

CV OPTIMISATION | VIRTUAL INTERVIEWS | PACKAGE NEGOTIATIONS | FIRST 100 DAYS

# Career Guide

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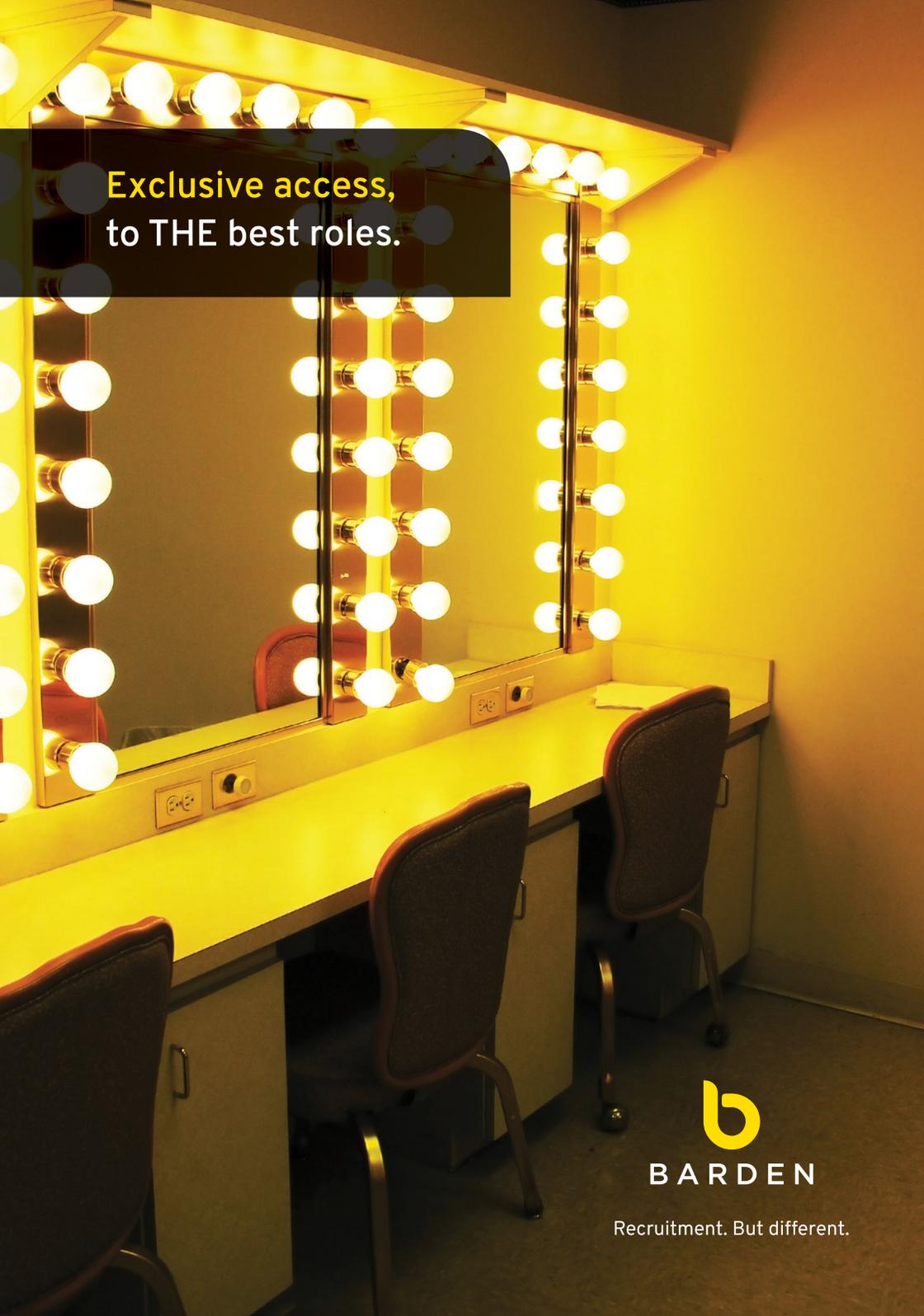
## One of a kind

LEARN HOW TO LEVERAGE YOUR  
UNIQUENESS AND PUT YOUR  
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**WELCOME**

**T**he COVID-19 pandemic is a tragedy in every sense. The death toll, the impact on lives and livelihoods, and the knock-on effects on people's physiological and psychological wellbeing cannot be overstated. But amid the carnage, particular positives are by now well documented – not least the remote working revolution.

It is generally accepted that the desk-bound model for professional work has been proven unnecessary in many instances and that a more flexible model is not only possible but preferable. While most organisations were forced to adapt, some now promote flexibility as a talent attraction and retention tool.

This is the backdrop to 'The Great Resignation', a phenomenon that has seen record numbers of people leave their jobs. And it isn't just Gen Z that is re-evaluating their fawning careers – according to the World Economic Forum, resignation rates are highest among mid-career employees.

So if you find yourself pondering your next move, whether prompted by the pandemic or not, this guide will help you prepare for every stage of your job search. The team of expert authors cover everything from CV optimisation to virtual interviews, all within the context of the new hybrid environment.

I hope you find it helpful, and I wish you good luck as you prepare for your next chapter.

*Liz Riley*  
Acting Editor,  
Accountancy Ireland

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# The changing world of work

**ED HEFFERNAN** OUTLINES THE FIVE MAIN TRENDS IN THE WORLD OF WORK, AND EXPLAINS WHY 2022 MAY BE LESS DISRUPTIVE THAN THE RECENT PAST.



**Ed Heffernan is Managing Partner at Barden.**

It has never been a better time to be a qualified professional. Pent-up demand for talent shows no sign of weakening; employers are increasingly flexible in terms of the background they will consider; hybrid working models look set to stay; and as organisations are getting ambitious about tomorrow again, there is ample opportunity for internal promotion or development in large swathes of the market. The COVID-19 pandemic has catapulted the world of work ten or more years into the future, and it might be one of the few positives we can take from what has been a trying time for so many.

As we look forward to 2022, we expect some trends to continue and others to emerge.

**1 Hybrid working models will become embedded and will be a crucial trading variable in talent attraction and retention.** While some organisations will exist in the extreme (100% work from home or 100% work in the office), most organisations are landing on a 3:2 working model with three days in the office and two days working remotely. New joiners will likely build up to this over time (as there are definite advantages to being in the office more while learning the role). Individuals who have earned the right will likely enjoy even more flexibility with tenure. Companies that vary significantly from this model will find themselves highly uncompetitive in terms of both talent attraction and retention in the future – fact.

