# 2023 TECH JOB SEARCH GUIDE

This guide was created to help tech job seekers during their search. It includes everything from technical resume tips, working with recruiters, building your personal online brand, interview tips, red flags to look for, how to prep your references, crafting a thank you note, and how to evaluate multiple job offers. This resource is meant to be used as a job seekers guide to finding a job, from start to finish.

UPDATE YOUR RESUME

Tips for Building Your Tech Resume

Starting off your job search, it's important to take a look at your resume. Your resume is the first impression hiring managers will receive about you. If your resume isn't concise regarding who you are, what you do, what tech projects you have completed and skillsets you provide, it will unfortunately be their last impression. A well-formatted resume with the right amount of detail can be the ticket to scoring an interview, so it's important to take your time and get it right. Here are a few tips the Planet Technology team suggests following when updating your resume:

PROVIDE A GOOD SUMMARY
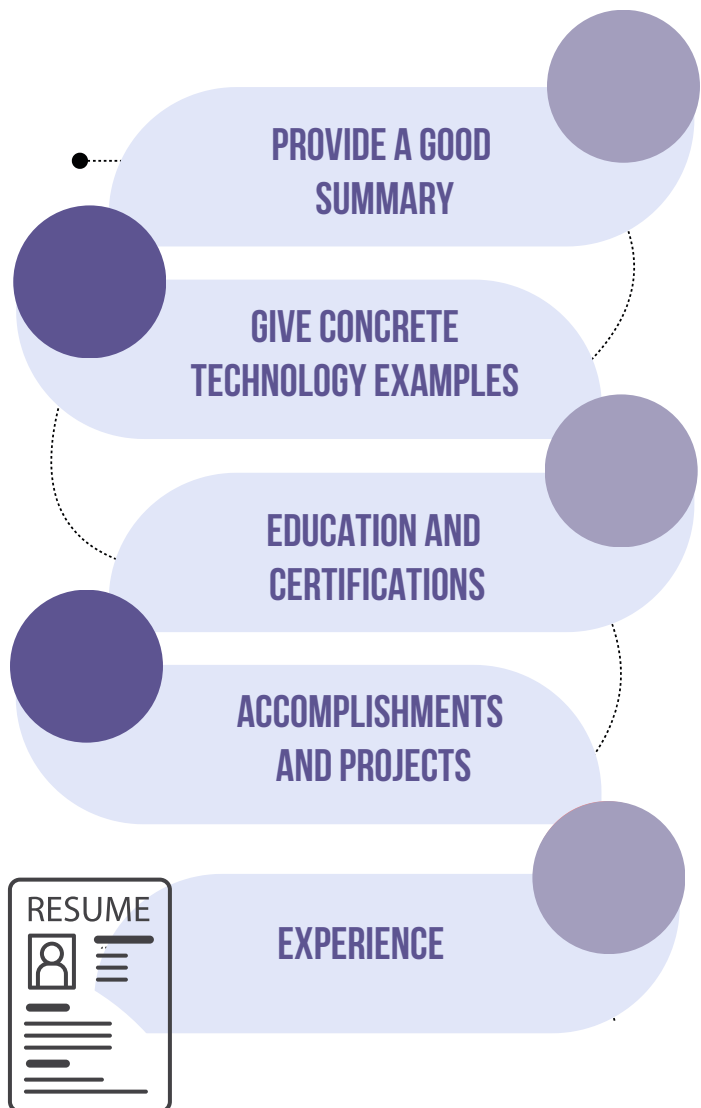
You'll want to use this space wisely; include highlights of relevant experience rather than soft skills. EX: years of experience in specific programming languages.

GIVE CONCRETE TECHNOLOGY EXAMPLES

Here you provide concrete examples for your skills and list technology experience. The list you'll include depends on how technical you are, and you should only include those you're comfortable using.

EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATIONS

A lot of companies prefer to see formal degrees, including anything from Associate's degrees up to Master's and PhDs. This is true even for highly technical roles like developers. This section is also where you'd include certifications and boot camps.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PROJECTS

This section is the highlights reel of the work you've done. Successful migrations, implementations, upgrades, and deliverables.

EXPERIENCE

The last, and longest, section of your technical resume will be your experience. Pay close attention to formatting here; you'll want it to be easy for the hiring manager to skim.

BUILD YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE

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Why an online presence?

You may be thinking, "Why do I need to do this? My resume and accomplishments speak for themselves." Well, yes and no. While it's important to update your tech resume, recruiters go looking for talent online on job boards and tech sites, especially in a tight marketplace when good resumes aren't flowing in. If you don't have a social presence, you're making it harder for staffing firms like Planet Technology to find you.

