



## Five ways to make yourself more employable in 2021

If you're among those who lost their job or missed out on work opportunities last year due to COVID-19, here's what you can do to improve your employment prospects in 2021.

### 1. EVALUATE YOUR TRANSFERABLE SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

Start by taking stock of what you can offer a new employer. Everyone has useful skills and competencies that can be applied in the world of work, whether it's your computer skills, teamwork or artistic ability.

Once you've got a good grip on your existing skills and competencies, you can start to identify the gaps, and fill them with further training, study, mentoring or work projects.

### 2. RESEARCH NEW INDUSTRIES AND EMPLOYERS

To future-proof your employment prospects, it makes sense to retrain in an area that's actively growing and recruiting. But where to start?

Our ageing population, changes to disability services and the never-ending progress of technology are all making their mark on Australia's job landscape.

According to Job Outlook, the industries expected to grow most strongly in coming years are:

- Healthcare
- Professional, scientific and technical services
- Education and training
- Construction

Retraining in a new profession can involve a significant investment of your time and money, so make sure you research it first to see if it's a good fit. If you can, try to speak to people already working in the industry. Here are some good places to start:

- Reach out to anyone in your wider network who fits the bill and ask for their advice.
- Attend online events and webinars connected with the industry you're researching and speak to the presenters afterwards.
- Contact professional industry bodies and training providers. They may have experts who are happy to chat, or may even hold introductory information evenings.
- Use LinkedIn to find professionals who have the job you're interested in and reach out to them with your questions.

It's also important to find out what kind of study or qualifications are required to get the job you're looking at, as this may influence your decision.

### 3. UPSKILL OR RETRAIN

Once you're armed with a list of your transferable skills, and you know where you want to go next, it's time to fill in any skills, education or training gaps. There are dozens of ways to upskill and they don't all involve formal education. If you're looking to build new skills that will help you get promoted or transition to a related field, you could try:

- Volunteering
- Taking on stretch projects or assignments at work that will help you gain the technical or soft skills you need
- Attending webinars and online events to build the skills and competencies you're missing
- Listening to TED talks and podcasts
- Joining an industry association
- Taking an online short course.

Online short courses are a great way to quickly gain practical skills that can help you land a new job. But with so many online courses to choose from, it can be hard to know where to start.

#### Getting financial support

If you're aged under 24, over 45, or have lost your job due to COVID-19, you could be eligible for government support to retrain. There are several programs running, including Career Transition Assistance, short online courses in high-demand areas and financial assistance for older Australians.

## 4. FIND A CAREER MENTOR

It's much easier to get where you want to go when you have someone more experienced to help guide you. Make it a priority this year to find a career mentor, ideally in a role that you aspire to. Seek out their guidance and ongoing support to help you break into your new field or advance to the next stage of your career.

## 5. NETWORK

Looking for work in a difficult job market like the one we're experiencing requires a more proactive approach, so make your networks count. In a tight job market, word of mouth is often the best way to find a new opening and stand out. You never know where your next opportunity is going to come from.

With the outlook for many industries still uncertain, it makes sense to look for opportunities in high-demand fields.

Showing future employers that you've made good use of your time to upskill, study, or connect with others in your industry could just be the point of difference that gets you your next job.

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