**2 Virtual interview processes are here to stay, but in-person interviews are not gone forever.** In 2019, very few companies hired people without a face-to-face meeting. Today, very few companies hire people with a face-to-face meeting. In the coming year, virtual interviews will dominate the early stages of the recruitment process.



In-person meetings will then return for the final stage of the process – for the comfort of both hiring managers and candidates alike. Entirely virtual hiring processes worked fine when people worked full-time from home, but hybrid working will result in a hybrid recruitment process. So don't throw out the office attire just yet!

**3 Salary inflation will become a reality.** When demand exceeds supply, the price of goods inevitably goes in one direction. The same applies to services, and what is work but a service. We currently see some sporadic inflation in areas of high demand (such as newly qualified accountants' base salaries shifting by up to €2,000 on the €55,000



base that held firm over the past five years). It is inevitable that, in 2022, we will see between 5-10% inflation in base salaries in high-demand professions. This is not necessarily good news from a macro perspective, as it will have knock-on consequences for the supply chain and may dampen demand into the second half of 2022. Higher base salaries, however, are inevitable.

**4 The Great Resignation might have a very different meaning in Ireland.** Unlike other countries, we have not witnessed The Great Resignation quite the same way. It could be said that, for many, The Great Resignation has meant a resignation to the fact that people will stick

with their current employers rather than resign. People have working patterns now that could be hard to replicate in a new company. Those who have been looked after by their employers over the past 18 months have a heightened sense of loyalty. People often feel more secure staying in their current role in times of uncertainty, and job security has been identified time and time again as a critical factor for candidates over the past six months. This will not last forever, but it is likely here for the first half of 2022 at the very least. Sometimes, it's better the devil you know...

**5 Notice periods will be extended. Three years ago, a one-month notice period was the norm.**

Sure, there were exceptions where people had to give two or even three months' notice, but they were outliers. These days, one month's notice is the outlier. This is likely driven by several factors: difficulty in hiring, time to set people up remotely, longer induction lead times etc. A significant number of companies have changed their notice periods in reaction to a longer lead time to replace and on-board. Two months' notice is the norm these days, and we expect this trend to become even more evident in 2022. It simply makes sense.

Other things are likely, too. Temporary staff will

become increasingly difficult to source and retain for the contract duration as there's too much competition for permanent roles. Work from home allowances and set-up costs will become a material element of salary packages. Annual leave days will become an increasingly important consideration – the statutory 20 days will not cut it in 2022. Start times and finish times in the working day will become more fluid – we'll see an increase in companies citing "core hours" and allowing flexibility, assuming a contractual number of hours are worked per week. Company and team days will become increasingly frequent as organisations strive to keep people connected, reinforce culture, and share information usually learned at the water cooler. I could go on, but I won't.

In 2022, we expect a little more consistency and less change in the world of work. Existing trends, as outlined, will continue and embed themselves in the system. Other trends will emerge, but they are less likely to be as significant or impactful as the change that has gone before. 2022 will be more about embedding the patterns that have evolved over the past two years and setting a firm foundation for what work will look like long into the future. Probably.



**In the coming year, virtual interviews will dominate the early stages of the recruitment process. In-person meetings will then return for the final stage of the process – for the comfort of both hiring managers and candidates alike.**





**Neil Curran is a corporate trainer and professional improviser specialising in effective teams and authentic communication.**

**T**he afternoon chit-chat over the coffee machine, office gossip over the water fountain, and the race for the last parking space in the morning... it's exciting for many to be returning to the office. However, our return to the office will never be the same as hybrid working emerges as the new normal and we seek to balance flexibility with connectivity.

Here are some tips to help you leverage the new working model to maximise your workplace engagement while achieving your career goals.

### **1 CHECK IN WITH YOUR CAREER PLAN**

With businesses adjusting to the changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, you may not have focused much on your career since March 2020. Or perhaps your manager wasn't 'in the zone' for career conversations, especially if your business was going through change. Re-evaluate whether your goals align with your career aspirations, which may have changed since the onset of the pandemic, and consider



# Master of your own destiny

**NEIL CURRAN** EXPLAINS HOW YOU CAN BALANCE CONNECTIVITY WITH FLEXIBILITY AS EMPLOYERS PLAN AND REFINE THEIR POST-PANDEMIC WORKING MODELS.

whether the steps to success need to change. Now may be a good time to engage with a mentor or coach.

### **2 BE AN EARLY ADAPTOR**

This is a tip that people can and will struggle with, but early adaptors are likely to be the ones that set the scene for the hybrid workplace. So, create the new normal for yourself and reset expectations for your team and manager. We are in new territory, and the workplace is crying out for early adaptors to test what works. This means setting expectations with others as to what your hybrid work style looks like.

Communication is critical. Let your manager, peers and stakeholders know when you will be available in person and the hours you are working where relevant. Don't create a stigma between in-person working and the days you work at home. The pandemic has shown us that people are as productive, if not more productive, when working from home. So, create a perception that homeworking days are regular workdays. Perception is reality in the workplace.

### **3 RELEARN HOW TO SOCIALISE**

It's important to adjust your communication style to reflect

the different demands of the hybrid working environment. Conscious communication, where we communicate with intention, will be a critical skill. Let's break it down into its key components.

**ACTIVE LISTENING**

We are all able to listen, but it doesn't mean we listen all the time. Consider the conditions for effective listening when communicating – not just when you listen, but when you need others to listen too. Consider the appropriate communication method, the time of day, environment, and language to get your message across. If you wait until you are back in the office to communicate important things, you risk selling yourself short.

**BE AWARE OF YOUR LANGUAGE**

With the obstacles hybrid working brings, it's essential to be mindful of how our intention doesn't always align with interpretation by others. Most of us aren't aware of our communication style, but we all have cultural and personality traits that influence the words

we use. For example, auxiliary language (should, would, could, etc.), lack of assertion with saying no or yes, and making assumptions about those we are communicating with can distort intention and interpretation, thus undermining credibility.

**OUT OF SIGHT DOESN'T MEAN OUT OF MIND**

The need for strong relationships will continue in the hybrid model, and we need to balance how we adapt to it. This applies to both formal and informal interactions. In a hybrid workplace, there is a risk that we will keep office communication to a minimum on our homeworking days. This shouldn't be the case. In fact, with expectations that Monday and Friday will become popular days for homeworking, these are prime days for informal and formal communication. Informal communication, such as asking colleagues about their weekend plans, serve relationship maintenance. (Pro tip: when asking a colleague what their weekend plans are, be specific when asking them on Monday how their weekend was. For example, ask, "How was the hike in Glendalough?")