How to Engage Online

Let's say that you're a software engineer with a passion for clean energy. Let that come through in your online presence. Find interesting posts on LinkedIn on sustainability and repost them with your comments. Link to interesting articles. Join professional groups that reflect your passion. Get involved in discussions around this topic and follow companies and people who are leaders in that area. Increase your connections and build your network. Anything that gets you more active will get you more visibility.

Get on the Job Boards

If you're posting your resume on a job board, make yourself as accessible as possible by filling out all fields. Don't be afraid to target the type of job you want. When you apply for an opening, highlight the content in your job history that matches key words in the description. Search tools are run by AI algorithms that can find you if you're doing the right things. So, if you are reviewing specific job postings, you may start seeing similar jobs forwarded to you. Even perusing job openings will drive traffic to your profile.

Be Who You Are

Above all, don't be afraid to be who you are. Sharing your passion helps employers who share the same passion find you. Focus on building an authentic online presence and be proactive in your job search. Getting yourself out there is the key.

Agency and Candidate Relationships

Our recruiters at Planet Technology are committed to making lasting matches between job seekers and companies, as well as building lasting relationships with our clients and candidates. When working with tech job seekers, the process can be complex and requires exceptional clarity with expectation setting, and follow-through. Sometimes when candidates are first working with recruiters, they may not understand the ways to make the relationship successful or things that can get in the way of their next career move.

It's all about relationships when it comes to candidates and recruiters – mutual respect, honesty and transparency.

When a recruiter says they aren't the right resource for you, it doesn't mean you're "un-hirable."

This is a very common misconception and it leads to frustration for the job seeker and even negativity toward recruiters. Although we would love to help everyone, for many reasons, we can't.

Most recruiters specialize in specific areas or domains. They establish an expertise and strong network in this area, and their knowledge and experience make them an invaluable asset to their clients. No matter how strong a candidate is in her field, if her background, technical skills, or projects doesn't align with our expertise, they are likely not going to be able to help you. That does not make you "un-hirable." It means you need to find an agency that aligns with your experience.

We want to find a way to help you

Recruiters definitely want to find a way to place you – this is a big part of our job! Anything we can do to help you be more marketable to our clients is in your best interest and ours. So when a recruiter delivers the "bad news," remember that it's bad news for us, too.

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Agency the F-Word

Feedback is a hot topic for recruiters. There is no such thing as too much feedback. The more feedback we have, the better we can do our job and the more efficient we can be in making the right placements.

So, when a recruiter says you are not moving forward in the process but doesn't have specifics as to why, it's more than likely they did whatever they could to get information – not only for your knowledge, but to help us figure out how to find a more suitable fit for you and for the job we're filling.

We don't have anything for you right now.

While many companies prefer to partner with an agency when it comes to hiring, recruiters don't get access to every open job. We also don't have control over when positions become available and what types of roles open up. Your background may line up well with the kinds of roles we regularly recruit for, for example: different ERP System, Software's, or Cloud technologies, but timing is everything.

You can rest assured that as soon as something comes in that is a fit, we are going to get in touch with you.

We are in it for the long haul!

Recruiters at Planet Technology may appear to be primarily focused on the jobs they have open today, but rest assured we are thinking long term! Relationships are the number one thing this business is about. Building strong relationships with clients and candidates is the key to longevity. Every good recruiter strives to build and preserve a strong and diverse network. Take the time to tell them what your dream job is. Keep in touch with them. Connect with them on LinkedIn. Keep them up to date with any changes in your profile. When the right opportunity comes across their desk, the first place they will look is their network.

INTERVIEW TIPS FOR SUCCESS

After sending out what seems like countless resumes, you finally got a call for a job interview. Securing an interview is great (congratulations!); you've wowed your potential employer on paper, and now you have to wow them in person. Here are 7 tips to set you apart!

Preparation is key!

Research the industry, the background of the person who is interviewing you, review the job description so you can speak to your technical skills, and the company as well. If you don't, surveys suggest that 47% of hiring managers will count it against you.

Limit Potential Distractions

Leave your devices in the car (including that smart watch) or turn them off. Eliminate the potential for anything to buzz you with notifications to take you mentally away from the interview.

Be Concise (But not Short)

Avoid answering any questions with a simple "yes" or "no" response. Even if it seems elementary to you, a more technical question may not be as simple to a hiring manager with no technical expertise. Highlight your most relevant skills to provide a solution to the problem.

Stay Positive

Your past employment history will come up, and even if you had a negative experience, it's best to refrain from bad-mouthing former bosses or coworkers. We suggest that you share negative lessons you've learned in a tasteful way.

