

Career Advice

First job

No experience? No problem!



Jobsdb content team – updated on 31 January, 2026

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Getting your first job — or moving into a new industry — can be difficult. Many job seekers face the same puzzle: employers want candidates with experience, but how can you gain that experience without being given the opportunity?

To help you navigate that, we spoke with Nick Chow of [Macleans Group](#) for insights on what Hong Kong employers look for. Here's how to position yourself when applying for jobs where you don't yet have direct experience — and what to highlight on your résumé.

Highlight your great attitude

Ever noticed how many job ads in Hong Kong include phrases like “positive mindset,” “can-do attitude,” or “team player”? There’s a reason. Hiring managers across industries — from banking and retail to logistics and hospitality — value attitude as much as experience.

“In entry-level or career-change roles, employers are looking for candidates with a strong willingness to learn, professionalism, and interpersonal finesse. The rest can be taught. A great attitude, however, stands out,” says Chow.

Instead of simply writing “I have a positive attitude,” demonstrate it with real examples. For instance, maybe you volunteered during the marathon, balancing multiple tasks under pressure, or took online courses in your spare time to upskill in a new field.

These actions show initiative and persistence — qualities that speak louder than claims.

Call out your transferable skills

In Hong Kong’s evolving job market, recruiters care more about whether you can do the work than whether you’ve done it before. The trick is learning to identify and communicate your transferable skills—capabilities that you’ve picked up while doing other jobs, volunteering or working on passion projects.

For example, someone working in hospitality might transition into customer success in tech because they already understand client needs and are skilled at communication, multitasking, and problem-solving. Similarly, a teacher could pivot into training or human resources — both demand empathy, organisation, and clarity in communication.

When you mention transferable skills in your cover letter or résumé, always back them with examples:

“While working in event management, I led bilingual client communications and handled fast turnaround projects — skills that have direct application to project coordination roles.”

Being specific helps Hong Kong employers see how your background translates into immediate value.

Connect with the recruiter or hiring manager

Don't just click "Apply" and wait. Taking the initiative to connect — thoughtfully and respectfully — can set you apart in Hong Kong's relationship-focused business environment.

Unless the job ad specifies "no enquiries," send a short email or make a polite call introducing yourself to the hiring manager or recruiter. If they're unavailable, look them up online and learn about the company culture or recent initiatives before your interview.

Small actions, such as addressing the hiring manager by name or referencing something from the company's website, show that you've done your homework — a quality highly valued in local firms and multinational companies alike.

Have an elevator pitch

Your résumé should always include a short personal summary that clearly states your career objective. But you should also be able to speak about it — naturally and confidently — through an elevator pitch.

Your elevator pitch is a 30-second summary that answers: Who are you? What do you want? And what makes you a strong candidate?

Start practising it now. Record yourself on your phone and fine-tune your tone.

For example:

"I'm currently working in marketing but have developed a strong interest in data analytics. Over the past six months, I've completed online courses in Python and Tableau, and I'm excited to bring my storytelling and analytical strengths together in a data-driven role."

That kind of clarity and energy can move your application to the top of the shortlist.

It can feel daunting to look for a new job when you don't have direct experience, but remember — every professional started somewhere. Your task is to approach your job search strategically: highlight your great attitude, call out your transferable skills, and prepare a confident elevator pitch.

Employers are not just hiring experience; they're hiring potential. Show that you're adaptable, sincere, and ready to learn, and you'll already be one step closer to landing that opportunity — whether it's your first job or your first step into a new field.