With formal communication, don't restrict scheduling important meetings to office working days only. Get the balance right. Similarly, when it comes to one-to-one meetings with your manager or other key stakeholders, don't cancel meetings if you are homeworking – even if the agenda is light. Checking in with others keeps relationships in check while also presenting an opportunity to catch up on non-essential items.

**4 AUDIT YOUR ADVOCATES AND SUPPORT FRAMEWORK**

As a result of the pandemic, many of us have had infrequent connections with people. Our social capital may have dwindled as a result. Advocates are people who speak highly of you and can be found in your organisation, your sector, and your network. As we move through our careers, we collect advocates who speak positively about us when we are not in the room. It is therefore essential that we audit our advocates to see where improvement is needed.



**“While our working environment has changed dramatically in recent times, the need for connectivity within our teams has not.**

**Whether at the office or at home, the need for constant communication remains. As a candidate, remember to be proactive about communication with your peer group and your manager. Don't be afraid to host informal coffee mornings with other departments – people want a break from their day-to-day.**

David Breen, Head of Finance at Avolon.

**BE THE CHANGE YOU WANT TO SEE**

It will take some time before the pendulum settles in the hybrid working environment, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't be thinking about how our career plan will shape up in the future. Yes, we have extra plates to spin – on top of work/life balance, we have homeworking versus office-based considerations. However, now is the time to shape that engagement while keeping our finger on our career development pulse.



# The 10 rules of personal branding for the hybrid world



**TANA STORANI** EXPLAINS HOW TO BUILD A PANDEMIC-PROOF PERSONAL BRAND THAT WILL BOOST YOUR CAREER AS THE HYBRID WORKING MODEL EMERGES.



**Tana Storani is the Founder of Storani Careers and a former recruiter for LinkedIn and HP. Tana specialises in personal branding, career strategy, and leveraging LinkedIn for professional growth.**

**A** brand is a figurative representation of a product or service. You are also a brand. Your personality, network, communication style, education, know-how, and experience is packaged in a title, such as Chartered Accountant, and sold to the market. Your personal brand is essentially a combination of your image and reputation.

Branding is the management of a company's image and reputation, aiming to make it more desirable and positive in the minds of its customers and the general public. The goal is to differentiate the brand. Similarly, personal branding is the act of developing the strategy and actions to guide and manage your brand to either advance your career or be chosen by potential clients. It is acting and positioning yourself in such a way that your audience clearly understands who you are and what you offer.

To thrive in this new hybrid environment, where virtual is the 'new frontier', it is important to adapt to the new business models and ways of working. To do so successfully, you must strategically develop a hybrid personal branding strategy and project your image and reputation to your target audience to set yourself apart. In other words, you

cannot simply go back to the old way of doing things — the post-pandemic world will be a combination of online and offline, whether you like it or not.

I have helped individuals and companies unlock their full potential through personal branding and professional innovation since 2012. I do this through the ten golden rules of personal branding in a hybrid world, which are:

**1 Create a strategy:** Develop an online and offline personal brand strategy and stick to it. Use the Personal Branding Canvas to develop your personal brand strategy.

**2 Complete your LinkedIn profile and create a personal website:** A personal website and completed LinkedIn is the crux of your personal brand. Your target audience will research you on LinkedIn before deciding to work with, hire, or recommend you, so it's crucial that you do more than the bare minimum. Don't simply complete the core steps in creating your LinkedIn profile or build a basic, bland website. Be compelling.

**3 Gather virtual recommendations:** Saying you achieved phenomenal results in a unique way is one

thing, but having the beneficiary publicly sing your praises is quite another. Word of mouth is always good, and having virtual recommendations on LinkedIn, websites, and internal groups is essential.

**4 Determine your efficient time:** This is the percentage of your time that could be used more productively for tasks other than meeting clients in person. Instead of travelling to visit clients, what if you used part of that time to network or seek new prospects? To determine your percentage of efficient time, identify the number of hours you wished you had available each week to be more productive through tasks other than face-to-face meetings.

**5 Implement criteria to determine what meetings can go virtual:** Look at your agenda for next week and decide what client meetings should go virtual to free up more efficient time for the goal you created. Create defined guidelines. For example, all first meetings with new potential clients

are face-to-face, but if the decision-maker attends via video link, you should too.

**6 Use CRM software:** Humanising your service ensures that all strategies, whether digital or offline, are accurate and achieve the best possible result. Using a CRM system will help you optimise your daily schedule and prioritise tasks, ensuring customers are not ignored and key prospects are contacted on time.

**7 Make contact easier using technology:** In the hybrid world, virtual selling essentially becomes selling. With that in mind, it is important to ensure you have a clear call to action or an easy contact route for your network. For example, use the WhatsApp tab on your website to enable contacts to reach you without thinking twice.

**8 Ask your target audience about their preferences:** If you are an entrepreneur or a member in business, your network likely wants solutions that deliver measurable and valued outcomes online or

offline. So first, understand their expectations, preferences, and current situation. Then, use technology to offer a broad range of virtual options to cater to their needs. That way, you will become known as a solutions-focused Chartered Accountant who is a pleasure to deal with.

**9 Network:** Participate and speak in online and offline events. By networking and building relationships regularly, you're constantly engaging with new people that have the potential to shape your brand by offering new opportunities for personal and professional growth. You can either create your own event to participate in or join an industry event on Eventbrite. Also, develop partnerships that will allow you to host or manage online events where your name will be highly promoted. Whether you're comfortable with it or not, public speaking is a tried and true way to extend your personal brand.

**10 Social media is a MUST:** According to Statista, over 3.6 billion people use social media worldwide. Social media creates excellent opportunities for personal branding efforts, both for personal and corporate purposes. Well-planned brand management on social media creates value for your brand – from creating posts to interacting with followers, it all contributes to a solid social media presence which, in turn, contributes to a solid personal brand.

These ten rules will help you achieve recognition in your career and even greater results in your business, especially in this new hybrid world. Good luck as you prepare for 2022!



**“ Personal branding is what people say about you when you’re not in the room. Now more than ever within our connected and increasingly virtual world, personal branding is a vital element of your career toolkit. It is becoming increasingly difficult to stand out from the crowd as a candidate. However, by being consistent, authentic, and true to yourself, you can get noticed. When it comes to personal branding, don’t be afraid to be proactive, put yourself out there, and use your voice, both virtually and in person. But remember to listen too!**

Elaine Brady, Managing Partner at Barden Leinster.





# How to optimise your CV for AI

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IS COMMONLY USED BY ORGANISATIONS TO FIND THEIR INTERVIEW SHORTLIST. **MIRIAM MAGNER FLYNN** EXPLAINS HOW YOU CAN OPTIMISE YOUR CV SO IT GETS NOTICED BY BOTH THE SOFTWARE AND HIRING MANAGER.



