

Dress
Me
Slowly,
I'm
In A
Hurry.

Master The Art Of
First Impressions
To Stand Out In The
Job Hunting Game

Alex Aráez

*There is no point in finding your dream job
if you don't know how to get an interview.*

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I was about to leave his house after spending the afternoon together. We enjoyed a cup of coffee, and we talked about *Breaking Bad*, Christopher Nolan's movies, the brilliant mind of David Cage, the outspoken album *Pop Negro* by El Guincho, and all the other nerdy things we had in common. When I was at the door, he told me he would visit me if one day he could finally get a job and make some money. I asked him how the job search was going, and he told me he had been looking for months, but he hadn't gotten any results.

I was a bit surprised. This guy is one of those born salesmen. He is excellent at articulating thoughts and ideas, he is a good critic, and he is a book-lover and an avid reader. He's got a friendly and approachable personality. How come he was desperately looking for a job for months? He only needed an interview at any company, and most likely they would hire him.

He gave me all sorts of reasons why it wasn't working. Like, most companies were rude and they were not getting back to him, or that he was unlucky because unemployment was high and the competition was fierce. Or that the salaries offered were ridiculous and he didn't want to be a slave for two cents.

I could have wished him good luck and continued with my life, but I felt an intense curiosity about how he presented himself. All the reasons he gave me sounded like external factors he couldn't do anything about. But as there are two sides to every story, I wanted to find out about the effort he was putting in from his side.

"Can I see your résumé?" — That was the question that opened Pandora's box. And this is how it all started for me in this field.

He didn't expect me to ask that question, and he felt a bit nervous about it. Most people don't like to share their résumés, because it makes them feel vulnerable. They see it as a personal and private document only to be shared with companies, which is a bad strategy. A second pair of eyes can help to spot mistakes we can't see ourselves. Although in his case, the reason why he was more nervous than usual

was the fact that — in a way — he already knew I was going to be disappointed.

“Is it that bad?” — he asked.

Even though I consider him to be a talented person, his résumé was probably the worst I have seen in my entire life. It had the same poor structure of the résumé-building course he took decades ago. His picture looked as if he just woke up, wearing an old and cheap t-shirt. He had no description of his optimal job title or the field he could work in. The description of his abilities — the ones I was sure he had — was non-existent. His work experience was reduced to just one line, although he had already worked for many years. His education was mentioned in only two simple lines, when in fact he had a long academic career and had participated in many workshops.

I also asked him what clothes he was thinking of wearing to the interview, should he finally get one. He had nothing decent to wear. He was dressing as if he were 17, when in fact he was 35. He thought it gave him a relaxed image, but instead, it only made him look careless and sloppy.

Maybe the unemployment rate was high at that moment, perhaps some companies were rude, but the reason why he was not succeeding was the lack of insight and effort he put into selling himself.

I took the résumé with me, and we worked on it for almost a week. After rounds of back and forth, digging into his education and work experience, we managed to make a two-page résumé, full of relevant content and oriented to the field in which he wanted to work. I took him to a shop to get him decent clothes that fit his style, and we went to a professional photographer to take new pictures. The change we made in only five days was quite impressive. He felt more positive and looked like a different person.

He was so impressed with the results, and the conviction with which I spoke, that he advised me to change my career. With no apparent

background in the field of recruitment, he said that I should help other people to find jobs, that I had a natural talent and I could do good for many others.

Back then, I had no idea how to make a living out of this, so I started by helping people for free. It is incredible how many people began to ask for help once they knew. Then I realized that there is a global problem with the way people present themselves when looking for a job. I also noticed that the majority of people were making the same mistakes, over and over again. On the other hand, I also felt overwhelmed. My relatively simple suggestions seemed to work for most people, and I got — and still get — many messages and thank you notes, which still feels great.

I feel like I'm waging a little war against unfair work conditions and low salaries. Wherever I go, if the subject comes up, I can't help but offer my tips and suggestions. This sense of conviction began quite early. When I was a teenager, I got traumatized in one of my first jobs. I was ridiculously underpaid, and the managers were cruel and took advantage of employees. The work was awful, the supervisors treated people like rats, and the vibe in the office was one of fear. Even on payday, they made me wait in a room with no chairs until they were ready to tell me that they couldn't give me cash right away. Instead, they gave me a promissory note. I had to wait a month to get that money, which I actually needed right away.

That company and its philosophy of treating people created such a mix of feelings in me —including anger and frustration. Since then, I have tried to help others avoid situations and companies like the one I experienced.

Having a job and a busy life, I didn't have enough time to help everybody, so I started creating an online course and offer my services for a small fee. I also got invited to share my ideas at public events. I made the talks 100% practical for people, hoping to give them as much actionable advice as possible. The first talk — and those that followed — ended up being successful, and the Q&As lasted forever. People were taking

a lot of notes, something I never experienced. Even in the middle of the presentation, during the break, people came to me to tell me what a useful and interesting talk it was. That it was already worthwhile to have come all the way from another city for those first twenty minutes. I was excited. It was my first set of talks on this topic, and the results I got were really positive. With each talk I conducted, I noticed that the same doubts and questions kept coming up. People were struggling with the same issues as the ones when I started. This observation led to some pretty powerful insights about the job market. And those insights inspired me to write this book.

I have put together the answers to most of the practical questions I have been asked, and in general, what everybody struggles with. I have also added a section about branding. That includes personal branding, a topic that is now popular and on-trend, but widely misunderstood. I will present personal branding with a different approach than merely 'stand out for the sake of standing out' or 'pretend to be someone you are not.' I will provide tools that will help you use brand strategy to communicate your values, as great brands do.

