

Tuffias S A N D B E R G

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS (SA)
REGISTERED AUDITORS



YOUR GUIDE TO SUCCESS

Tips, hints, and helpful advice
on starting your professional
career right!

Training | Development | Experience | Opportunities



TRAINING

Benchmark training to achieve your qualifications with the support of a dedicated team.

DEVELOPMENT

Consistently grow your personal and professional skills and never stop learning.

EXPERIENCE

Get hands-on experience to build your confidence and your know-how.

OPPORTUNITIES

Widen your choice of career opportunities with exposure to a diverse range of industries.

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"The first step to success is believing in yourself. I focused on the step in front of me and not the whole staircase. Don't stop until you are proud of yourself."

Deborah Kiregeya
(Audit Manager)

IT STARTS WITH YOUR CV

Applying for your first job can be stressful, and having no work experience can add to that stress. Here are a few tips to help you prepare a good CV and make the right first impression.

FIND A CV TEMPLATE

There are many free CV templates online. Find one that's appropriate for your industry. The best CVs give the right amount of detail without being too long. As you're just starting out, aim to get everything on one page.

ADD A PHOTO

This is the first way your potential employer will see how you present yourself, so make sure it's professional. Smile, be neat, and well-dressed. Nothing too casual, and avoid screenshots from your social media.

THE IMPORTANT STUFF

Include your name, contact telephone number and a direct email address, not someone else's. If you do not have an email, create one on Google or Yahoo. Your contact number should be yours, too. And when your CV is out in the market, ensure you answer the phone professionally.

YOUR PERSONAL STATEMENT

As you have no experience, your personal statement should say who you are and what you are looking for. Include your interests, goals, and what drives you. As well as a sense of who you are - your values and positive personality traits. If you have done volunteer work, include this and say what you enjoyed about the role.

LIST YOUR SKILLS

List the skills you believe you have or have been told you have. If your teachers and friends have mentioned you are a great communicator, include this. It should be things you can use in the role you are applying for. Do you have good planning skills, people skills, administration, technical, writing or other skills?

YOUR EDUCATION

List your education from the most recent; if you are still studying, include this as well. List what you are studying, the year you started/completed the programme or course and what it covers. For Example, BA Degree at UNISA, majoring in Communications and Psychology.

LANGUAGES

Include details on the languages you speak, can write and read. Some people can read or write in a language but are not easily able to speak the language. So state your proficiency in the languages you list.

ADDITIONAL INFO

End your CV with your interests and hobbies. This is where you would list any organisations you belong to, and any positions you hold, like, SPCA Volunteer, member of Rotary International, President of the chess club etc. This information will give your future employer additional insight into who you are.

CHECK, AND CHECK AGAIN

Now that you have created a professional CV, double-check your grammar and spelling. A spelling mistake or typo might be the difference between getting an interview or not. Print out a copy on clean paper for your records, and save a digital file somewhere that's easy to find - for when you need to update any information.

WATCH YOUR SOCIALS

Be aware of how you come across on social media. Many employers do social media checks on future employees. If you're constantly out partying or using foul language, this can work against you professionally. Create a LinkedIn profile and connect with professionals who know you, and could recommend or endorse your skills.



"I've learned that the journey itself is as important as the destination. Hard work and dedication will lead to a fulfilling career with a view worth savouring."

Estefan Theron
(Senior Audit Trainee)

NAILING THE INTERVIEW

It's all about preparation. The better you prepare, the more confident you will feel in your interview, and the better overall impression you will make. Here are some tips to help you.

DO YOUR RESEARCH

What does the company do? Go onto their website and learn about who they are, what they do, and what they say about themselves. Have they been involved in any positive news stories? If yes, bring this up. It will show that you have done your homework.

THEIR VISION & VALUES

Understanding the vision of the company will give you an idea of where they see themselves going. What do they value? Excellence? Personal service? Innovation? Their people? What resonates more with you? Does it align with your personal values?

UNDERSTAND THE CULTURE

If you are interviewing at a formal company, you will need to mirror this in your appearance. At a less formal company, you might have a little more freedom. However, always dress smartly and well put together, no matter what. But culture is not only about dress. Also think about your speech, your attitude, and the way you carry yourself.

PREPARE SOME QUESTIONS

Ask relevant questions like: Can you explain some of the day-to-day responsibilities of this job? What are the key skillsets required? How would my performance be measured? Ask questions about pay, leave, and overtime etc at the end if they have not come up already.

CONFIDENCE IS KING (OR QUEEN)

A good first impression is made in seconds. So smile and don't slouch. If shaking hands, give a firm handshake and make good eye contact without overlooking or staring. At reception say who you are and who you are meeting with. You will probably wait in reception until called. If you are nervous, take a few deeps breaths before you walk into the room.



“In life you must set your own goals and ensure you gather all the information, skills, expertise, and the right people needed to achieve them.”