**Miriam Magner Flynn is Managing Director of Career Decisions, an award-winning coaching firm that specialises in career transition coaching, also known as outplacement. Miriam is a leadership, career and change strategy expert who has led some of Ireland's largest career transition and executive coaching programmes.**

**W**hen applying online for a role, your CV will probably be passed through an applicant tracker system (ATS) powered by artificial intelligence (AI),

which will screen suitability and help determine whether you make the interview shortlist.

Even if you 'cleverly' manipulate your CV to 'beat the tracker' and make it to the shortlist, at the end of the day, you will be faced by a human. They will dig deeper into your competencies, achievements, and experience. Therefore, it's important to optimise your CV to make the shortlist rather than attempt to 'beat the tracker', irritating the recruiter and setting you up for disappointment.

The three key considerations when optimising your CV are format, word match and impact. Let's look at each.

## FORMAT

When it comes to formatting, keep it simple. Tables and graphics confuse some trackers and cause sections of your CV to be overlooked. Have a crisp, professional layout that

is easy to read, maximises space and is not cluttered. The optimum length of a CV (a common question asked of our coaches) is one or two pages. Many ATS use signal-to-noise ratio, which means that pertinent information (signal) is weighted against irrelevant information (noise). So, less text can increase your resume's relevance.

## WORD MATCH

It sounds obvious, but take the time to match the exact language of the job description when you are listing your skills, education and experience in your CV. Be sure to include a combination of your technical, industry and people skills, as well. For example:

- **Technical skills include competencies such as project management, data analysis and report writing.** If essential to the role, include

your proficiencies with specific systems and tools.

- **Industry skills** are specific to the function performed within the given industry. For example, in financial services, your function might include taxation. You should list your area of expertise, such as corporation tax, payroll, VAT etc. If yours is a specialised role, like derivatives, list the assets you deal with such as bonds, commodities, currencies, stocks, etc.
- **People skills** cover interpersonal and relationship skills. Be specific. Don't rely on the generic 'communication' skills. Instead, break it down. Consider your true strengths. Match your strengths to those listed as important in the job specification. This also covers relationship building, stakeholder

### Top tips

- Create a 'master' CV that outlines your proudest achievements and includes all of your key skills. When applying for a role, simply tweak your master CV to match the language of the job specification.
- Consider professional help from an expert who can help you shine. At Career Decisions, for example, all career transition coaching programmes include access to the PowerMyCareer career portal. This portal includes tools to analyse your CV, score alignment for specific job postings, and help you optimise your keywords for search engine visibility.



**“ A CV needs to be more than job titles, tasks and academics. Focus on achievements and what particular value you have added to those roles. Use descriptive words that are in the specific job description – change, transformation, leadership, collaboration are examples that always stand out to me. Don't wait for the interview process to show off what you personally delivered to other organisations!**

Louise Tallon, Group Head of Accounting at UDG Healthcare.

engagement and managing/ leading people. If you manage people, do you cover the full gamut of recruiting, hiring, onboarding, developing, mentoring, coaching, reviewing performance, disciplining, downsizing?

Most ATS use frequency as a factor – the more often a skill or keyword appears, the more important it is deemed – and that is reflected in the match rate. However, don't overdo it. Think of the human that will read it later.

It can be helpful to create a 'master' CV which outlines your proudest achievements and includes all your key skills. When applying for a role, simply 'tweak' your master CV to match the language of the job specification.

Finally, ATS will check for occurrences of the job title of which you are applying. If you haven't held that job title previously (chances are you haven't – this may well be why you're applying!), don't pretend you have. Similarly, don't include skills on your CV that you are not sufficiently competent in purely to 'beat the tracker'. Address any gaps in your cover letter or executive summary. These will be passed through the ATS, as well. This is where you can refer

to the exact job title, repeat the key skills that make you a great fit for the role, mention skills you may lack, and explain how you intend to address the shortfall. In this way, the job title and your less competent skills are counted in the word match. You will not only be seen as honest, but you will have presented your willingness to develop.

### IMPACT

AI, as the 'I' suggests, is a lot more intelligent than a simple word count. It tracks impact or 'measured' results. Listing your skills highlights what you can do. Listing your achievements, including the scale of your responsibility and quantifying your results, highlights the impact you've made. For example, if you lead a team, how many people? If you recommended a process improvement, what was the effect? If you influenced a change in strategy, what was the consequence? If there is a tangible result, be proud, own it and include it. To optimise your CV, focus on quantifying (using numbers) and qualifying (using keywords like 'increased', 'reduced', and 'saved') your achievements rather than listing your duties and responsibilities.





# 10 tips for your virtual interview

AFTER NEARLY TWO YEARS, IT CAN STILL BE DIFFICULT TO CONDUCT MEETINGS ONLINE, ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY ARE AS IMPORTANT AS A JOB INTERVIEW. THERE ARE A FEW KEY ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE TO MITIGATE ANY DISASTERS, WRITES **TINA KINIRONS**.



**Tina Kinirons** is a business psychologist and interview coach.

## 1 DRESS AS FOR A FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEW

The usual recommendation for interviews is to dress in formal or business attire. This still applies for online interviews. Yes, the interviewers can only see your head and upper body – but it's still important that you dress

for the job you aspire to. Make sure you are comfortable and confident in what you are wearing.

## 2 KEEP YOUR BACKGROUND UNCLUTTERED

Try to keep the background that is visible on the screen to your interviewers as

neutral and uncluttered as possible ensuring there are no distractions for your interviewers. It's worth checking what's visible on your screen when you are sitting in the place you plan to do your interview. You should avoid a virtual background, as they can look a bit fake and can usually be detected by the human eye. Find a quiet place that has a neutral background instead.

### 3 MAKE SURE YOU ARE WELL LIT

Cameras need good lighting to show you properly on screen. That might mean turning on your lights, opening or closing blinds, or bringing an extra light into the room. You should be prepared for a sunny or dark day. Test your lighting beforehand to make sure you are clearly visible on-screen.

### 4 MAKE SURE YOU CAN BE HEARD

Many of the microphones integrated into devices don't have good enough sound quality for an interview. Test it out to check that you can be heard clearly. A set of headphones can make a big difference to how well the interviewers can hear you, so buy or borrow a set.

