

Setpoint**HQ**

REJECTED
BY SOFTWARE
IN 0.3 SECONDS

FOR SCHOOL LEAVERS & GRADUATES

Nobody reads CVs any more. **10 ways** **to get hired** **anyway.**

A plain-English playbook for the toughest
youth jobs market in years. From twenty years
of recruitment marketing.

SWIPE →

First, understand the game.

Everyone now has the same AI tools, so the tools are no longer an advantage. When every CV is AI-polished, a polished CV is just the entry fee.

The way to win a game everyone is playing identically is to play it slightly differently.

01

Understand the robot before you try to beat it.

Most employers screen applications with software before a human looks. It matches the words in your CV against the words in the advert. Read the advert like an exam question and use their vocabulary, not yours.

This isn't gaming the system. It's translation.

02

Keep the format boring so the content can be interesting.

Screening software chokes on graphics, columns, text boxes and photos. One clean column, standard headings, Word or simple PDF. Save the creativity for what the CV says.

A beautiful CV that can't be parsed is a love letter posted without an address.

03

Write the CV around evidence, not adjectives.

"Hard-working team player" is a claim anyone can make. "Ran the till on Saturdays for two years and trained three new starters" is evidence, and evidence is scarce. Numbers beat abstractions every time.

How many, how much, how often, how long.

04

Use AI to prepare, not to apply.

The more applications AI writes for you, the more you sound like everyone else, because everyone else is using the same AI. Use it to research, rehearse and critique. Then write the final words yourself.

Recruiters can smell an unedited AI cover letter at forty paces.

05

Apply like a sniper, not a shotgun.

Fifty tailored applications beat five hundred identical ones. Pick the roles you actually want, spend an hour on each, and mention something specific that proves a human was involved.

| Specificity is the cheapest way to be rare.

06

Do the things that don't scale.

Everyone applies online, so that's where all the competition is. Almost nobody phones first, turns up to an open day, or sends a follow-up note. These things feel awkward, which is exactly why they work.

In a world of infinite identical applications, mild inconvenience is a signal of sincerity.

07

Build proof of work, not just a list of wants.

Want a job in marketing? Market something and write about what happened. Want to code? Put something on GitHub. A visible, finished thing puts you ahead of the many who merely want.

Employers hire evidence of appetite.

08

Tidy up what the internet says about you.

Every serious employer will look you up, and the AI screener may get there first. Sort your LinkedIn, lock down what needs locking down, then post occasionally about what you're learning.

It quietly answers the only question that matters: are you interested in the thing, or just in a salary?

09

Apprenticeships are routes, not consolation prizes.

The perfect role is oversubscribed precisely because everyone agrees it's perfect. The adjacent role, the smaller firm, the apprenticeship: that's where the queue is short and the learning is fast.

Careers are made by trajectories, not starting points.

10

Persist on purpose.

Rejection is the default output of the machine, not a verdict on you. The people who get hired are the ones still applying, still improving, still following up when the equally talented have given up.

Stamina is the most underrated qualification in Britain.

Know a young person job hunting right now? **Send them this.**

The full plain-English guide, including how the interview really works and what employers are actually assessing, is on the blog.

READ THE FULL GUIDE