

Graduates can improve their CVs by degrees

TIPS FOR JOBSEEKERS

KAREN COLFER

YOU'VE just finished university and are eager to transform your hard-earned degree into a sterling career. Fast forward a few months and you may be wondering why your CV has generated little positive response from prospective employers.

Businesses are always looking to reduce a new recruit's "time to productivity" and the assumption is that university graduates will have acquired enough skills to ensure they perform, however modestly, immediately after hire.

However, educational training alone does not provide the skills necessary for a new recruit to make an immediate contribution to a business, leaving employers less than impressed with some graduate hires.

While there is no magic solution, the following suggestions may help reverse employer perception that your university studies are inadequate for the real-world workplace.

• **Undertake internships to gain real world experience.** For example, if you are a communications major wanting

a career in broadcasting, look for internships with local TV or radio stations that offer little or no pay, but deliver valuable experience.

• **Work part-time while studying.** Applicants with work experience are more likely to show initiative, have a stronger work ethic and have some real-world business skills such as customer service, understanding basic commercial transactions and being part of a team.

• **Learn what skills employers want in your industry.** Research your industry and learn the specific skills they want for new, inexperienced hires. Work on acquiring those skills to become more attractive to hiring managers.

• **Accept entry-level jobs to gain experience.** While you may want to start as a fast-track management employee, it may be better to accept a position lower than your original target to learn day-to-day skills. Don't sound like you want to contribute management advice, this is the time to be open to everything you need to learn in the workplace.

• **Do your homework.** Research the requirements and demands of your desired career path and those succeeding in your field. Professional improvement never ends; success requires repetition and hard work.

Karen Colfer is managing director of recruitment firm Kelly Services Australia