### 5 BE AWARE OF YOUR CAMERA

The equivalent to looking an interviewer in the eye is to look at the camera instead of the person on the screen. It's important to keep looking at the camera and at the interviewers, as you can pick up on body language cues from them in the same way you would in a face-to-face interview. Adjust your camera by putting your laptop on a few books or adjust your seat to get the camera in line with



**“Being late really puts you on the back foot in any interview, and the virtual world runs exactly to time. So, dial in early. As well as signalling to the company that you are serious about the role, it will give you space to get settled and iron out any technical issues.**

Marie Joyce, Chief Financial Officer at NTR plc.

your eyes and include your shoulders and a bit of your upper body in the frame.

### 6 ENSURE THERE ARE NO DISTRACTIONS

Think about where you will conduct your interview and how you can make sure there are no distractions and no noise. Consider putting a sign on the door (of the room and house) stating you need quiet, and find a spot that doesn't see any foot traffic while you're at your interview.

### 7 HAVE A GOOD INTERNET CONNECTION

Test Zoom, Teams, WebEx or whatever platform you will use for the interview in the morning before the scheduled time. Is your internet connection usually stable from where you will conduct the interview? If it's not very reliable or fast enough, move. The interviewers need to be able to hear and see you clearly.

### 8 PRACTISE TALKING ONLINE IF INEXPERIENCED

Try out the online environment you will use

for your interview. Get comfortable talking online if you are not already using an online platform for meetings. You need to be focused on the interview questions and your answers, not worrying about the technology and your use of it.

### 9 FAIL TO PREPARE, PREPARE TO FAIL

Planning and practicing apply to all interviews, whether online or not. Plan out your interview examples and decide what best demonstrates which competency. Remind yourself of the details of your examples from your previous work and practice describing them out loud. Don't let the first time you hear yourself speak your answers out loud be at your interview.

### 10 BE EARLY

Same advice as for face-to-face interviews – get there early to avoid any last-minute panics. Logging in before the scheduled time will ensure you can connect to the meeting, there is no issue with your internet connection, and that you have the lighting right.





# Realise your worth

**GINA LONDON** SHARES HER TIPS FOR NEGOTIATING A COMPREHENSIVE AND COMPETITIVE BENEFITS PACKAGE.



**Gina London is CEO of Language of Leadership, LLC. She guides global companies and executives to better connect and engage with their employees, their boards and themselves. Her Fortune 500 clients include Salesforce, Oracle, Google and more. Gina is an Emmy award-winning former CNN anchor and correspondent.**

**Y**ou did it. After how many rounds of interviews and follow-up meetings, you have finally been offered the job. Congratulations! Now all your research, role-play sessions and diligent preparation work is over, it's time to settle into the role.

Wait a minute. What about your salary and benefits package? Have you negotiated that? No? Then there is still much work to be done. If you're one of those people who thinks you should just take whatever is offered, I have good news for you. In today's hybrid, employee-centric marketplace,

employers expect candidates to discuss their salaries and benefits.

## **1 INTRODUCE NEGOTIATIONS WHEN YOU'RE OFFERED THE JOB**

If you feel uncomfortable reading this first tip, you're not alone. While the research I refer to above states that 70% of employers expect to engage in negotiations with their would-be employees, the same research revealed that just over half (55%) of candidates brave the waters to negotiate their packages.

But as someone who coaches and trains business professionals all over the world, let me give you some inspiration as to why you should join the few who decide to take that plunge. When you negotiate your salary, you are demonstrating to your manager that you are confident and comfortable discussing your value and worth. This kind of communication is likely what helped you land the job in the first place, so keep building on this foundation of strength. Your courage to initiate what many consider a difficult conversation is what will set you apart, establish you as a leader and position you for promotion.

Consider, too, the other side of the coin. What happens if you simply accept, without any discussion, whatever salary or benefits package is set before you? You may be considered a follower rather than a leader. Even worse, depending on what you receive, you may be accepting a salary far below the market or your needs. Imagine, for instance, that you accept a wage 10% beneath your desired salary. If you're later provided an average cost of living increase of 4% annually, it will take you more than two years to attain your original desired starting point.

For those reasons and more, the positives of negotiating outweigh the negatives. So, let's explore how to be as successful as possible during this process, even if you don't move the monetary dial as high as you envision.

## **2 UNDERSTAND YOUR VALUE**

The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly impacted the workforce. The International Labor Organisation (ILO) shows that unemployment remains at record-setting levels. This means you are valuable as an employer investment. You have more leverage than

you may realise. Don't forget to factor in your years of experience, level of education, leadership, and other related skills as part of that leverage.

While the pandemic is still affecting the world's economy, it doesn't mean you need to steer clear of discussing your value in the ecosystem of your new company.

The events that shaped our lives during the pandemic, and now beyond, have promoted both employers and employees to examine their career opportunities, culture, values, and lives. What is important to you? You likely want to be in a company that makes a difference. Employers, too, are looking for people who can positively influence their teams. That is a value in itself. Seek to define that.

### 3 DO YOUR RESEARCH

While you're putting a value on your own worth, conduct some research on the value of your potential new employer. Can you determine how badly they were affected during lockdown? Many companies lost revenue. If so, how are they doing today? Other companies continued to chart financial growth during the pandemic. They hired new team members, granted promotions, paid increases, and even provided year-end bonuses.

Try to inform your research with as many sources as possible. Also, consider asking some of these questions as part of your interview. This will set you up nicely for your package negotiation.

### 4 PREPARE AND PRACTICE YOUR NEGOTIATION CONVERSATION

I work with my clients to



**This is not a competition you have to win in one go. Rather, I encourage you to approach this conversation as a means of establishing yourself as an engaged and active employee who is a confident and courageous leader – not only for your teams, but also for yourself.**

understand that even their most seemingly informal, off-hand conversations become a part of their brand. Therefore, please understand that if you ultimately accept your new offer, your negotiation conversation will become a part of your employer's perception of you. Your conversations are not neutral. They are positive or negative. Knowing this, seek to make this conversation a positive one.

Start off with gratitude. Once you've been offered the job, thank your manager, HR professional and whoever else was part of the process. If you are asked what your anticipated salary would be, don't limit yourself to a single number. State a range with a spread of about €10,000. Make sure your bottom range number is something you can realistically live with. Don't low-ball yourself here.

### 5 SUMMARISE YOUR QUALIFICATIONS

Remember how I suggested you understand your value? Well, here is where you need to not only understand this, but also be able to articulate it. Write out your points of distinction and rehearse these lines out loud. The more you can be clear and confident

here, the stronger your case will be.

### 6 MAKE SUGGESTIONS BEYOND MONEY

As companies move into the uncharted waters of hybrid working and other new workforce of the future models, here is your opportunity to suggest a range of benefits and ideas beyond the salary range you have already proposed.

Consider discussing a possible signing bonus to compensate for accepting a lower salary than what you suggested. Can you nail down a work from home schedule? Annual leave days? Are there any other perks that your employer can come up with? Ask them for their own creative ideas.