Provide Real-World Examples

Employers want problem solvers, and you have to demonstrate how you're equipped to solve theirs. Using real examples and avoiding generalities improves your credibility. What software projects have you recently completed, did you assist in an ERP implementation, highlight your skills and accomplishments from previous technical positions.

Prepare Questions in Advance

Along with bringing your resume and something to take notes on, you should also have a prepared list of questions to ask the hiring manager. 5 -10 questions shows your interest in the position while still respecting your interviewer's time.

RED FLAGS DURING AN INTERVIEW

During the job search, we know the importance of being well prepared – a crisp resume, on-point interview questions, clothing neatly pressed and a sense of confidence are all necessities. But as a job seeker, in addition to selling yourself, you also need to evaluate the opportunity in front of you. Our recruitment team at Planet Technology has compiled a list of 9 red flags to look for during the interview process.

- THE MANAGER IS NOT PREPARED
- THEY CAN'T SELL YOU ON THE JOB
- POST-INTERVIEW FEEDBACK IS SLOW
- THE INTERVIEW PROCESS IS DISORGANIZED
- THEY CAN'T GIVE YOU A REASON WHY THE LAST PERSON LEFT
- THEY ARE VAGUE ON JOB ENTAILS
- THE COMPANY TRIES TO LOWBALL YOU ON SALARY
- THE COMPANY'S BUSINESS MODEL DOESN'T MAKE SENSE
- THE COMPANY IS SHRINKING IN A GOOD ECONOMY

WHO TO CHOOSE AND HOW TO PREP YOUR REFERENCES

You've worked hard to get to this point. You've updated your resume, gone through the interview process, open your inbox and see that you've made it to the final round interview stage. Hooray! You skim through the recruiter's email, trying to find what you consider the most important information —- scheduling your last interviews.

But you come across something that sparks a little panic. You need to provide several references. Here are a few tips from Planet Technology on how you can prep them, and a few dos and don'ts to read through as well.

Who Should be Your Reference?
The best people to use as references are past managers. Managers have the most credibility and have the ability to tell the reader of the reference what you like to manage. They also have overlooked your work and see how you work with other people.

While you can't guarantee what these references say about you, you can ask them questions when you ask for a reference. Hop on the phone and ask them what they might say about your greatest strengths and weaknesses. Tell your reference about the job and why you feel your skills and experience are the right fit.

3 Things to Provide Your Reference

1. Send them the job description: Your reference should know what job you're applying for. They should review the roles and responsibilities of the new job so they can highlight your technical abilities.
2. Send them your resume: This will help them fill memory gaps and also emphasize specific projects you've completed.

3. Update them on what you've been doing: Use this as an opportunity to share new things you've been working on, tools you've learned, or leadership roles you might've taken on.

Other dos and don'ts
DO ask your references to be honest. As hard as we try, no one is perfect. References can rave about you but ask them not to seem disingenuous. After they talk about your strengths, ask them to present a legitimate weakness. You want someone genuinely excited about the new role you might get and enthusiastic about recommending you to the company you're applying to.

DON'T be guarded with your references. It hurts you. Hiring managers want to speak with references, and not sharing them can seem suspicious.

It's important to make your reference rock-solid. Even if these extra steps seem tedious, they can really make or break your chances of getting hired.

CRAFTING YOUR THANK YOU NOTE

Sending a thank you note after an interview sounds like a good idea until you sit down to write it. What are you supposed to say? Do you send it now or later? Thank you notes set you apart from other candidates and make you memorable. As with most things, you just need a little guidance. Here are several tips and tricks from Planet Technology to ace your next thank you note.

Elements of a Great Thank You Note

An Interview Recap: This does not need to be a play-by-play of the interview. Give a two-sentence debrief of why your technical skills would be a great solution for their project needs. Mention that you're excited about how the role fits into the company's broader mission or bring up the fact that you're thrilled to work on an exciting new product feature.

Reiterate Why Your a Fit: Go back and re-read the job description and the company mission. What did you say in your interview that shows you fit the criteria of an ideal candidate? Explain why your skills, experience, or work ethic resonate with the specific requirements of the role you applied for.

Get Personal: Did you attend the same university or work at the same company? Was there something funny or notable that happened on the call? If you feel you have good rapport with the interviewer, make a reference to the connection.

Add a "Call to Action": At the end of your note, you should have something like "looking forward to hearing next steps" or "looking forward to meeting the rest of the team."

Send Within 24 Hours: Your interviewer, like everyone else, is doing a million things the day of your interview. To stick out in their mind among the sea of tasks, send your note within 24 hours.

