

The Job Hunting Podcast

[96. Recruitment and selection without resumes - with Dina Bayasanova Ph.D](#)

- Renata: Dina Bayasanova is the founder and CEO of PitchMe, a skills-based talent marketplace that aims to replace traditional CVs or resumes with an alternative candidate profiling system based on a person's skill set and abilities. Dina wants a system where each candidate is anonymized to prevent unconscious bias in the hiring process.
- Renata: Dina sounded like a guest we would want to hear about, so I invited her to be on the podcast. The World Economic Forum recently predicted that 97 million new roles could emerge after the pandemic. In response, companies have to rethink how they hire to ensure both employers and employees are prepared for the new business landscape. The remote revolution has proven the value of soft skills like communication, time management, and leadership.
- Renata: On top of that, more people are changing careers due to fast-evolving tech capabilities that could alter their existing roles. Companies that learn from these shifting dynamics can construct a dedicated, agile workforce that is better equipped to solve problems and adapt to future working conditions. One of the most inspiring takeaways for me was when Dina explained why employers should now target career shifters: Shifters are psychologically better prepared for uncertainty and are primed for upskilling and reskilling.
- Renata: Hi, Dina, can you hear me?
- Dina: Hi. Yes. Good morning. How are you?
- Renata: I am good. How are you doing?
- Dina: Not bad. Are you also boiling? All good?
- Renata: No, my friend, I am in Australia. It's evening here, and it's winter.
- Dina: Oh right. Right. Well, we are boiling here in Europe.
- Renata: I'm very jealous. I wish I were boiling. I was born in a very warm country. And sometimes I think to myself, what am I doing in Melbourne? This winter here is really, really horrible.
- Dina: Yeah. Well, thank you for taking the time and pleasure to meet you.
- Renata: No, thank you. So, you're a lovely EA Sasha reach out to me and, that was a few months ago and said, oh, you know, Dina would be a good guest for your podcast. And I think

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she's right. I can't wait to talk to you. So, would you like to tell our listeners a little bit about your career?

Dina: Yes, absolutely. Growing up, I didn't know that I wanted to be an entrepreneur, but I always knew that I wanted to do things differently. I started my career in a very traditional sector, oil and gas, and I have spent 12 years there, but working internationally. I have also done my Ph.D. in economics, which has nothing to do with HR or technology, which I am currently working on, but that career in oil and gas taught me to look at things differently. This sector was disrupted by technology heavily. The processes, which were known before they have been transforming really, really rapidly. So I think my previous career made me curious about technology, innovation, and disruption of a traditional sector. So, this is how I ended up being an entrepreneur in the HR tech sector because, despite oil and gas being non-renewable energy, I think that human resources are.

Renata: Oh, that's a very interesting way of putting it. During your career in oil and gas, did you also experience the life of a job hunter? Did you traditionally go through recruitment and selection?

Dina: Well, actually, I experienced it from very different angles, being a candidate myself and then being an employee later on. So yes, all busy. I have spotted that something is broken in, in the recruitment process, being the participant of this process from different perspectives, but, technological sector and, oil and gas sector is even more, difficult to, to hunt and recruit people for because it's, it's unique and the skill set, we were looking when I turned to be an employer myself. When I was hunting myself, the skills we were looking for were unique. So we had to use different approaches. We had to think out of the box, how to attract and screen candidates. So I think that my previous career taught me a lot and, it opened up the horizon of opportunities, which I am, tackling right now.

Renata: And what is Pitch Me? Explain to those listeners who don't know much about it what it does.

Dina: So Pitch Me is a skills-based talent marketplace. We are based on the idea that people should have an opportunity to demonstrate the overall skillset they possess to find an ideal work environment and work, and job, as well as identify career development opportunities. We don't work with a CV. We give candidates a new type of professional presentation. It's called Smart Me profile. It's a real-time picture of humans, hard skills, soft skills, and personality profiles built by analyzing various digital sources. So as a candidate, you have a chance to input links and sources. You can see the relevance to

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yourself, and we convert obtained big data into measured and validated skills. And around that profile, we have built the overall ecosystem matching you either with employers and positions or matching you with online education opportunities.

