



C.V. & Interview Preparation Delegate Manual - SAMPLE PAGES



COURSE OUTLINE

9.30 Welcome and setting the scene
Introductions and getting to know each other

Purpose of the c.v.
Visual appeal
Content and expression

Summary profiles
Practical exercise: Designing your summary profile

11.00 **BREAK**

Principles of designing effective job responsibilities and achievements
Practical exercise: Designing your job responsibilities

Final C.V. checklist
Principles of the covering letter

12.45 **LUNCH**

Recruitment interviewer strategy
What the interviewer looks for - 'the right fit'
An insight into a typical selection process

Key tips on preparation for interviews
Practical exercise: Understanding own strengths and development areas

Preparing for behaviour based interviews
Typical questions asked
Practical exercise: Answering behavioural questions

3.00 **BREAK**

Last minute things

Role of body language
Practical exercise: Body language

Key tips on shining in the interview
After the interview

Summary of the Day
Knowledge / Skill Checklist

5.00 **CLOSE**

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BUILDING YOUR C.V.

Producing a Curriculum Vitae that is accurately targeted to your potential market is an essential element of successful self promotion. The C.V. and accompanying cover letter represent 'sell yourself' literature and as such must contain the elements you would expect of an effective advertisement.

A C.V. may get a few seconds attention from the potential employer. In that time you need to gain and maintain their interest and leave a clear concise image of quality, professionalism and of your likely benefit to them.

The completion of an effective C.V. takes time, and possibly several drafts. Sometimes it is advisable to 'tailor' the emphasis of content to the job that is on offer - so expand some descriptions and contract other parts of the C.V. Visual appeal, presentation and choice of words that demonstrate responsibility and achievements, are all vital components. It's got to cry out: *"Look at me! Look at me!"*

Although there is no ideal format for a C.V., it is useful doing a search on the internet to review specimen examples and get some feedback from friends and colleagues on your own C.V. You need to 'buy in' to the format before any prospective employer might.

"Action is the foundational key for success."
PABLO PICASSO

PURPOSE OF CURRICULUM VITAE

What is a C.V.?

PROPERTIES OF ADVERTISING

It is your self-marketing tool - your chance to self advertise.

The properties of advertising include:

- Eye catching
- Factual
- Brief
- Well laid out
- Believable
- Interesting
- Matches the market
- Sells the benefits of you
- Easy to read
- Relevant
- Individual

"We create success or failure on the course primarily by our thoughts."
GARY PLAYER

FORMAT OF THE C.V.

Career Background / Employment History (continued)

- If several appointments have been held at similar levels in a relatively short space of time, it is important not to be perceived as a 'job jumper'. The problem can be overcome by incorporating several positions into one paragraph:

1998-2002 PROJECT MANAGER

During this period, Project Manager positions were held with several multinational companies on fixed term contracts including major development projects for Bradford and Bingley, Barclays Bank etc

Followed by a summary of responsibilities and achievements throughout the period

Education and Training / Qualifications

- Do not overload with lists of dates/schools. If you have been educated to 'A' level or beyond, put in number of GCSE/O/CSE /A levels but avoid grades (unless you are in your early 20's and have limited work experience)
- State the year, not the month, of starting and finishing the various educational establishments
- Include any specialist training undertaken which may be applicable to your next appointment, together with membership of professional bodies

Interests

- Interests can demonstrate a lot of personal qualities e.g. leadership, fitness, team working, intellectual capacity, communication skills, planning and organising
- Include any that may serve as a comfortable topic of discussion at interview. Don't put down anything that you can't justify

Other Skills

- E.g. full clean driving licence, Microsoft Word and Excel skills

Optional Personal Details

- Could include date of birth, nationality, marital status - not mandatory (and could be seen as a factor to 'discriminate' against you e.g. sexual or age discrimination)

CONTENT AND EXPRESSION

The purpose of your C.V. is to generate interviews - to give a sufficient taster to the employer that they want to meet 'the real thing' and probe you further. Having made a good visual impression, you still have the task of convincing the employer that you are worth meeting.