This is not a competition you have to win in one go. Rather, I encourage you to approach this conversation as a means of establishing yourself as an engaged and active employee who is a confident and courageous leader – not only for your teams, but also for yourself. If you keep your composure, you will plant positive conversation and leadership seeds that will grow over time – regardless of whether you land the salary and benefits package of your wildest dreams.





**Anne Phillipson is  
Director of People &  
Change Consulting at  
Grant Thornton.**

**H**ow you exit your company when you have decided to move on to pastures new says an awful lot about who you are. The final weeks (and, in some cases, months) you have in an organisation is the lasting legacy you will leave behind, and so it's important to make a graceful exit.

### YOUR NOTICE PERIOD

The period between handing in your notice and your final day is a chance to ensure that you have done everything you can to tie up loose ends and complete any outstanding projects, so your colleagues left behind don't have to wonder where things stand, and clients aren't wondering why you haven't returned their calls.

Your notice period is also the final opportunity to create the lasting impression your employer has of you, which they will use as the basis for any future references. It could also decide whether the door remains open for your return should you decide that the new opportunity isn't the right move after all.

So, if you want to do everything you can to work your notice period and leave on the best possible terms, here are a few pointers on how to do that well.



# A graceful exit

**ANNE PHILLIPSON** EXPLAINS HOW  
YOU CAN WORK YOUR NOTICE PERIOD  
LIKE THE PRO THAT YOU ARE.

- Don't take your foot off the gas. Continue to be as productive as you always have. Work hard and be diligent for the entire notice period.
- Let people know you are leaving (agree timing with your line manager) and don't bad mouth the company, colleagues, or boss. Focus on the positive reasons for leaving rather than anything you were dissatisfied with in your current role. (You can save that for your exit interview!)
- Agree with your line manager how to handle any outstanding leave – will you take your time off as part of your notice period, or will you get paid for your days as part of your final paycheck? Agreeing this early will help you plan your final weeks.
- Don't feel responsible for other people's reactions to your leaving. Your colleagues may be upset, disappointed, or even try to discourage you. That's more about them than you. Take the fact that they really don't want to lose you as a valued member of the team as a sign of affection, but don't allow them to cast doubt on your decision.
- Make a list of the projects you have been working on, with



notes on its current status, who to call with questions, and any other insights you have which may not appear in a typical file. Make it easy for others to carry on when you are no longer on the team.

- Agree with your line manager who will pick up your work, and then schedule time with those colleagues to have a proper hand-over. Don't leave those meetings until the last week. Ideally, your replacement(s) will have some time to get stuck in while you are still around to answer questions. Sometimes they don't know what they don't know until they actually get started, so allow time for that process.
- If your replacement is in place before you leave, do your best to train them well.
- Express gratitude to all the people who have helped you in the organisation. Say thanks by taking them out for a coffee or lunch to let them know how much you appreciate everything they did for you. Even a thoughtful note can mean a lot. Every organisation has those kind people who look out for others, so don't miss this opportunity to let them know their efforts were appreciated.

By following these suggestions, you should be in a strong position to leave with your head held high and knowing that you have done everything within your power to leave on the best possible terms.

## THE EXIT INTERVIEW

Most organisations will also request an exit interview with Human Resources as one of the final meetings before you go. This is an opportunity to express your reasons for leaving. The information gathered in exit interviews provides valuable information for the organisation. Trends from exit interviews may inform retention strategies, so use this as an opportunity to be honest but respectful in explaining why you decided to look outside the organisation for your next opportunity. Quite often, when people leave, it's more than just pay and benefits that tempted them away. Whatever the reasons are, it's HR's responsibility to report back on the trends they are seeing across a range of exit interviews so that senior management can act on the information.

## KEEP IN TOUCH

Finally, you may wish to send a goodbye note to the team or even the entire company on your last day. This is an opportunity to update colleagues on your new contact details. The relationships we build at work are an important part of who we are – we often spend more time with colleagues than we do with our friends and families – so it's not surprising that many of those relationships transcend the work connection and colleagues become lasting friends.



**“Handing in your notice is rarely a joyous experience. Even if you are thrilled about your next move, it can bring up uncomfortable feelings and emotions that normally arise when you ‘end’ any sort of relationship, professional or personal. You have most likely done well in your current role, enhanced your personal brand, and created and developed excellent relationships with colleagues, among many other things. Avoid jeopardising your hard work by managing your feelings and emotions and continuing to behave like the professional you are. This will help you create a positive and lasting impression you will be proud of.**

Jonathan Olden, Managing Partner at Barden Munster.



# First impressions: what candidates should expect from the onboarding process

THE ONBOARDING PROCESS IS MORE THAN JUST AN OFFICE TOUR AND AN OVERVIEW OF THE EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK, WRITES **DR MARY COLLINS**.



**Dr Mary Collins is Senior Executive Development Specialist at the RCSI Institute of Leadership.**

**T**he first interactions beyond the interview and selection process can have a lasting impact on how a new hire perceives the organisation. A positive onboarding experience can really set one up for a successful career in their new office.

## WHAT IS ONBOARDING?

Onboarding is the process through which new employees are oriented to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and behaviours in order to become effective members of the organisation and in a manner that aids overall retention. The goal of onboarding programmes is to help employees quickly become

acclimatised to their new workplace and bring them 'on board' with regard to company culture, understanding of job function and overall comfort level. It is more than providing basic information for new hires to do their jobs – it is about engaging new hires with the culture of the organisation and supporting them in finding their purpose in their new roles.

## Key onboarding areas

- Overview of processes and how things work
- Individual, ongoing training
- Introduction to key players (who to go to for what)
- Introduction to the company culture
- A team welcome
- Workspace and any technology is ready before employee arrives
- Goals and expectations for the employee's role with defined milestones and success metrics
- Detailed overview of the company and growth opportunities
- A mentor assigned to the new hire

(Source: Career Builder Survey)

## MAKING CONNECTIONS

In an increasingly hybrid world of work, we need to work harder to communicate clearly and make strong connections. Wherever possible, arrange to meet people face-to-face or, if this is not possible, vary the communication channels. A regular phone call can often work as an easy way for people to share and connect rather than just relying on zoom or other visual platforms.

For new employees, onboarding is the ideal time to reach out to key stakeholders in a new organisation, arrange short coffee catch-ups with relevant people to build your understanding of the culture, strategic priorities and importantly to start building a strong network for your future career.

## RELATIONAL VS TRANSACTIONAL ONBOARDING

A recent trend is 'relational' onboarding, which complements the more traditional 'transactional' onboarding. Transactional onboarding is more focused on policies and procedures and getting people skilled-up in relevant regulatory requirements, for example.