Renata: Dina, that's such a disruption in the market. What I like about today's interviews is I've done all day, and yours is the last one here because it's evening in Melbourne. It feels like there's a weave, you know, like this golden thread between all of them, we're all looking at the emperor with no clothes, but different guests of this podcast come with different ways of addressing that issue. So I'm a very pragmatic person who just wants to get my clients into jobs very quickly, working within the system, whatever system it is, we'll find a way and develop your effectiveness to work with the system. You, on the other hand, look at the system, and you go. I don't like the way that this is going, and I want to disrupt it. Right. When you do that, how do you then convince the employers that it's time to change?

Dina: That's a great question. Because we are on the market for two and a half years and before the pandemic, it was much more challenging because the mindset of an employer was still traditional CV work. The traditional recruitment process worked, so no one was really open for change. So 2020 was a real turning point in the mindset of employers. So we are not only talking about the changes of the work environment and everyone going remote, but people are more receptive of technology. People are trying to sync and reflect on traditional processes, which they had in place from a different angle. So obviously, when we sell it now, it became much easier to convince an employer and demonstrate this in action. So our sales page always starts with results, which we deliver to our existing customers. But the 2020 and the last year was a really, really a turning point for me as well. We have grown five times. So I think we were a little bit ahead of the market trend, but we are in trend right now. So it became easier for us.

Renata: And are you getting a specific group of professionals, or is this platform, sort of, a good, best practise for every industry, every sector, every professional.

Dina: So we have started with the digital sector, so everything related to IT, marketing, design, creative industry, because it was affected by, by the changes of the work nature. And these professionals have a lot of different sources, which they build throughout time. So we started initially with the digital professionals. However, our technology and approach can be implemented and probably transformed into different sectors, such as finance, medicine, and education. But, we have startups; still, we are growing, so we have a way to go.

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- Renata: Yeah. Okay. And, with this different type of employment, is it available for people in every country, or are you also, you know, geographically, working with a smaller sandbox?
- Dina: No.in terms of the candidate talent pool, it's completely global. So 40% of our candidates in the database are coming from Europe, 40% from states, and 20% from the rest of the world. So it's Asia, Africa, and Latin America. in terms of employees, we are also working globally. So we have quite a vast presence in Europe and states, but here are our employees and our customers. They have multiple different offices globally.
- Renata: Are the jobs that are going through your Pitch Me platform jobs that can be done remotely, or are they still jobs that require you to be physically located in the country where the employer wants you to work from?
- Dina: It's a mixture. It's a mixture. So we do see the trend, of the remote work, of course, affecting us. So w more positions have this remote tab on, but still, some people are hiring traditionally full-time in the office, but to less extent, but we are not a freelance platform. So we are only working with full-time permanent roles, which can be done with relocation, or they can be done physically being remote. But full-time jobs.
- Renata: That's interesting that you mentioned that you're not into the freelance roles.was that a business decision for you that you opted out of this freelance gig economy?
- Dina: In the beginning, yes. Because our technology and methodology need to be validated by businesses, we measure and track candidates' progress placed by a pitch me. We need to see how they outperform other candidates. So it's much doable when you place a person for a permanent role where the freelance jobs, the nature is different. So people are hired mainly based on their skillset. So soft skills or personality matters less. But our core difference in our core strengths of Pitch Me is that we measure soft skills and personality and demonstrate how this assessment in the pre-screening process affects the placement in interview processes later on. So, our decision to go for a full-time permanent role was intentional because we needed proof of concept.
- Renata: Right. And, okay, so now let's give the job seekers some advice on how to operate in this completely different platform for them. I mean, I'm assuming it will be quite a different experience. Am I right?
- Dina: To be honest, no. The only difference is that we are not asking for a CV straight away. So that's probably the main, wow, and aha moment because there are definitely behaviour parts, and they find a job seeker. But the core principle is that people need to have a variety of sources to support their professional identity. Recruiters already started to

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look at their social networks, and they are asking for portfolios. They are asking for any proof of their knowledge and abilities. And they, we start our onboarding process of a candidate exactly from this. We give them an opportunity to provide whatever they consider relevant, provide links, and not upload any CVS or fill in the forms. It's as simple as just providing links. And we create a profile in under three minutes.

