

Thinking of studying IT? Read further

 By [Juliette Attwell](#)

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It seems that between industries, there is a definite difference in emphasis on the importance of a qualification. In more technical environments a qualification is vital, in the media and arts sectors, although important; more significance is placed on personality and experience. This week we look at the best IT hardware qualifications to start off with if you're looking to head in this direction, as well as how to get into a role you're passionate about.

My name is Khensane, I have been working in IT doing mostly helpdesk and first line support. I have no formal IT qualification, my experience is mainly in the GSM and telecoms industry. I have been out of work for sometime and, though I qualify for most first line, I get overlooked due to me not having the formal qualification.

I have, on my own, learned web design and have had success with a few clients offering logo/web design and web hosting. Recently I acquired some funds that would allow me to do some coursework for a firmer footing, but where do I start? Project management/ ITIL or Comptia?

I don't want to end up with a formal qualification that only gets me an interview or only serves to get me an entry-level job. Also, how do I optimise on the skills I've learnt and the experience I have?

I know it may be much to ask, but I seriously need some career guidance. Your assistance in this matter will be greatly appreciated. - Khensane

Hi Khensane,

Thank you for your question.

We have seen that in the IT industry, a qualification holds a lot of value because it is so technical and specialised, so with a qualification you should in essence get higher pay and a more meaningful position.

With regards to what you should study, it depends what direction you want to go in. If it is IT support then the Comptia/MCSE route is best. For the Comptia you can do a self-study course through Microsoft which may be a nice option, or contact CTI for course information and costs on an MCSE. Itil is a highly recognised and reputable course too. I would only suggest a project management course at a later stage once you have more experience. The posts aren't as readily available as the other three so I would suggest only doing this at a later stage.

Once you have completed the degrees, try and apply to as many posts as possible as well as putting your CV on all the

online job boards in order to broaden your scope.

I hope this helps.

Qualification vs. experience

My question is that, I have NO qualification as yet. I'm currently busy with my National Diploma in Journalism and my BA degree in Psychology. But, I have a four years' experience as a print journalist and a layout designer, a year's experience as a broadcast technical assistant for radio, a year's experience as a news website journalist, layout designer and a sub-editor and two years' experience as a marketing officer. I have been applying for copywriting, journalist, communications officer and sub-editor posts within these six months BUT all in vain. One other response I got from two companies was that they will be wasting my time employing me at junior posts. Is a qualification that important as compared to experience, even though you are studying towards obtaining one? I have tried freelancing in the past, but work does not come with a sense of financial security at times due to its seasonal kind.

I would love to get your advice on this matter as I'm starting to get frustrated daily. I'm 25 years of age and I have ambitions of starting up my career at a high note.

I thank you and hope that this has found you well. - Eric

Hi Eric,

Thank you for your question. I can tell just by the questions you ask that you are very ambitious and driven and eager to get going with your career.

You have excellent experience and clearly you are passionate about writing. The two companies that turned you down possibly lack vision. They could have brought you on in a junior role and worked with what you could bring to the table, as clearly you would have brought passion and new ideas. So ask yourself, would you want to work in this sort of environment anyway? Perhaps it was for the best. The battle rages on between experience and qualifications in the media and advertising industry, but I do believe that companies should rather look at the candidate, and ask themselves, are they a good person? Do they have transferable skills? Can they be taught? Are they fun, friendly and hard working? If all of these answers are yes, then a qualification really is just a piece of paper. Out of interest this is what Richard Branson believes when he hires people and he owns some of the most successful companies in the world. I have said it before and I will say it again, hard work will get you to where you want to go.

You may not exactly start your career on a high note, but if you persevere and work hard you will get there. You are young with a huge amount of opportunity, keep that passion and drive and you will find what you deserve. In the meantime, whilst finding your dream job, apply to everything and anything that you believe you can do, even if it's unrelated to writing. At least this will keep you on your toes and in the job market as opposed to being unemployed. The perfect role will more than likely not come up immediately, but eventually you will get there, you will just have to see where the career journey takes you. Perhaps take on a role not in your career path and freelance (what you're passionate about) on the side.

Apply for jobs and put your CV out there. You are welcome to send it to me to have a read over and I'll advise where I can.

I hope this answers your question.

Best of luck!

Remember to always love what you do,
Juliette

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