# The NextRoll Career Resources Guide

Introduction

NextRoll's Talent Acquisition team has put together a playbook to help you in your job search. Using our perspective and experiences as Talent Acquisition experts and hands on Recruiters, we compiled step by step actions and tools to help you find and land your next opportunity. We focused on three areas where we felt we could make the biggest impact.

The first area gives you insight into how to best look for a job (sourcing) and who and what tools you should incorporate into your search.

Next, we focus on how to build your brand (getting a recruiter's attention). We share best practices for developing your resume and LinkedIn profile.
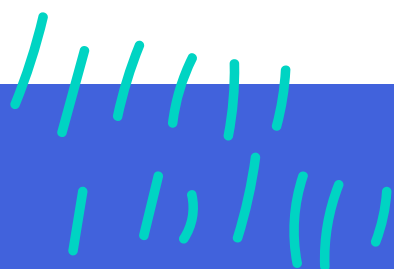
Lastly, using NextRoll's approach to interviewing, we guide you through the interview process and how to provide strong answers for those interview questions.

We hope you are able to take away some nuggets of information that will help you in your search!

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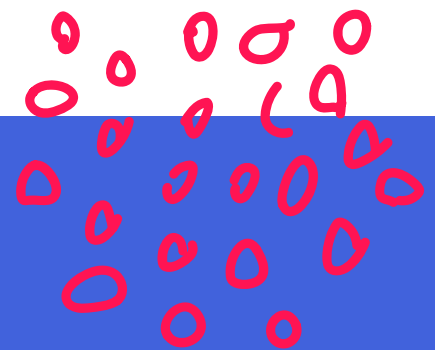
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I. Sourcing for a Job

Finding a job that is suitable for you sounds easy in theory. As seasoned recruiters in tech, we've seen common mishaps that job seekers make when sourcing for a job. In this section, you'll learn about tips on how to network and source for a job using the right platforms.

Network

Your network is the fundamental way you can get into the door before all else. This is your biggest job platform of all.

- Your network are folks who have a working relationship with you, or someone you know, and who will advocate for you when you aren't in the room.

- Your network are folks you know who can refer you to jobs at their company. From a recruiter's perspective, referrals have a higher chance of going to offer with the company. So, recruiters place heavy emphasis on anyone who comes into the door as a referral. Some organizations even have a best practice of getting back to referrals within 3 days because they understand the importance of the referral process.

- Your network could be folks who don't know you yet but you've gone out of your way to make the connection. This can be folks you reach out to who share similar interests to you or even the hiring manager / recruiter for the role you are applying to.

Your network is a sea of people who will very likely want to help you. Whether it's sending an email with your resume attached or sending an individual text message....make sure you tap into your network before all else! Use platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook, or even email to create awareness to folks that you are looking for new job opportunities. To find your network on LinkedIn, here are some tips.

Job Platforms

Once you've exhausted your networking opportunities, you can start sourcing for jobs on various job platforms.

"Big hitters" are what we call platforms that MOST employers are likely to post on. Examples include: Indeed, Glassdoor, LinkedIn, ZipRecruiter, Facebook/LinkedIn Groups, AngelList, FlexJobs, GetWork, and Ladders.

- Indeed, Glassdoor, and ZipRecruiter integrate with most applicant tracking systems (systems recruiting teams use to track candidate progress) so that means that a majority of jobs are posted on these platforms because it's automated whenever a company posts a job.

- On LinkedIn, you can search for jobs right from the navigation bar. LinkedIn is very popular for job searches.

- AngelList is a platform that a lot of tech start-ups use. If you are looking to work at a smaller company, this platform could prove to be quite interesting.

- FlexJobs is job search platform focused on finding remote and flexible job opportunities.

- Facebook and LinkedIn Groups have groups you can join based on skill sets or backgrounds. For example, Facebook has a group called "Jobs for Recruiters" that have TA-related opportunities. It's worth searching for similar groups that align to your career interest to source for new opportunities.

"Specialty" platforms are another type of job platform to tap into. These platforms are specific to your demographic OR your functional area of expertise.

- Popular marketing-focused job boards, as an example, include MarketingHire, American Marketing Association, Behance, and for writing jobs, ProBlogger.