I have no degree in recruitment or talent sourcing. I didn't study social sciences or anything related to it. I just studied design and communication, and I specialized in branding. You may wonder: what do branding and job hunting have in common? More than you think.

In this book, I'll share the tips and strategies that worked best for the people I have helped. These insights are the distillation of all the most common problems people encounter, and I offer ways to address them. My theories are all based on common sense, empathy, and what I have learned about branding over the years, working for the big brands like Tommy Hilfiger, Nike, Scotch & Soda, Bloomingdale's, Evian, Mini, Ericsson, Marriott Hotels, Uber, ASICS, etc.

If you want to find out more about me, you can find me on LinkedIn or my website, www.alexaraez.com.

Now it's time to focus on your job search.

You won't find science in this book. Or religion. I am not telling you to follow these tips blindly. You are responsible for deciding what strategy works best for you. I am just sharing what worked for me and what has worked for other people I have helped.

Dress me slowly, I'm in a hurry.

Nowadays, technology is practically flying. Everything happens virtually instantaneously. There are no waiting times in most of the things we do online. We are so used to things going fast, that we assume that everything should work that way, and anything that involves waiting is not an option. See an ad about something you like? Two clicks away, and it will be at your place the same day. Need to talk to someone? Instant messaging anywhere in the world. Is your phone slow? You can buy a new one in a heartbeat. Waiting 10 seconds for a website to load? Not worth your time.

We have gained speed and efficiency in many things, and technology has made our lives more comfortable and more time-efficient. But, as with everything, there is a downside to all this speed: we have become incredibly impatient.

Being impatient, as a general rule, works well for marketing. Companies are making billions, thanks to our constant state of being 'in a hurry.' Brands sell average products we don't need with what they call 'scarcity' or 'sense of urgency' strategies. How many times have you seen: 'limited seats available,' 'only 20 spots left,' 'sale ends in XX hours: XX minutes: XX seconds,' 'Shop Now,' 'Download Now,' etc.?

All the time. It's everywhere you look. And it works. It generates anxiety and makes us think that we could be missing out on something important. It seems like — if we are not fast — we won't get any of all that fantastic stuff.

I work with marketing departments on a regular basis, and this whole fake 'urgency' thing is, to me, at the very top of the bullshit barometer. It is just a strategy to manipulate people psychologically and make them buy something impulsively. Something neither urgent nor necessary.

We are continuously being manipulated to seek instant gratification,

and as a consequence, we are becoming impatient and impulsive. And guess what the biggest enemies of someone looking for a job are?

The fact that you are regularly exposed to instant gratification has a negative effect on your job search. To get interviews and to be able to negotiate appropriately, your best assets are patience and perseverance. Without these, you will either get ignored or you will end up underselling yourself.

Do you get stressed when you see a job opportunity? Do you feel that the speed at which you respond to an email will affect you positively? And overall, do you feel exhausted after you send your applications?

If you answered ‘yes’ to any of these questions, you are probably acting impulsively, and most likely you are trapped in your self-generated urgency.

Perhaps you don’t need to go that fast when sending applications. You don’t have to rush to hit the ‘Apply Now’ button, either. You don’t need to reply to that email immediately. You don’t have to finish your résumé right now, in fear that you will miss some opportunities. Maybe you should not send multiple applications on the same day with the same generic cover letter and résumé for the sake of efficiency, etc. Any time you feel this sense of urgency again, either looking for a job or buying a pair of shoes, remember that emergencies are only for doctors.

And don’t worry; you won’t miss out.

Napoleon said once: “Dress me slowly, I am in a hurry.”

There is so much wisdom in that quote. And that’s why it is the title of this book. When we rush, we make mistakes. We miss opportunities. Every job seeker I met, in the talks I gave or through my network, was rushing as if it was a race, sending applications and applying anywhere there was a job opening, while keeping the same résumé they had years ago or using the same cover letter template they found online. The very few who tried to update their résumé didn’t know what they

were doing, and the ones who continually got ignored by companies didn't understand why.

You've probably had experiences like this in the past, or you are having them right now. At the same time, you know you are good enough and that you could even be the perfect candidate. You know you will work your ass off. You believe in yourself and your capabilities, and the company won't regret hiring you. But what's the point of believing all that, when you don't even know how to get the job in the first place?

You need to put a stop to that sense of urgency, take a step back and fix the things you are doing wrong.

In the next chapters, we will define the most relevant details to create a compelling profile: one that works and gets you interviews. We will create a cover letter structure that will help you apply smarter and faster to any job opening. And ultimately, we will address how to openly apply to new companies with no job openings, how to handle interviews and how to negotiate your salary with conviction.

I have condensed all the chapters to a minimum length, to keep it all on point and to use your precious time wisely.

Let's get started.

APPLY

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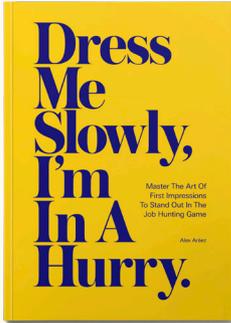
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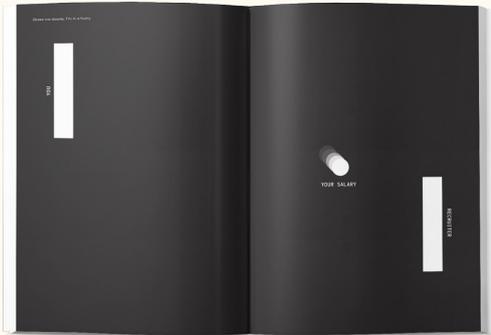
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