

How to stand out when the credentials are the same

So, you have the right credentials for the job you are seeking, but how do you stand out from the competition when your qualifications and experience are pretty much the same as everyone else's?

We asked Nick Hindhaugh, founding managing director at Six Degrees Executive and Rob Simpson, founding director at Seed Talent to share their best strategies for standing out from the crowd.

Headhunters and recruiters don't want vagueness. They are looking for candidates who can be specific about the type of role they want and clearly articulate what they have to offer to the role and the company.

1. **Think of yourself as a brand and market yourself accordingly.** Hindhaugh says it's helpful to [think of yourself as a brand](#) when preparing for a job interview. By thinking of yourself as a brand, it is easier to be clear on what your value proposition is and then tailor your pitch to your target audience. Your value proposition should include both hard and soft skills.

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Simpson says start honing your communications skills and rehearsing how you will answer behaviour type questions in relation to the role you are applying for. "Candidates who can demonstrate where their experience aligns with the needs of the organisation will have a much better chance of success,?" he says.

2. **Practice the art of story telling.** Hindhaugh says when it comes to choosing between candidates who have the same [qualifications and experience](#), it often comes down to which candidate is better able to illustrate how they will add value.

In [preparation for interviews](#) Hindhaugh encourages candidates to [practice answering questions](#) in a simple 'story telling' format:

- **Situation:** Provide a clear and concise overview of the situation. Where were you working and what was required of you? Try to give recent examples.
- **Process:** Describe the actions and steps you took in response to the situation. Always talk in first person "I did X? in order to achieve "Y?. Writing down some examples in bullet point form may help you prepare for the interview. Always aim to be clear and concise.
- **Outcome:** Describe what happened based on the action/s you took. What did you accomplish? What learnings did you take away? Where relevant try to use figures and values in your examples.

"Candidates who keep their answers simple and can explain examples in a 'story telling' format will definitely stand out," he says.

3. **Stay up-to-date with the latest trends.** Simpson says most employers are looking for a lot more than just qualifications and experience when hiring. "They want to know about a candidate's values, drivers and motivators. Hiring managers will also want to see how interested a candidate is in keeping current with their knowledge and training. This is especially the case within the tech space but also true in other industries.?"

Simpson says successful candidates tend to be very active in their chosen professional communities. "High calibre candidates frequently attend meet-ups and industry events to share their knowledge and learn from the experiences of other skilled professionals.?"

"Read lots, identify experts in your field and make sure you show an interest in what they are doing by following their blogs and making comments on their musings. You will really [stand out in an interview](#) if you can show that you are up-to-date with the latest trends and knowledge in your chosen field," Simpson adds.

4. **Get social.** According to Hindhaugh employers are increasingly relying on employee networks and social media channels, such as [SEEK Profile](#) to find great talent.

There are a number of ways you can build your online presence so you [stand out from the crowd](#) and discover openings before they become known to other job seekers, such as joining a company's Facebook community, creating your own SEEK Profile, and signing up to SEEK and other prospective employers' job alerts.

"It's important to remember many jobs are not advertised, so reach out to people in your own network. If you know people connected to someone, ask for an introduction. You never know who might refer you to their colleague, HR

department, CEO or make a recommendation on your behalf.?