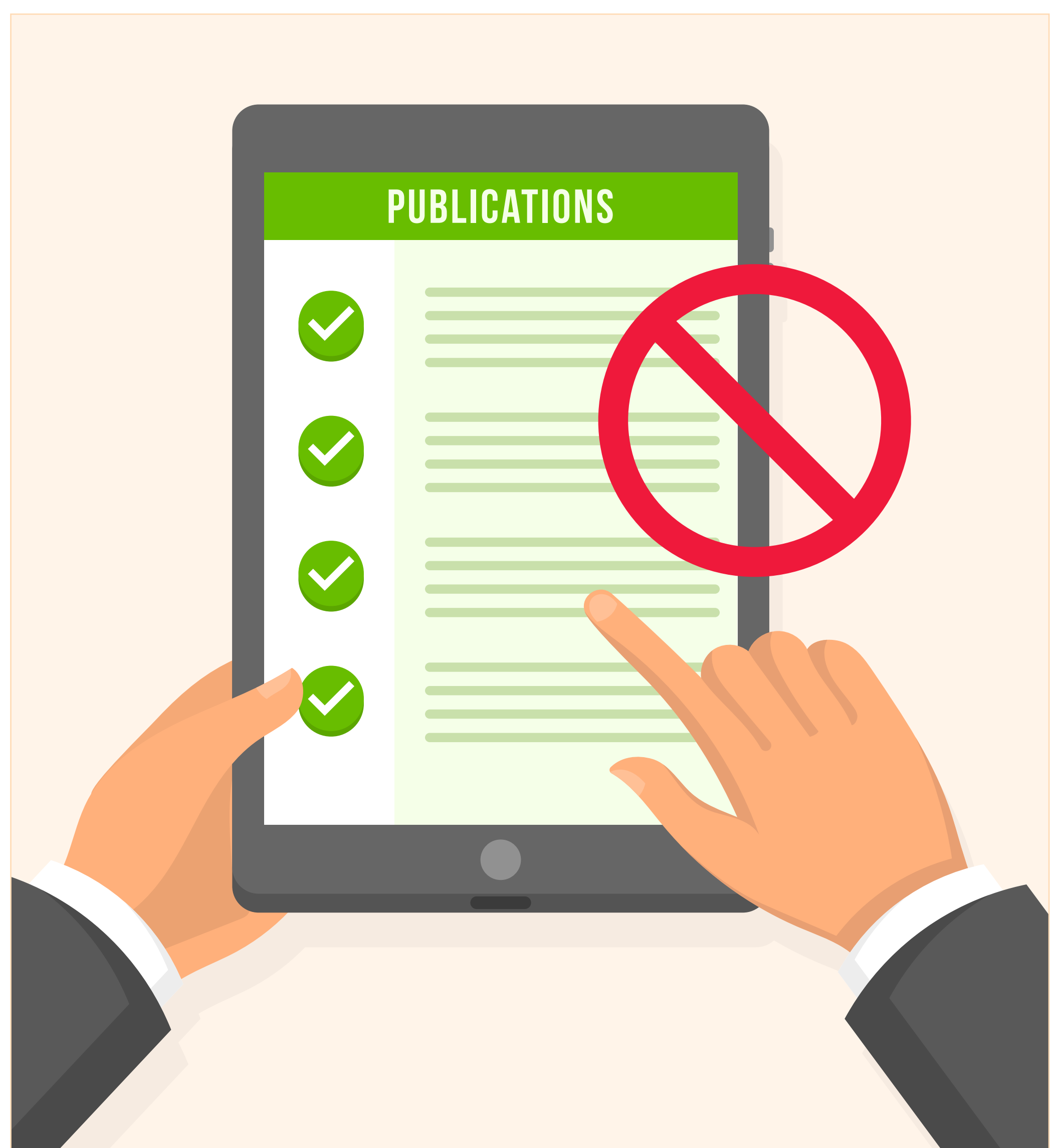
To appear as though you are ready to make the switch to industry, you need to demonstrate that you know what is important in industry — results! You should turn those publications that you are so proud of into a quantified result, and then use that result in the sandwich of your bullet point structure.

For example, let's say you want to highlight project management and a specific technical skill listed in the job description, using your publications as the result. Your bullet point could be: Excellent project manager who facilitated the completion of XYZ project by leading a team of 6 researchers, resulting in publication of the project in XYZ journal.

Always err on the side of being shorter and more succinct because the employer can always ask you for more information. You want to give them a short concise resume that piques their interest. Then, once you have gotten their attention, they might ask you to send a work cited section of your publications. But, initially, do not include a list of your publications.

Main Takeaway: Do not include a list of your publications, hiring managers do not want to read it.

Submit Your Resume Directly To A Person

When you submit your resume you should submit it via a referral. Even if it takes you an extra day or two to get that referral, that's okay. Getting a referral is very important. Without a referral your resume will likely end up lost in the black hole of the online submission portal — never to be seen again.

Resume **Submit**

BLACK HOLE

"80% of resumes are rejected by ATS within seconds."