Dina: So for more traditional candidates or candidates who have CVS, we also have an opportunity and ask them to upload CVs if they wish, but this is not our main tool or main paper, which we are analyzing. So every candidate coming on the platform starts with the section of things they fill in, whatever they want to fill. Then there are four questions related to personality, a very simplified psychometric test, as much as I can, say. Then, any supporting materials, like they can upload portfolios, upload examples of their previous work, and that's it. And, we turned all of this obtained information into four sections, measured and validated hard skills, measured soft skills, and ideal work environment context. So, candidates can download it. Candidates can share the link to their profile, and it's completely free. So they can design that way completely free under three minutes and then use it elsewhere, not only on our platform, but we are also building the social element, or they can get matched to jobs on Pitch Me.

Renata: And Dina, when you say links, can you give us some examples of what your candidates are linking in the platform?

Dina: Yes, absolutely. So they link professional websites related to their sector. If it is an IT professional, they usually link Github, get lob, StackOverflow, any repositories they have. If it's a designer, they link three bill behind their portfolio websites. People are linking their blogs. People are linking, YouTube channels they're hosting. People are linking online games, such as chess.com, for example, poker stars. So we work with a really wide spectrum of sources starting from traditional websites, ending up with blogs and even online games.

Renata: That's excellent. I love all of this because it's so aligned with what I asked., what I ask my clients to do, which is to dig the interweb for stuff that has been hidden, you know? And yes, you were talking about tech professionals. Still, even if you're a marketing professional or somebody like myself who worked in sort of executive roles, there are always opportunities for you to find things. And, you know, if, if you can find them, make sure that they're linked somewhere, be LinkedIn or pitch me, or your resume, your traditional resume, for sure. Absolutely., what made you come up with this idea, Dina? What made you think this is what I want to do?

Dina: Personal problem and a struggle throughout my career that I never managed to find the job by CV because I'm a, I don't have a linear career story, an observation that it's not

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only me that it's quite a lot of people was speaking up about the similar problems, which I experienced and curiosity. So before starting Pitch Me, I was involved at the young professional committee of the energy Institute. It's quite a big society. You know, I think the professionals or the oil and gas and energy sector. And, I came up with an initiative to run and research to see how the recruitment process works in the sector. And we have interviewed more than 600 candidates, around 400 employers, and 17 recruiters. So we came up with quite an in-depth analytical material, which answered all my questions.

Dina: So I managed to narrow down problems, like really, really broad problems to three to three areas, which Pitch Me now is addressing. The first one is the fast-paced work environment. So businesses are developing way faster than they used to before. So the traditional recruitment doesn't catch up with the speed of a hiring need. Second, more than professionals acquire skills in a non-linear way, so it's not only about their traditional education or employment. It's a variety of ways, starting from online education, like reading and listening daily, news, podcasts, anything that also contributes to the skills acquisition. And, as a third one, a traditional CV failed actually to present a person's full potential. So curiosity and research this is what made me start Pitch Me.

Renata: I have you considered, and maybe it's already there, and we just haven't spoken about this, but I'm thinking about the video component. Is it something that you're working on? Is it already part of Pitch Me to include, you know, the candidates expressing themselves on the video?

Dina: Not yet. And pitch me is addressing the three prime primary stages before the interview itself. So we are doing lead generation. We are doing the skills assessment, and we are doing the initial shortlisting and prescreening. We are bias-free. So we want to remove any bias from screening and initial assessment. This is why we do our matching of candidates with employers anonymously. The element of video is necessary down the line when you want to write it to meet face to face. So at the pre-screening and initial assessment, we don't think we need it. However, it influences who wants to use speech rates around the process of recruitment. They express these requirements. So it's in our roadmap.

Renata: Yeah, that's a very interesting explanation because I know that they are some talent acquisition programs here in Australia and overseas as well. And softeners that have done that Murcia has created. And there's a big bank here that has a similar, new, not traditional way of recruiting people. And they're heavily relying on video format as the first entry point. And that raises a whole bunch of new issues, right. Because, of course, there is that bias, which they say it's taken out of because bots are reading it. But again, you know, does that mean I use sort of capturing our facial expressions and their, what a,

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you know, what do you make of it? So there's a call for a moratorium on facial recognition software in Australia. I mean, that's been discussed at the moment, and I'm looking into it.

