

PIVOT POINT

March 2026



Sean McLoughlin - A Smart CV



Recruitment Is Changing. Is Your CV?

There's a useful piece doing the rounds this month, *"10 Recruitment Trends To Expect in 2026"* by Recruiterflow. Credit where it's due, it's a solid overview of where the industry is heading. But buried within it is something that every job seeker needs to sit with for a moment: if recruiters are evolving this fast, the people applying to them need to evolve just as quickly. Because sending the same CV everywhere and hoping for the best? That approach is already outdated.

Here's what's actually changing, and what it means for you.

AI Is Now Embedded in Recruitment

This isn't a future trend. It's operational reality. AI tools are screening, sorting, summarising and matching candidates before a human being has even glanced at a single CV. What that means in practice is that clarity beats creativity, structure beats waffle, and keywords genuinely matter. If your CV isn't aligned to the specific job description you're applying for, there's a very real chance it never reaches a hiring manager at all.

Skills Matter More Than Degrees

Recruitment is shifting away from "where did you study?" towards "what can you actually do?" Hiring managers want capability, proof, and impact, and your CV needs to reflect that. There's a world of difference between *"Managed a team of five"* and *"Led a team of five to deliver X, improving Y by Z%."* One is a job description. The other is evidence. The second builds credibility. The first gets skipped.

Data-Driven Hiring Is the New Normal

Recruiters are using CRM systems and structured data more intelligently than ever before. They're tracking skill matches, response rates, candidate engagement and historical placements. Which means generic, scattergun applications don't just get ignored, they actively stand out as a red flag. Tailoring your application to the role and company isn't an extra step anymore. It's basic hygiene.

Candidate Experience Is Getting More Human, Not Less

Here's the part that often surprises people. As AI takes over the admin, recruiters are actually being freed up to focus more on relationships. That sounds reassuring, but it raises the stakes. Because when a recruiter does pick up your CV, they need to understand you immediately. Research consistently suggests that initial CV scans last around seven seconds. In that window, someone should know what you do, what level you operate at, and what value you bring. If they have to work it out, they won't.

Entry-Level Roles Are Tightening

Automation is squeezing certain junior roles, and that means positioning has become sharper than ever for graduates and career changers. Vague CVs simply won't cut it anymore. Transferable skills and commercial impact need to be front and centre, clearly evidenced, not assumed.

So, What Does All This Actually Mean?

Recruitment is becoming more strategic, more data-driven, and more AI-assisted all at once. And yet so many people are still sending the same CV to every role, unchanged and untailored. It's a bit like turning up to every meeting in the same suit regardless of the dress code, the audience, or the objective. It's not laziness, it's just an outdated approach in a market that's moved on.

March Focus: Time to Upgrade Your Approach

If you're actively applying for roles this spring, now is genuinely the best time to take stock of where your CV stands. Start with a structured sense check, it doesn't need to take long, but it does need to be honest.

Our free AI-powered CV review tool can show you whether your value is coming across clearly, whether your structure supports quick scanning, where you might be lacking measurable impact, and where you could be underselling yourself. It's fast, it's practical, and it could save you weeks of frustration and silence from employers.

If the review highlights gaps, and it often does, then we can have a proper conversation about smarter tailoring and what that looks like for your specific situation.

Recruitment is evolving. The question is whether your CV is keeping pace.

 [\[Try our free CV review tool here\]](#)

Until next month,

Sean & Tom

Founders, A Smart CV



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In "PIVOT POINT March 2026," discover how the recruitment landscape is transforming as AI tools revolutionise candidate screening, making tailored applications essential for success. With an emphasis on skills over degrees, job seekers must adapt their CV's to highlight measurable impact and relevant experience. This timely guide provides practical strategies for upgrading your approach, ensuring you stand out in a competitive job market.