- Another example is a platform called Jopwell. Jopwell is a diversity hiring startup that helps companies connect with and recruit Black, Latinx, and Native American candidates for jobs. Jopwell also has a job board where organizations can post jobs. Jopwell also contains candidate profiles, so if you identify as Black, Latinx, or Native American, we recommend signing up.

- BuiltIn is the online community for startups and tech companies where you can find information about company culture and posted jobs.

- One question we've received previously is whether it's advisable to utilize a staffing or recruiting agency and our response is yes! Agency recruiters can be a great resource for helping you locate roles you would not have otherwise known about.

So let's say you found your dream job using the LinkedIn jobs platform. Before applying, always try to find someone in your network who can refer you or connect you to someone who can. This is your best effort to get yourself noticed faster. If you aren't able to get a referral or get connected with someone, then move forward with applying. To find your network on LinkedIn, here are some tips.

As you continue sourcing for your next position, keep track of your progress by using a job search tracker. This will help you stay organized and quickly reference connection you've made and job details during interviews. To keep yourself accountable during the ups and downs, we recommend having a daily goal so you can feel progress during your search.

Quick Tips

In summary, here is a recap of tips to help you on your way to finding the right job match for you.

1. **Reach out to your network via LinkedIn or email.** Ask for a referral instead of applying directly. Find someone you are connected with who works at the company at which you want to apply. To find your network on LinkedIn, here are some tips.

2. **Reach out directly** to recruiters / hiring managers via LinkedIn to express interest.

3. **Don't limit your search to one platform.** Be creative in how you are finding jobs through different platforms, attending virtual meetups, virtual groups via LinkedIn/Facebook. You can even set job alerts on LinkedIn and other platforms so you'll be notified as soon as roles open within the areas in which you specify being interested in.

4. **Keep track of your progress** networking and sourcing for a job using this tracker. Have a daily goal on the number of connections and jobs you want to apply to! Remember, there will always be ups and downs. Things won't always work out, and that is ok! Just keep going and celebrate the small wins.

II. Get A Recruiter's Attention

Getting a recruiter's attention is probably one of the most talked about topics in someone's job search. There's millions of articles out there about hot tips. In this section, we are here to validate and debunk some common philosophies.

Build a Strong LinkedIn Profile

When you're looking for a new opportunity, make sure you're represented well on LinkedIn. This is an important part of getting a recruiter's attention as recruiters can find you via your LinkedIn profile. Even if you do apply to a role directly, interviewers might use your profile to review your experience. It's often referenced alongside your resume during the application/interview process.

Important things to think about are:

1. **Refresh your profile photo.** Your profile shouldn't be unprofessional (a selfie or group shot), but it also doesn't need to be too formal. It could be you at a coffee shop or in front of an interesting (but not distracting) wall. Find a spot with indirect light, have someone take it from you from several feet away.

2. **Boost your profile with recommendations.** When asking someone to write a recommendation, give them guidance on what you'd like it to highlight. (i.e. my ability to build cross functional relationships, the specific cross-functional project I worked on last year, or my ability to learn new technical skills.) You could even write up a draft for them!

3. **Create a catchy headline.** LinkedIn defaults to your current job title. You can change your headline to describe what drives you, a technical skill you possess, a project you ran, or what you're passionate about. For example, some engineering folks use catchy headlines such as "Code Enthusiast" or "Building Things with Code".

4. **Use action words and less pronouns In your "About Me" section.** For example, some of the action words you can use are "Drove adoption", "Owned external communication…", instead of "I was responsible for…" which let us know about your accomplishments instead of your daily duties.

5. **Entice the reader in the "Experience" section** by:

   • Avoiding too much detail and potentially giving them reason for them to rule you out. Think of the experience section as the elevator pitch of your skill set.

- Focus on creating bullet points that show the impact you had to the business' bottom line and stakeholders you worked with. Remember to focus more on your accomplishments vs your daily tasks and duties.

- Use targeted keywords and list all the skills you have. Recruiters will search on the backend, and look for keywords like "Marketo", or "closing", "prospecting", "Javascript", and "stakeholder management" when finding the right profile matches for their jobs. It's important that you build your profile with keywords that define the position for which you are applying.

- Add skills to your profile by taking courses to brush up on or learn new skills . Take this time to broaden your skills and enroll in classes. LinkedIn Learning even has a selection of free classes. This gives you more material to add to your profile. This also creates an opportunity for you to share in your interviews that you used your down time to learn new skills.