Thank You Note Don'ts

Write a Novel: Time is essential so keeping it to the point is necessary.

Template Thank You Notes: Do not plagiarize your thank you note. While we recommend looking at samples for inspiration, your note should be in your own words and personalized for each interaction.

Forget to Proofread: Grammar or spelling mistakes in your thank you note can be a red flag to employers looking for great attention to detail. Beyond the typical spelling and grammar checks, make sure the company name, interviewer name, and role are capitalized and spelled correctly.

HOW TO EVALUATE MULTIPLE OFFERS

If you've ever been in the enviable position of getting multiple job offers, you know it feels like you won the lottery. Who doesn't want to hear that several companies believe in you and want your expertise on their side? Choosing your next adventure is a big deal. Below, Planet Technology's recruitment team outlines some strategies that have enabled our candidates to pick their dream job.

The Job Itself
You should know what your day-to-day might look like when you join. Did they define what success looks like down the line? Do you think one role plays more to your technical strengths? What's on your list that's important to you?

Compensation Package
Just because one company offers you more base pay doesn't mean they gave you a better overall compensation package. You need to consider other factors like the cost of benefits, 401k contributions, stock options, and frame these factors in the context of your unique needs.

Location
With some companies returning to the office full- or part-time, your new job location may be a deal-breaker. Map out the commute and gas you'll need to get there. Are you willing to put in that much money and time?

Do Some Soul Searching
Before you start your job search, figure out what's important to you. Do you like working remotely? How do you want to be challenged? Are you comfortable with ambiguity or do you prefer structure? What is your ideal salary range? Next, think about why you're leaving your current job.

Culture
Culture affects how the entire company behaves and conducts business. And if the company values don't align with yours, the job is likely not going to be a good fit.

Work-life Balance:
Time away from work is almost as important as time spent at work. Take a look at each organization's vacation and sick leave policies to ensure you have ample time off per year.

YOU DIDN'T GET THE JOB

HOW TO USE NEGATIVE FEEDBACK TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

We've all been there. You get home from a killer interview — you clicked well with the hiring manager, answered all of their questions, even got a tour of the office. But a week goes by and you get a call only to find out you have been rejected. Or even worse, you never hear back.

What went wrong to lead to this job rejection and what should you do now? The most important piece of advice we can give you is to ask for feedback. Finding out exactly why you've been rejected can be super helpful in preparing for future interviews. Below are 8 common reasons for job rejection, and some tips on how to use feedback for the future from Planet Technology.

Underqualified

Let's face it. Sometimes job rejection is due to the fact that you are just not as seasoned in your career as the hiring manager needs you to be. If this is the only reason for rejection, ask the manager to keep you in mind for more junior openings they may have coming up.

Skills Don't Match What's on Your Resume

If you have technology, skills, or abilities listed on your resume, but are unable to speak to them during an interview, that will almost automatically get you disqualified for a role. If this is the reason for rejection, do some resume clean up.

Internal Referral/ Promotion:

The hiring manager had an equally impressive internal candidate and decided to go with that person instead. If you can learn more about the job and company than the internal candidate, you'll have a leg up. Do your research!

You Didn't Seem Interested/ Engaged

Tell the hiring manager how interested you are and that you would be thrilled to be part of their team. This seems intimidating to some candidates, but it's an important end to the interview.

Didn't Dress the Part

Some companies, like startups, have a very laid back dress code, and will think you don't fit in if you show up in a suit and tie. Other companies, like financial institutions, are very polished and will disqualify you immediately if you show up in anything but business professional attire.

Late for the Interview

Plan for traffic, to determine what time you should leave and arrive 10 to 15 minutes early. If your interview is via video, make sure you know how to connect and log in early.

Money

Pay for contract roles is usually discussed up front and is not an issue. But if you're interviewing for a permanent role and are uneducated on the market rate for the position, you must do your research regarding salary expectations. Have a range in mind and try to get this nailed down as quickly as possible so you aren't disqualified for having out-of-this-world pay expectations.

Stay Positive!

There are many reasons for job rejection. So the next time you get passed up for a role, ask for feedback and use it!

START YOUR JOB SEARCH

Planet Technology

If you've found you are ready to start your job search, reach out to us today. Planet Technology is a global staffing and recruitment firm that specializes in sourcing top talent for roles within the Core Technology, Enterprise Systems, Cybersecurity, and Creative & Digital sectors. Our goal is to connect professionals with opportunities that will allow them to achieve their potential and develop a clear career path. We strive to connect talent to the right position based on one's skills and the culture they are looking for.

Job Openings: careers.planet-technology.com

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