Mpho Sello
(Audit Manager)

ACTIVELY LISTEN

When someone asks you a question, listen to the full question first, take a few seconds to think, and then answer calmly. This will show that you have the ability to listen. If you do not understand what is being asked, ask for clarity in a polite manner. Say: "Just to check that I understand the question correctly.", and then repeat what you heard.

PACE YOURSELF

Don't be in too much of a hurry to speak. And do not cut people off when they are talking. You may think this shows confidence - it does not. It makes you come across as impulsive, and not a good listener. Take a breath before calmly speaking.

KNOW YOUR BOUNDARIES

It's good to be relaxed and friendly in an interview, but over-confidence can come across as arrogance. Know who will be interviewing you ahead of time, and memorise their name/s. Never call people by nicknames. And never use slang or overly casual language. Always be professional.

TIMING IS IMPORTANT

Use your planned questions at the right time. There will be a moment when you will be asked if you have any questions. Ask relevant questions as they come up in the process. But avoid asking lots of questions to try and impress. This can be frustrating for the interviewer.

GOT YOUR DOCUMENTS?

Your interviewer will more than likely have a copy of your CV. However, it is a good idea to take one along. It should be in a professional CV layout, and kept in a neat folder or clean envelope. Pulling out a creased or messy CV in an interview is not a good look.



“Five attempts of ITC didn’t define my limits; they expanded my understanding of perseverance. My journey has been unique, and I wouldn’t trade a single moment.”

Sarah Nortje
(Senior Audit Trainee)

FROM STUDENT TO EMPLOYEE

Making the transition from being a student to the workplace can be quite an adjustment with things like dress code, time management, people skills, and workplace ethics. Here are some differences between student and employee life:

STUDENT

Frequent, quick and concrete feedback (grades)

EMPLOYEE

Infrequent and less precise feedback

STUDENT

Highly structured curriculum with lots of direction

EMPLOYEE

More unstructured, uncertain environment & tasks, often with little direction and oversight

STUDENT

Personally supportive environment

EMPLOYEE

Less personally supportive, more self-reliance required

STUDENT

Flexible schedule

EMPLOYEE

Structured schedule

STUDENT

Personal control over time, classes, interests

EMPLOYEE

Responding to the interests of others and the direction of management

STUDENT

Intellectual challenges

EMPLOYEE

Organisational and people challenges

STUDENT

Choose your performance level (A, B, etc.), reflected in your results

EMPLOYEE

“A” level work required all the time

STUDENT

Create and explore knowledge

EMPLOYEE

Get results with your knowledge

STUDENT

Less initiative required

EMPLOYEE

Lots of initiative required



"While juggling work and studying, what helped me most was creating small, achievable goals every day. It wasn't about perfection, just persistence."

Rocky Govender
(Senior Audit Trainee)

PROFESSIONAL ETIQUETTE

When we talk about work or professional etiquette, what do we mean?

Work etiquette is a code that governs the expectations of social behaviour in a workplace in order to respect time, people, and process within an organisation.

Professional etiquette is an unwritten (sometimes written) code of conduct in the business setting, regarding things like emails, phone calls, business meetings, and general day-to-day interactions among colleagues.

Organisations value people with emotional intelligence, a good work ethic, and a can-do attitude. In a world where many applicants have the same qualifications, your personality and character can be a key differentiator.

HOW TO BE A GREAT EMPLOYEE

It starts with having the right attitude, dressing professionally, and always being on time. But this is just the beginning.

THE CULTURE

Take time to understand the Culture of the company. What do they stand for? Why do they do what they do? What do they look for in employees, partners, and suppliers? How do they see their customers? And how do they value the people in the organisation?

EXPERIENCE STARTS SOMEWHERE

You may have years of study experience, but you lack work experience, so go in with a willingness to listen and learn. And don't be afraid to ask questions. Rather admit you don't know something than pretend you do. You're new. No-one expects you to know everything.

PROVING YOURSELF

Working hard, delivering to your objectives, and meeting your deadlines are your priority. Once this is in place, then learn to find a balance between work and everything else in your life. Hard work and determination are the foundation of your success.

LEARN TO LISTEN

One of the greatest skills you can harness is your ability to listen, before you speak or react. Find a balance between being proactive vs thoughtful and reflective. There is an appropriate time for each approach.

TAKING CRITICISM

You may receive criticism or negative feedback from your colleagues, your superiors, or your customers. Learn to use it constructively. Incorporating feedback, and using it to grow and improve, is an invaluable tool.

COMMUNICATION

You will need to focus on developing your communications skills, which means verbal and non-verbal communication. Know what the appropriate medium is for communication in a particular context. Is it phone calls, email, WhatsApp, or something else?

RESPONDING TO COMMUNICATION

Always respond to communication you receive directly - in emails, phone calls, and messages. Respond within a reasonable timeframe, and don't let people chase you for feedback. Be aware of 'replying all' to large company-wide emails that can clog up in-boxes and cause frustration.