Relational onboarding is more about connecting people in the organisation, building their network internally and externally.

Part of this 'relational' focus is gathering feedback from new employees for continuous improvement of the onboarding experience. There tends to be a one-flow system of communication in most organisations. An employee onboarding process should be an iterative learning process that improves over time with experience and feedback. Soliciting feedback at important transition points means you can gauge if you are meeting or exceeding expectations and helps build a meaningful, engaging onboarding process.

## COMMON PITFALLS TO AVOID IN ONBOARDING

While a good onboarding process can create an engaged and connected workforce, there are some pitfalls organisations should be aware of:

- **Treating it as a one-day event.** Onboarding starts when you are contacted to communicate success at interview and continues for at least three months after the new employee joins the organisation.
- **Assuming that onboarding is 'training'.** Effective onboarding is about successfully assimilating the new employee into the culture of the organisation and connecting them with others who can help them adjust to their new role.
- **Believing that new hires cannot add value from the first day.** If the pre-onboarding period is managed well, new hires



**Onboarding is more than providing basic information for new hires to do their jobs – it is about engaging new hires with the culture of the organisation and supporting them in finding their purpose in their new roles.**

can contribute value from their very first day. This is important, especially for professionals who are used to being high performers in their previous roles. Clear communication around performance expectations from the outset will ensure that the new hires know this.

and how they are 'fitting in' and performing. It may be a time when questions emerge related to the role and performance objectives. It may also be a time when new hires have suggestions to improve the overall performance of the business based on what has been observed.

Training and development needs may emerge around this time, as it is usually the half-way point in a six-month probation period. It is worth having a conversation about what support is required and how it will be provided.

## FIRST 100 DAYS

The first three months are critical when you start a new role. By the end of this period, employees should have a good sense of the expectations of the role, the company culture

## First 100 days checklist

Important questions will be asked during the first 100 days of employment.

1. How are you finding your new job?
2. What are you enjoying most about working here?
3. How does the role compare with what you were expecting?
4. Has the learning and development/training you have received to date been helpful? What, if anything, would you add or change?
5. How are you finding the experience of working with your colleagues?
6. Do you have any suggestions for improving the onboarding process?
7. Is anything not working for you?
8. Is anything about your role, the team or company still unclear?
9. How can management help your transition at this point?
10. How do you find the work-life balance?





**Niamh O'Keefe is the author of *Your First 100 Days: How to Make Maximum Impact in your New Role*. Niamh also advises corporate CEOs and senior leaders in London and New York.**

**T**he 'first 100 days' is a very helpful device for defining the beginning phase of your new role. It carves out three to four months as a period of transition, which is useful for giving yourself a chance to land in, listen and learn. It is also the time to set out your strategy and make a positive first impression with your new team, boss, and key stakeholders.

Whether you are new to the role or new to the company, your first 100 days is a new leadership beginning and an opportunity to establish yourself and set the tone for how you plan to lead during the rest of your role tenure. So don't just arrive and get busy with the day-to-day detail. Instead, think more strategically about what you want to achieve and, with that in mind, set out your key priorities for the first 100 days and stick to them.



# Advice for your first 100 days

AUTHOR AND EXECUTIVE ADVISOR  
**NIAMH O'KEEFE** SHARES HER TOP SEVEN  
TIPS TO HELP YOU MAKE A SOLID FIRST  
IMPRESSION IN A NEW ROLE OR COMPANY.

## **1** THINK BIG AND START WITH THE END IN MIND

Set an ambitious role vision for what you want to achieve within three to five years. How will this role matter to your career? What will success look like? What kind of leadership legacy do you want to leave behind? Think about what truly matters to you as a business leader and what you could do in this role to make a difference to your team, organisation, industry, and the world. Your vision is about long-term thinking; it provides context and helps you prioritise

what you need to achieve in the next 12 months and, subsequently, the actions to focus on in your first 100 days.

## **2** STAY FOCUSED ON YOUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

A new role in a new company can feel overwhelming, but don't just get busy doing the doing. Jumping on the day-to-day treadmill of firefighting is too short-term in approach. With your long-term leadership vision in mind, set out your key strategic priorities for the first 12 months and



then align a plan of key desired outcomes to be achieved by the end of your first 100 days. Setting out your key priorities early on and regularly monitoring progress makes you less likely to get derailed by less important day-to-day activities and less important tasks.

**3 DON'T INVITE THE IN-LAWS TO STAY!**  
 Your first 100 days of transition to a new role or new company is not business as usual. No matter how experienced you are, stepping up into a new role is still a heightened stress event. You need to be fit-for-purpose, and you will need to manage your energy levels accordingly for the challenges and intensity of the new learning curve. Adrenalin will compensate for any lack of reserves but don't exacerbate the pressure on you by having the house redecorated or the in-laws over for a visit. Instead, keep a cool, clear head and maintain a calm personal life to support your work efforts.

**4 DON'T BE A HERO, IT'S NOT ALL ABOUT YOU!**  
 On arrival, remember that you are a new leader, or member, of a team. You are not an individual operator, nor superman, nor a lone expert genius. Building or contributing to a high-performing team will be critical to your overall success. Take time in your first 100 days to bond with your colleagues and figure out how to work well together. Be straightforward, friendly, optimistic. Ask for help when you need it. And if you are new to this company, don't annoy people by constantly talking about how great your last company was!

**5 PAY ATTENTION TO CULTURE, POWER, AND POLITICS**  
 In any new culture, always try to figure out who and what matters. Consider how decision-making works. Don't make assumptions or be naïve enough to simply take things at face value. Get advice from seasoned colleagues at the company to better understand how the company's culture works, both above and below the surface. For example, what people say versus what they really mean. Learn to read and decode the organisation's clues to understand the politics of the new organisation so that you can participate more productively.

**6 BE YOUR OWN BEST PR AGENT**  
 Don't expect your work to speak for you. You need to bring people with you on the journey of your first 100 days and communicate your successes to stakeholders along the way. When the first 100 days is complete, share a record of your main achievements. You could make a formal 'End of First 100 Days' presentation to your boss or other key stakeholders. Think of it like showcasing the return on investment on the cost of hiring you and brief people on what is yet to come.

**ASK FOR FEEDBACK, NOT REASSURANCE**  
 After a month or so, seek formal feedback on your performance. If your boss, peers, and key stakeholders say, "You're doing great, just keep going", it may feel encouraging – but please realise that this is not actually feedback. Push for a more constructive response. You will need to know if you are making any unwitting cultural gaffes. You need feedback sooner rather than later on anything that may prevent you from making the right impact or building more productive relationships.