- Turn on the "open to work" feature on LinkedIn. Recruiters use this feature a lot to narrow in on talent who are looking and available. This is an extremely valuable tool and will absolutely help direct traffic to your profile.

Build a Strong Resume

A strong resume will help the reader align your skills to the right role. Without intentional thought, you could be missing some great opportunities. Here are some Do's and Don'ts when crafting your resume.

Dos:

- **Do cater your resume to each job you apply for** and speak to your experience that is most relevant to the role. You can do this by bolding keywords and skills that are mentioned in the job description.

- **Do make your resume easy for a recruiter to digest**, quickly, using a traditionally formatted resume. Recruiters only spend an average of 6 seconds reviewing your resume. Avoid the fluff and stick to the impact you've had.

- **Do include information about the company with each past job you list** (industry, product and/or size of company). This will help the recruiter more easily understand your previous environment, especially if they've never heard of the company you've worked at before.

- **Do make it easy for recruiters to find you** by ensuring all your contact information is included, correct, and linked to your resume.

- **Do focus on the impact you've made** and bring in metrics as much as possible. Analytical skills have been on the rise of top skills employers look for in candidates. Quantifying your impact is a sure fire way for a recruiter or hiring manager to recognize strategic and analytical skills. Example: "Increased revenue by 16% through..."

Don'ts:

- **Don't list skills that you don't have.**

- **Don't list Microsoft or Google Suite**, only list highly specific skills/softwares. If you're applying for a job in tech, save the space! It's usually implied that you have this experience.

- **Don't over format your resume.** A busy two-column resume is not recommended as it can become distracting for the reader.

- **Don't forget to check for mistakes**: spelling, formatting, end dates, etc. Attention to detail is important. Have someone else read your resume to double check for errors.

Quick Tips

In summary, here is a recap of tips to help you on your way to getting a recruiter's attention.

1. **Build a strong LinkedIn profile.** This is an important part of getting a recruiter's attention as recruiters can find you via your LinkedIn profile. Even if you do apply to a role directly, interviewers might use your profile to review your experience.

2. **Tailor your resume.** Take the time to tailor your resume. Give each application your best as you only get one shot to impress.

3. **Highlight your impact.** Whether it's in your LinkedIn profile or resume, focus on creating bullet points that show the impact you had to the business' bottom line and stakeholders you worked with.

III. Ace That Interview

The time has come when you actually have a virtual interview. You are excited about the opportunity and want to set yourself up for success. You have received an invitation from the company using a video format you haven't used before. Before the interview, make sure your technology will work without a glitch, minimize distractions, do your research, and prepare questions.

Test your technology.

Start by testing your technology. Most interviews today are conducted via video conferencing. Virtual interviews can be conducted through Google Meets, Zoom, or Microsoft Teams (or others) so make sure your browser is up to date and test your connection ahead of time to get ahead of any potential hiccups. Look at the information sent to you to determine which platform is being used and review their requirements. You can check with these links:

- Google Meets requirements

- Zoom requirements

- Microsoft Teams requirements

Once you have your technology all set up, consider a technology practice run with a friend or family member. We all know that technology can sometimes fail us even when we think it should work. So have a back up plan. You should have a mobile device ready to connect to the virtual interview in case you have computer issue.

Minimize potential distractions.

Okay so now you feel confident about the technology...take a look around the room you will be in during your interview. You should set the scene and minimize distractions.

- Is it a quiet room with optimal lighting? If the space does not have adequate lighting, consider adding an additional light source in front of you - not behind. You want the light to shine on your face!

- Is your background distracting? It would be best to have a blank wall to guarantee you're the focal point of the conversation and not the space behind you. You can also apply video effects (like blurring the background) within the video conferencing tool.

Decide on what to wear.

- You can't go wrong with a solid colored top. Once again, you don't want to distract your interviewer, so avoid wearing big prints or patterns.

- Wear something that will inspire your own confidence, do you have a lucky? Wear it!

- Ask your recruiter for suggestions on common interview attire based on the company culture.

Do your research.

- Take some time to research the company's products and offerings. Explore the company's blogs and be sure to check out its social channel for the latest happenings.