Some tips are:

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"If it's to be, it's up to me."
ANON

SUMMARY PROFILES

Secretary

Experienced, reliable and flexible **Secretary** with accurate shorthand and word processing skills, particularly enjoying legal work. A good sense of humour.

Administrator

A highly competent and versatile **ADMINISTRATOR** with excellent communication skills. Capable of working on own initiative or as an effective team member. Ability to work under pressure and used to working to tight deadlines. Computer literate with in-depth knowledge of many word processing and business computer packages. Always enthusiastic to learn and undertake new challenges.

Retail Manager

A highly motivated **RETAIL MANAGER** with over 15 years experience in target oriented companies. Proven ability in the achievement of sales/profit targets. Able to demonstrate strong leadership skills developed in a fast moving customer focused environment. Effective co-ordinator and administrator.

Enthusiastically seeking to broaden retail management skills and experience.

C.V. CHECKLIST

The only proof of a good C.V. is whether or not it generates interviews. The following checklist is not a set of rules. There are none, but a code of practice you may find helpful.

Appearance

- Is it well typed?
- Is the font the same throughout?
- Are the font size/ areas of bold consistent throughout?
- Is it on good quality paper?
- Do the margins have sufficient space for potential interviewer comments?
- Is it no more than two pages (unless you have a lot of work experience)?
- Is it page numbered?
- Do you have your name and phone number in the footer of each page?
- Will it photocopy easily?

Clarity

- Are spelling and grammar correct?
- Are all the words used in their simplest form?
- Is it jargon free?
- Is there a logical flow to the document?
- Are the qualifications and the job history stated in reverse chronological order?

"The mind is like a parachute – it works best when it's open."

ANON

INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES - INTRODUCTION

For a few, the job interview will be an exciting opportunity to show others what they can do. For most people though, it is a daunting prospect. It may be years since you were last interviewed and you simply have no idea what you are going to say, or how you are going to say it. The formality and rareness of the occasion all add to stress levels.

As with all our job search efforts, we can tackle many of these difficulties and the feelings that we have, through preparation and rehearsal. Of course, it will not overcome all your issues, and nerves will still prevail. However being nervous can make you more alert and 'think on your feet'. Interviewers will recognise your nerves and be empathetic, settle you in and help you through the ordeal.

This section will help you through this preparation and rehearsal process, providing tips and tactics to help you 'shine through' at interview. In addition, valuable 'insider' information is given as to what the Interviewer is looking for, and what impresses them most.

One thing is for certain - there is no excuse for not devoting enough time to help you prepare for that crucial interview. You never know, you might even enjoy the interview too!

"If you are leaping a ravine, the moment of take-off is a bad time to be considering alternative strategies."

JOHN CLEESE

GETTING THE RIGHT FIT

3. Fit the Bill

- How will they fit in with the general culture of the organisation? (E.g. someone coming from a fast paced organisation where decisions are made quickly, where decisions are sometimes implemented without a full picture of the situation and where use of initiative and self management is key, may struggle in an environment which is slow paced and bureaucratic)
- How will they get along with the rest of the team? Will they fit in?
- How long may it take them to adapt?
- What evidence exists about their adaptability and ability to cope with change?

Clearly the challenge for the interview candidate in this situation will be to demonstrate that they can adapt to different environments/ teams/ cultures quickly.

“If people knew how hard I worked to get my mastery, it wouldn’t seem so wonderful after all.”

MICHELANGELO

PREPARING FOR INTERVIEWS

- Find out as much as you can about the organisation by:
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- Write out some key facts about the organisation to memorise. For example:
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- Find out about the interview:
 - Will you be given a tour of the building/work area?
 - Will you have to sit any tests?
 - Who will be interviewing you? (Can you find out anything about their interviewing style? If the job has come through an agency, they'll be able to brief you on personality, sense of humour etc)
- Read and re-read the job advert, the person specification and job description

"Seek first to understand, then to be understood."