Renata: One of the things that concerned me with video use is the fact that while we are in Australia and close to Asia, we have lots of Asian Australians here. And, you know, when I think about how I, I'm a Latina when I think of the way I express myself, you can see my eyebrows go this way, and my eyes go that way. And there's a lot there that can be captured with software, whereas some cultures and some ethnicities wouldn't, you know, you would speak and be just as passionate about an opportunity, but your facial expressions wouldn't change. There's a Malcolm Gladwell book that if listeners are listening to, they're interested in learning more about, you know, people being influenced by facial expressions. It's a new book by Malcolm Gladwell. It's quite good. It's a good read, but yeah, I think you're doing well by not including it as a first entry point and resisting your clients if they insist. Yeah. Dina, I think that you mentioned in one of your emails, was that employers should hire career shifters rather than candidates with industry experience. What do you mean by that?

Dina: I wouldn't say rather, I would say, in addition, well in the past career shifting was an outlier. Something that people didn't often do, and today career shifters are becoming the norm. So, reach, I mean, our research has identified that, on average, a person will change a career between three and five times during their working life. So obviously Coronavirus pandemic has also accelerated this rising trend, and the pandemic has shaken up industries, and more people are now applying for jobs outside of their previous industries. However, this is an unprecedented time, but people are not only career shifting. They have taken some time and invested in upskilling or reskilling themselves. And this is a unique talent pool, which now became available to employers. They don't need to invest in reskilling or upskilling, and people haven't been more flexible. They probably realize the trend that they need to switch a career, or they have been artificially put in this conditions that they needed to reskill, but this is a unique, situation and, industries like hospitality, travel, aviation have been particularly affected by the changes and employers have been driven to seek employment in a are the areas.

Dina: Some are out of necessity, some out of their desire to change. And, it's supported that candidates are prepared to sharpen their skills, to meet the needs of the new roles. They are much more open for; I wouldn't say downgrading themselves. Still, they understand that they probably should make one step down to learn and to, and as in your industry on your sector, but they are bringing, I would say, a bunch of different skills and a bunch of knowledge from their previous experience. So for employers nowadays, it's a unique opportunity to refresh the skillset, to bring people from non-office backgrounds and achieve way more than they would with people coming from known or a similar career

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background or similar industry because you never know when a person came up with something creative or the person can bring innovation into the company and a new initiative, based on their previous experience. And, we see that this mixture of skills, mindsets, and culture is fruitful for employers. So, when I specified this in the email, I wouldn't say it; rather, I would say that employers now should be open-minded and see career shifters as a great opportunity for them.

Renata: Yeah. Do you find that that's already happening with the sector that you're working in?

Dina: Yes. We have placed multiple career shifters people switching from journalism to design, education to programming, people switching from sports into market research. So we have placed multiple career shifters. The overall approach when we initially present the skillset of a person, rather than the history of employment, actually helps employers focus on their skill sets rather than anything else.

Renata: Yeah. And this is just one of the sort of demands we seen traditional recruitment and selection processes from employers asking way too many years of employment for roles that sometimes don't necessarily need that, you know, sector experience, what, you know, what are, what should employers focus on when they're advertising in the future? So are you sort of with this new platform also using it to educate the employers on how to draft their selection criteria?

Dina: Yes, absolutely. And one of our recent products is an AI-powered job description generator. So it had been a massive success. It's, it's also a free tool, but when we started scaling, we saw that most employers are coming with really badly written job descriptions. They usually copy-pasted from elsewhere. They have nothing to do with the company. So we decided to help first ourselves and then help employers to write job descriptions. So a few tips, I would say that it's going to be like a tricky situation when you copy-paste the text because you don't understand the requirements of the job you're copy-pasting from. You probably will misguide the candidates and give them a different impression of what is required from them. So first I would, I would encourage every employee to write down the list of skills.