- Study the job description and think of relevant experience for every bullet point (or an example that relates to it.)

- Ask your recruiter for the names of your interviewers and their relationship to the role. Spend time researching them. A google search will do you wonders, you can find any interviews, webinars and past work that will help you better understand their background. Also be sure to check out their LinkedIn profile!

Prepare thoughtful questions.

After doing your research, it's a good idea to have a few questions prepared to ask each interviewer. These should vary depending on who you're speaking with. For example, you may want to ask your recruiter about company culture or benefits offerings and ask the hiring manager more in-depth job related questions. Additional interviewers will be able to give you more specific details in their responses based on their relationships to the position. Remember, it's okay to ask any questions that are important to you.

Think about specific questions for each interviewer that would be relevant to their relationship with the open position. Prep 2-3 Questions for each interviewer. Write them down and ask them during the interview.

Here are some of the common questions we hear in recruiting:

- What are the day-to-day responsibilities of this role?

- What are the top qualities of your strongest employees in this role?

- What is the training and growth opportunity in this role?

- What are the challenges of this role?

- What is the compensation range and benefits for this role?

Think about what parts of a compensation package matter to you.

Is it base salary? Do you value stock options or RSUs? Could full benefits and insurance coverage take the place of some of your base salary? If you can offer these options to your recruiter it helps them to build an attractive compensation package for you at the end stages.

Laws in several states require an employer provides the salary range when posting a job. If you're asked what your salary requirements are, there are a few ways to handle this depending on your comfort level and some other factors (i.e. if you're switching functions or industries and aren't sure what to ask for):

- You can instead ask them what the job is offering - this is one route if you are unsure of the market value of the position.

- You could share what your current compensation is as a means of letting them know why you feel your ask is valid - you are definitely not required to share, and by law they are not allowed to ask in many states.

- You could provide a target base salary OR total compensation range

We know that historically people have not been paid equitably based on gender, ethnicity, background, etc. Several states in the U.S. recognize this and are making strides to overcome this issue. If posting jobs in these states, companies are required to provide salary ranges in their job descriptions. This will help you set you set appropriate expectations.

Bottom line, don't feel pressured to share your range, ask the recruiter for the compensation range for the position. In most cases there's flexibility in the offer. If that offer isn't what you're hoping for, you can ask for what you want.

Understand the different types of interview questions.

Each company has their own methodology for their interview process. Here is some insight to help you prepare for your interviews.

Three are three types of Interview Questions that Interviewers may ask you:

1. **Behavioral:** questions are based on discovering how you acted in specific relevant situations. The logic behind this is; how you behaved in the past will predict how you will behave in the future, i.e., past performance predicts future performance.

2. **Hypothetical:** interviewers puts you in an imaginary and experimental situation and assess how you handle that situation.

3. **Functional/Technical:** showcase your technical skills necessary for the position:

   • **Whiteboarding** (working through a situation real time with the interviewer)

   • **Code challenge** (computer science questions or algorithms)

   • **Code challenge** (reasonable coding problem or Design focused)

   • **Take home project** (an assignment provided by the interviewer with specific deliverables)

Study the job description.

Think of an example of your experience for each bullet point listed in the job description. It's okay not to have an example for each one! Then, write out each example describing the situation, action and outcome that showcases your experience so that it is top of mind when you are interviewing.

- **What was the situation?**

- **What did you do?**

- **What was the outcome?**

** It's advisable to leverage your recruiter and inquire about the types/format of the interview questions. Also ask what each interviewer will focus on so you can best prepare for each conversations. The recruiter is there to be your advocate and should provide as much information as possible. They want you to be successful.

Even if an interviewer asks you a hypothetical question, it makes most sense to answer using experiences from your past to show you have had the experience. The best predictor of future success is past experience.

It is okay to ask clarifying questions to make sure you understand what they are looking for in the question and take a moment to think of an answer.

For Technical Interviews, take the time to practice explaining your approach to problem solving. Actually walk someone through an example of how you developed the code for a sample question.

Here is a great guide for prepping for technical interviews.

Some examples of Behavioral Interview Questions include:

- Can you tell me about a time you learned a new skill? How did you go about learning and developing this skill? *Focus: Learning Style*

- Can you walk me through a time you received constructive feedback from your manager? How did this feedback impact your future work? *Focus: Coachability*

- Can you give me an example of a time you worked on challenging task? How did you go about completing the task? *Focus: Problem Solving*

Let's walk through an example:

Sample Question

"Tell me about a time when you had a conflict with a co-worker?"