STEPHEN COVEY

TYPICAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

There are numerous questions that can be asked at interview. You can't learn them all. However you can predict some. Remember, candidates have 2 challenges - **what** they will say and **how** they will say it.

The following questions are the most common. The trick is to anticipate the ones that have a good chance of coming up, and have well-rehearsed answers ready. Then you can concentrate on **how** you're going to say it - the enthusiasm in your voice and the display of positive body language.

How You See Yourself

- Tell me about yourself or How would you describe yourself?
- Describe a time you had to deal with a difficult colleague or boss?
- How well do you fit into a team?
- Tell me about a time you had to deal with an angry member of staff?
- Give me an example of when you contributed to team work?
- Describe a time when you were under pressure?
- What motivates you?
- What are your particular strengths?
- What would you say are your weaknesses?

How Others See You

- How do others describe you?
- What will you be remembered for in your last job/company?

"I know that you understand what you think I said, but I am not sure you realize that what you heard is not what I meant."

RICHARD NIXON

SHINING IN THE INTERVIEW

- If the Interviewer offers you a drink, take it - even if it's a glass of water. If you get 'dry mouthed' during the interview, you have a lubricant. Besides, it's a good rapport builder with the Interviewer that both of you are drinking, rather than refuse the offer
- If the interview was arranged at short notice, and you are asked what you know about the organisation, never say "*I didn't have much time to prepare*" - it may demonstrate a lack of commitment to do the job
- Look for opportunities to build rapport with the Interviewer. Some suggestions include:
 - Use 'small talk' e.g. the weather; the football last night; asking about their weekend (on a Monday interview) or asking about the forthcoming weekend (on a Thursday/Friday interview). Beware not to overdo this
 - Use their name in the interview
 - Compliment them sincerely e.g. "*that's a nice colour you're wearing today*". The emphasis is on the word **sincerely**, and don't do it too many times
 - Look for common links e.g. "*You've got 2 kids, so have I. They're a handful at times aren't they!*" or "*We like Devon too*"
 - Positive body language
 - Use their words / phrases to mirror their language e.g. if you are a Customer Services Advisor in your Contact Centre, however the Interviewer refers to them as 'Agents' , then use the word 'Agent' in your interview responses
 - Give empathy when appropriate
- Avoid being rude or negative about previous employers (even if you do think it's justified). Getting it off your chest might make you feel better, but it might form an impression that you're a bit of a moaner

"The only place where success comes before work is in the dictionary."

ANON

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Profile

An experienced retail professional with over 15 years in department stores and specialist retailers. In depth product knowledge in men's fashions, children's and electrical. Skilled supervisor of staff for 5 years with good I.T. and visual merchandising skills. A team player with a keen sense of humour, and flexibility with working hours.

Experience

Frasers Department Store Glasgow
 March 2003 – present

Senior Sales Assistant

- ◆ Sell electrical appliances and deliver exceptional customer service
- ◆ Co-ordination of all departmental deliveries to customer's home addresses, managing up to 80 separate deliveries per week
- ◆ Deputising for the Department manager when away from the shop floor and supervising 6 full time and 3 part time staff
- ◆ Project Leader for visual merchandising project for electrical department. Achieved a 22% uplift in sales

Dollands Fashions Paisley
 1999 – February 2003

Sales Assistant

- ◆ Sell men's and children's fashions and deliver exceptional customer service
- ◆ Sole responsibility for all visual merchandising of new stock in menswear
- ◆ Cleaning floors and fixtures once a week, with deep clean once a month
- ◆ Received 5 customer compliment letters and £120 gift vouchers as a reward from Shop Owner

Softly Softly Children's Nursery Paisley
 1993 – 1999

Play Assistant

- ◆ Organised and executed structured play sessions for 2-4 year olds
- ◆ Complete play records for 5 children under my care
- ◆ Sole responsibility to produce sandwich lunch every day for 15 children in Nursery