Dina: They are looking for professional skills, maybe interpersonal skills, anything. And then group them by requirements. And, what we expect from you because sometimes the soft skills are put into the section requirements. And again, candidates are confused if you require me to be a leader, for example, but I don't recognize myself being a leader, probably I'm not going to apply for this role. Then, second, for the skills, not as a requirement, but as a context, how will these skills be applied to the role, or what will their skills be, achieving or what are you, what is an achievement, or what is expected from you? Like who are you going to be communicating with? Who is your line manager?

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Who, what are your not only responsibilities but what are the criteria of us assessing you?

Dina: Because sometimes this is what candidates are confused about that if my position is, I don't know, at title senior, but you don't mention any management or leadership responsibilities, is it senior role? Because senior people are expected to manage or mentor more junior people, but then also there is a misalignment. And senior, it doesn't require five years of experience. Senior doesn't require, and I don't know the proficiency in every programming language, senior usually differs from middle or junior by the nature of management and mentorship. And probably the last tip, which is, crucial is to try and sell your company because it's not only candidates selling themselves to an employer, but candidates have a variety of opportunities to choose from. Try to put in a couple of sentences why a particular person will enjoy working with you. What are you trying to achieve? What are your goals for the next 12 or 18 months? What is it already like? What is the current team you already have? Have you been funded? are you profitable? Anything which can give a context of why a person should devote 12, 18, 2 years of their time to you as an employer?

Renata: Yes. The interesting thing about everything that you've just said is you were talking about it in relation to an employer writing a job description, but it can be adapted to a job candidate writing their resume, their profile, their LinkedIn information. There's a lot of copy-pasting happening both ways, for sure. And it's one of the problems with resumes, as you probably know, it's probably a lot of copy-pasting happening.

Dina: Yeah, yeah. But employers now tell us that they are okay if a person doesn't have all the hard skills required. We are looking for a person with the right motivation, the right mindset, and a similar culture. So we would be willing to invest in educating, upscaling this person if there is a culture and team fit. So this is what, this whole story about telling a candidate's story, telling a story from fluid and then matching it.

Renata: So, what is your key advice for job hunters out there interested in applying through Pitch Me? What are the first steps they need to take to start working with a platform like Pitch Me?

Dina: First to revise their footprint, digital footprint. And it's not only for Pitch Me. Before you go on a job hunt, you need to go and first Google yourself because everyone will Google you.

Renata: I tell this if you've listened to this podcast before our listeners, you know, it's not the first time you hear this, but I love when my guests just reiterate what I've said before. Thank you so much, Dina.

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Dina: No problem. And they're usually funny stories when, when you Google your potential employees. Yes. So Google yourself, work on your first page of search. Like what sources you want anyone to come across, you as a professional, it's totally fine to have Instagram, Facebook, and so on, like down the line, but this is not what should straightaway jump to the face of the recruiter. If you have done anything which can showcase and improve your existing skillset, don't hesitate to demonstrate it. Some candidates and especially digital candidates. They even have a simple version of the profile of their personal website, where they put links, where they put portfolio, where they put summary, they sometimes attach a CV and leave their contact details. So, and again, this is what we observed in the trend that people are more than are CV. So help a recruiter or an employer read you, identify what skills are missing from a CV, and help them understand your story.

Dina: Of course, I will mention LinkedIn because, of course, LinkedIn is a powerful professional network tool overtly, everyone will try to search you. And especially this is a trend in the us that if you are not on LinkedIn, no one will probably contact you. Right? So it's also a matter of professional and personal reputation, professional reputation, first of all, so work on your LinkedIn, and the third, try to network with people within the sector, or within the potential companies you are applying to, or you're interested in try and network with people and understand their hiring process. and it's not about getting a referral and being put into the recruitment process via someone who can refer, you know, try to, to speak with people and understand why they work in this company, how they like, what the culture is, what your professional career development might look like in that company. Because if you understand that part, it will hopefully help you create your part, like your story, adjusted to, to a potential employer you are applying to.

Renata: Yes, that's all perfect. It reinforces all the right messages that the job hunting podcast has been banking on for quite some time. Dina, thank you so much for your time. It's been a pleasure talking to you and learning about Pitch Me, and I wish you all the best of luck because I love a disruption in the recruitment and selection process, and anything helps the candidate. I'm a hundred percent behind it. So count on me.

Dina: Thank you very much for having me.