**FINAL WORDS**  
 As this is a new experience, you inevitably won't get everything right. That's okay too. Do your best, learn lessons, and move forward. I wish you every success on your leadership journey.



**You need to be fit-for-purpose, and you will need to manage your energy levels accordingly for the challenges and intensity of the new learning curve.**



# HOW TO future-proof your career

**ADAM LEAHY** EXPLAINS FOUR WAYS IN WHICH  
YOUNG CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS CAN  
FUTURE-PROOF THEIR CAREERS.



**Adam Leahy is Co-Founder of The Finance Tech Forum and Senior Finance Manager at Microsoft Ireland.**

**F**irms have been able to outsource and even automate an increasing number of accounting-related activities over the past decade. When I completed my training contract in 2010, the workload for the newly qualified accountant consisted mainly of these activities. Today, if a candidate wants to enter and prosper in the larger industry firms, they must bring more to the table. So, what does it take for a young Chartered Accountant to stand out today?

**1 Technical knowledge**  
Technical knowledge has been, and will always be, the cornerstone for an accountant. Understanding the standards, how to apply them,

and how changes will affect how a company reports will always be needed.

## **2 Problem-solving, critical, and strategic thinking**

When an accountant can use reason and logic to solve complex problems that positively impact the future of the organisation, they show the ability to think long-term and outside the vacuum of their immediate role.

The common requirement of the future-proofed accountant is sustainable value creation for the business. The larger firms are moving at such a fast pace that if an accountant performs no more today than the same tasks they performed 12 months ago, that accountant is going backwards. A future-proofed accountant

## **4 Influencing and communication skills**

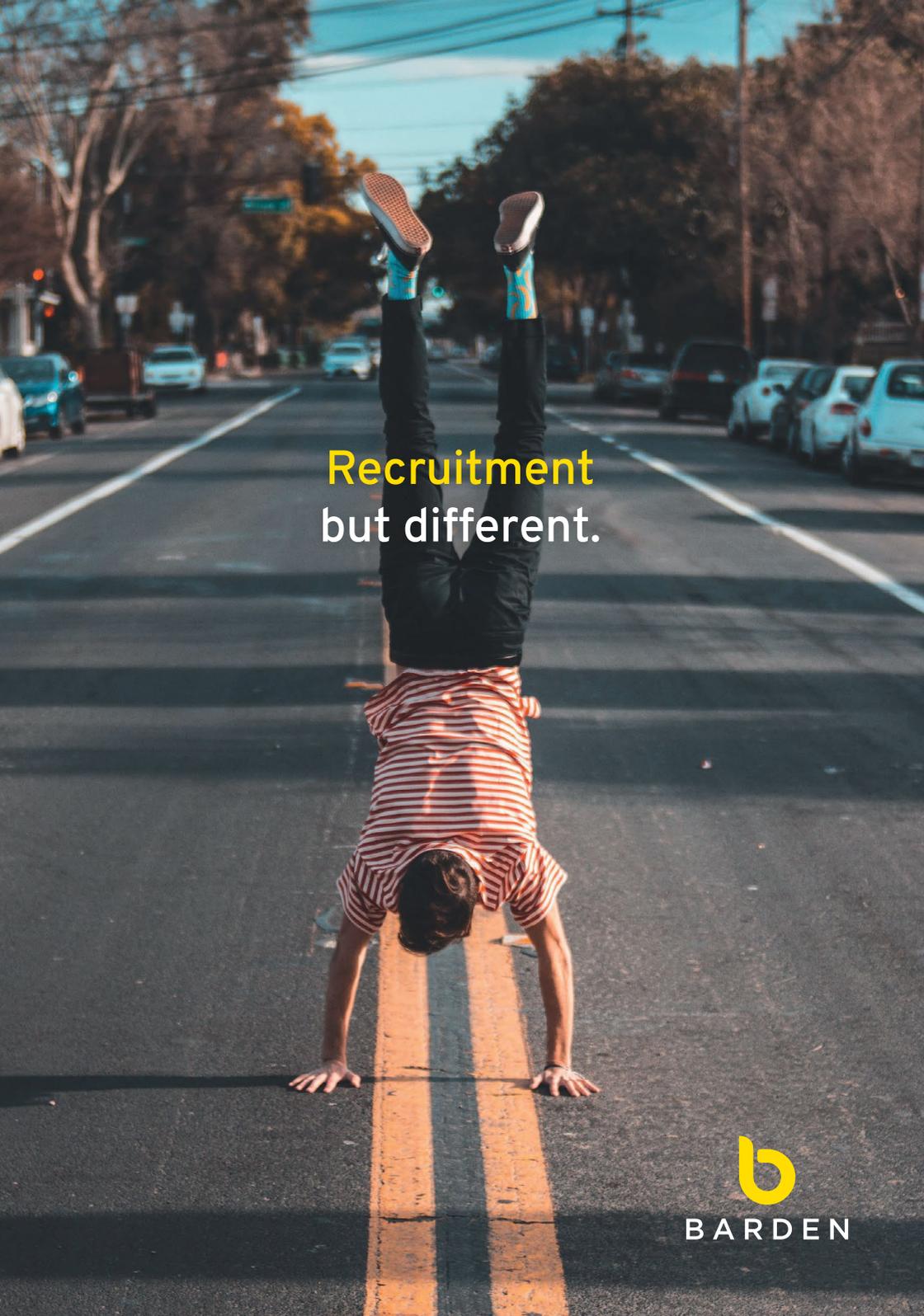
It's refreshing to see more leadership teams ditch the notion of "that's the way we've always done it" to justify their course of action. Instead, successful leadership teams seek ideas from all levels. Suppose a good idea is brought forward by a junior accountant who hasn't been there long enough to get swept up in 'group-think'. In that case, the ability of that accountant to confidently voice the idea and influence upwards could be the reason the idea is adopted. And happily, the junior accountant may also be rewarded or promoted in time.

needs to move forward consistently. To do that, they need to create value.



## **3 Systems thinking**

As we rely on increasingly advanced tools for processing and reporting information, it is not sufficient for an accountant to simply understand which buttons to press. Instead, accountants must understand how these systems work. What are the benefits now, and what are the current limitations? How can these systems be used or enhanced to drive greater efficiency, higher standards of compliance or more useful business insights?

A person is performing a handstand on a city street. They are wearing a red and white striped t-shirt, black pants, and blue socks with white sneakers. The street is paved with asphalt and has a double yellow line in the center. There are cars parked on the sides of the street and trees in the background. The lighting suggests it's late afternoon or early morning.

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