CLARITY

Be clear on what you are trying to say when you communicate. Be polite, but get to the point. Avoid random small talk without being rude. The work is always the priority.

UNDERSTAND THE HIERARCHY

Every organisation is based on hierarchy. You will probably have a head of department or manager that you report to directly. Understand this structure and be aware of undermining your immediate superiors by acting outside of the process.

GET TO KNOW HR

Depending on the company, you might have access to Human Resources (HR) which is usually its own department within an organisation. They are trained to look after the general well-being of employees and can guide you if you feel lost or overwhelmed.

BODY LANGUAGE

Be conscious of your posture, hand gestures, eye contact, and other non-verbal methods of communicating. How you might normally present in a social setting would be different to how you appear at work.

LEARN TO HANDLE REJECTION

You are not always going to get what you want, and unlike when you were a student, you will not necessarily be rewarded for completing your tasks on time. Delivering your work is now a minimum expectation.

LIVE YOUR BRAND

"Love" the company you work for and be proud of what they do and your role in it. You are a representative of that message inside and outside of the business.

PROFESSIONALISM ALWAYS

You may be the life of the party in your social life, but it is important not to overstep boundaries or cross the line between professional and overly familiar behaviour in the workplace.

LIMIT SCREENTIME

You are employed to work and complete tasks allocated to you; this is your number one focus. Respect your organisation and limit your time on private phone calls, dm's and social media in general. An excessive amount of private communication is inappropriate at the office.

MANAGE YOUR TIME

There are many great tools available to help you manage your time and increase your productivity. Use these tools to help you reach your goals and objectives, manage your studies and maintain a good work/life balance.

DRESS FOR SUCCESS

Respect the dress code at the office. Not every company will be highly formal, but always be smart and well-presented, even if you're dressing more casually. Your outer appearance has an impact on your performance and how you are perceived by others.

SAY NO TO GOSSIP

Avoid getting involved in office politics and gossip. Apply the triple filter test. If you can't answer yes to these 3 questions, don't engage in the discussion. Gossiping around the office is the opposite of being professional.

- Is what is being said about someone true?
- Is it kind?
- Does it have or add some value?

STUDYING WHILE WORKING

Working and studying at the same time can be challenging, but there are ways to make the process easier to manage.

REMEMBER YOUR GOALS

When studying while working full-time, you might feel overwhelmed. Always remind yourself of your goals. Your 'why'. Are you trying to build a career to support your family? Is getting a degree your big dream? Do you want to grow professionally? Whatever your 'why', keep it front of mind in challenging times to stay motivated.

LET PEOPLE KNOW

Make everyone (employer, family, and friends) aware that you are studying. This will make it easier to get support. It may also help you structure a more manageable work/study schedule. Employers admire dedication to professional and personal growth, especially if it means that you can add more value to your organisation.

HAVE A STUDY PLAN

Assess your weekly workload and the number of hours you have to study. When is your best study time? Early mornings? After work? Before bed? Consider when your energy levels are at their peak, so you can maximise results for the time you put in.

CHUNK, BLOCK AND TACKLE

Break large sections of work into smaller chunks. Focus on specific topics or tasks, rather than covering everything at once. Allocate 15 min sessions per chunk and tackle the small chunks. Chunking your studies will help fit it into your schedule, so you can study when you have any extra time or random gaps.

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

Look after your body and mind. Get plenty of good sleep, eat good whole foods and avoid processed food or meals high in carbs and sugar - which make you 'crash' after eating. Drink plenty of water and minimise alcohol intake. Create an environment conducive to calm and focus. Take 15 mins out daily to clear your mind; a short walk, meditating or journaling can do wonders.



“There is a certain level of resilience that I have developed after repeating CTA 3 times. I needed to go through that process to become the person I was called to be.”

Tshepiso Lesia
(Senior Audit Trainee)

AVOID DISTRACTIONS

When studying, remove anything that will distract you. Turn off your phone, the TV, and email notifications. When you are ready to start, make sure you have everything you need so you can minimise disruptions and stay focused.

MAKE SENSIBLE SACRIFICES

To successfully work and study full-time, you must make some sacrifices. For example, give up watching TV or time on social media and use quality time with family and friends to help keep you motivated.

STUDY DAYS

Plan strategic study days to help reduce your stress levels before big tests. If you are given study time off from work, actually use it to study. If you cannot get study leave, use your weekends as your strategic study days. Planning at least one strategic study day before a test will help you manage your stress.

FIND A NETWORK

Studying while having a job can feel lonely, especially when you can't really socialise. Find a network of people in the same boat as you; this will help you stay motivated. Start or join a WhatsApp or a social media group for support and study tips.

STAY POSITIVE

Your thoughts become your reality! If you spend your day worrying and convincing yourself that you will never have enough time to study, or will never pass the test, chances are you will be correct. If you believe in yourself, and you're doing the work, you will be unstoppable.

With the right plan, mindset, and work ethic, you can create the future you want.

**Now go out there and do it!
You've got this!**



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