Skill we're testing for: **Conflict Resolution**

First: **Explain the Situation**.

Give an example that is relevant to the question. Then, take a moment to set the scene..

"I was working on a project with someone and we had opposing opinions on how to go about completing one of the deliverables while in a larger meeting."

Next: **Share your specific Actions**.

What did you do in that situation? Be specific with the role you played and the actions you took. Were these steps taken independently or collaboratively?

"I" vs "we" - make sure to showcase your successes and state your role in reaching the result

Although it can be uncomfortable to talk in the "I" instead of the "we," it is important to take ownership of what YOU did. They are interested in your skills, not your team's. You can say that you collaborated with people, but it is very important the you make yourself shine and take credit for your successes.

"We tabled our discussion and set a time to speak offline. I then set a meeting and asked for more insight into their reasoning and got a better understanding of where the person was coming from. Then I shared my perspective and we actually ended up having a great discussion and uncovered other options to move forward."

Then: **Showcase the Results.**

What was the impact that you made? How did it help the company? Be sure to be specific. Quantitative or Qualitative answers work depending on your accomplishments.

"The project was a great success, we ended up saving 2 weeks of time and improved the ROI on the project by 10%.

- **NOTE**: If the interviewer has more questions, they will ask probing, "can you tell me more?" or "what did you do then?" or similar questions. That's a sign that you're not giving enough detail, and it's okay to go a bit deeper. Additionally, if you've answered a question and are not sure if it was enough, it's okay to ask "did that answer your question" or to offer "I can go deeper on that if you'd like." Depending on the stage in the interview process and the person with whom your speaking, getting really in depth may or may not make sense, so feel free to clarify if they've gotten what they need from you.

What if I don't have an exact example for what they are asking?

If you haven't had a specific experience from your work life that addresses a behavioral question you've been asked, it's okay. You can give an example from another part of your life that shows you have that competency. Or you could always respond in the hypothetical - i.e. "I haven't experienced that yet in my career, but this if faced with that, I would do x and y with the hopes of achieving z" or ask if they'd be okay if you gave an example from another area of your life

- **NOTE:** Don't worry if you don't have an example for every single question, some questions are weighted differently than others and hiring managers are often looking collectively at your experience and responses.

Quick Tips

1. **Be intentional.** When speaking with a recruiter, be prepared to speak about what is most important to you. Is it team culture? Compensation? Autonomy? Remote? Being targeted in what you want next is a positive sign to many recruiters.

2. **Prepare thoughtful questions.** Ask questions to the interviewers that show you've done research about their company.

3. **Be clear and concise** when answering interview questions by stating the situation, action, and result. Rambling detracts from your qualifications.

4. **Be aware of your body language** and engage in eye contact (even through the camera on your laptop). Here is a great article on the importance of body language.

5. **Take notes** about what you discussed/focused on during the interviews, you will use this information when you write your thank you notes.

What to do after the interview, it's not over till it's over!

Once you have completed your interviews, help seal the deal by doing the following:

1. Reach out to the Recruiting Coordinator and Recruiter to thank them for their help.

2. Write Thank You Notes to each of the Interviewers and mention specifics of your conversation. This is another opportunity to highlight your strengths.

3. Know that the interview process takes time, have patience if you don't hear back right away.

4. Ask your Recruiter when you should follow up if you haven't heard in 7 days.

5. Forward on an interesting article or relevant work to the Hiring Manager.

Key Takeaways:

1. **Do your research on...**

   a. The company and products

   b. Your Interviewers

   c. The key components of the job description

2. **Prepare for the interview by...**

   a. Writing out examples that best relate to the job's key components and provide success metrics.

   b. Answering using relevant examples from your past that relate to what is being asked by stating the Situation, Action, and Result.

   c. Interviewing with confidence and engaging your Interviewers by asking thoughtful questions.

3. **Send thank you notes to the interviewers.**

4. **Take deep breaths and have patience. Interviewing is a marathon, not a sprint.**

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Thank you!

Find more resources here:

- **Rolling On**

- **Job Search Tracker**

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