— FINANCIAL POST

543210

Without a referral, you probably won't get a response because when you upload your resume it goes through Applicant Tracking System (ATS) software. This software reduces your resume down to a single line on a spreadsheet. It ranks your resume based on metrics that the employer sets. But, you have no idea what those metrics are. 80% of resumes are rejected by ATS within seconds.

Including the right keywords in your resume can help you beat the ATS, but it doesn't guarantee that your resume will get a response or get looked at by a human. A referral is the best way to ensure that your resume gets a response and gets looked at by a person, not just a computer.

The ATS might reject your resume for any number of reasons, you might have a gap in your resume or have used the wrong job titles in your work experience. These minor things will remove you from the application process, but if you have a referral you will be able to bypass ATS and increase your chances of getting an interview.
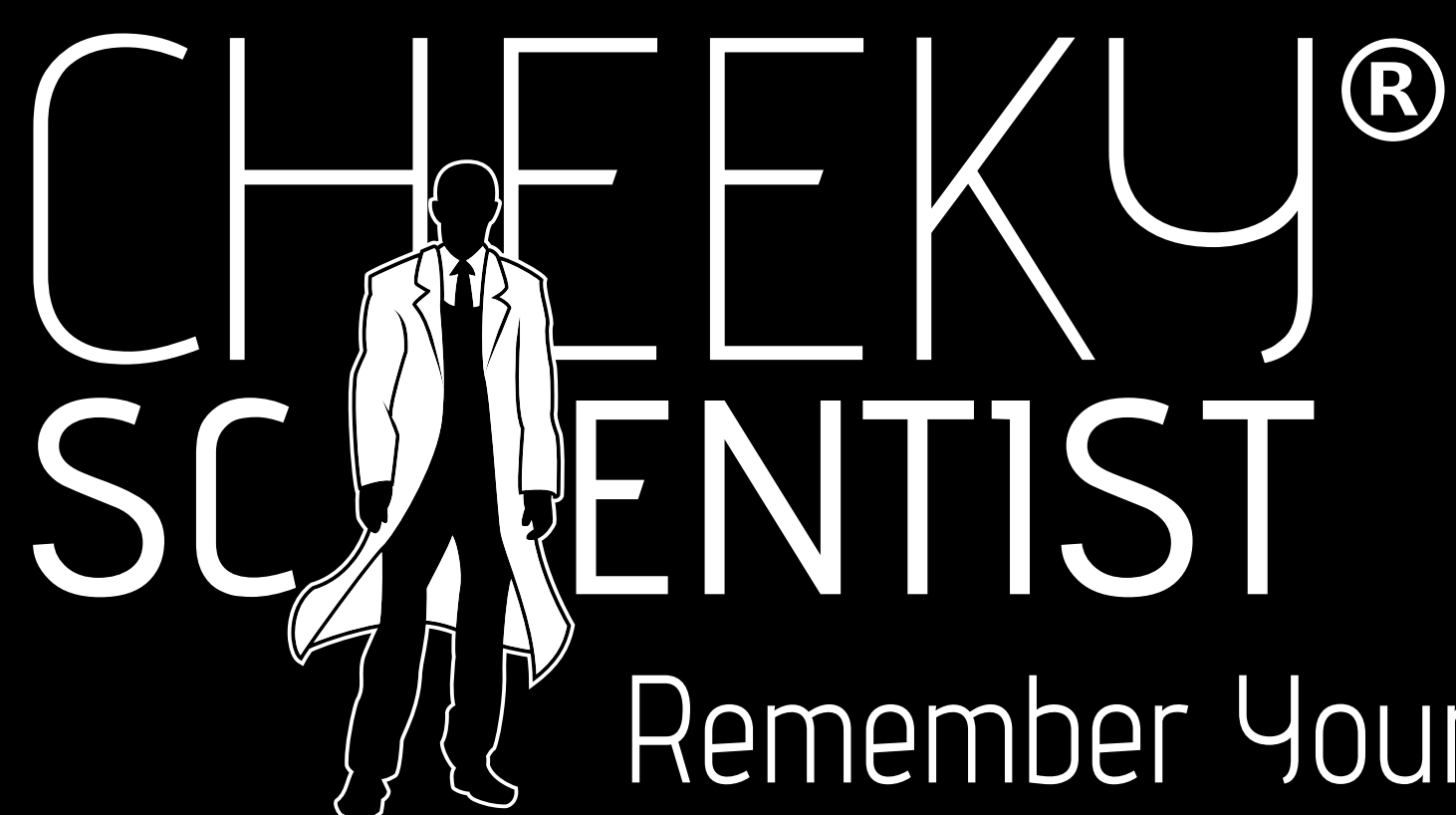
Main Takeaway: Getting a referral gives you a 40% better chance of getting hired (Quartz). It is worth the extra effort to network and secure a referral instead of blindly uploading your resume to job postings.

Stay Cheeky!

To access our free resume template and to learn more about transitioning into industry, go to:

www.**phdsgethired**.com

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Remember Your Value As A PhD™

Isaiah Hankel, PhD

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