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CV Tips and Interview Guide

Application

SOURCING AN IDEAL POSITION

This information is to assist you in your job search from sourcing the ideal position, composing the perfect CV to creating the right impression during an interview.

Finding the right position for you will involve a little research. You will find opportunities advertised in the local press, recruitment web sites, recruitment consultancies, job centres and job fairs.

APPLYING FOR THE POSITION

Usually, a job application will contain a copy of your CV and a covering letter. Both should be presented neatly with no spelling mistakes and be concise in nature.

The application letter introduces you to the potential employer or recruitment consultant. If possible keep the application letter to one side of A4.

Before sending your application letter read through the letter to ensure that it is free of any spelling errors.

Any application letters should contain the following information:

- **Where have you seen the position advertised?**

Wherever possible quote any references given and where you have seen the advertisement.

- **Why are you ideal for the position?**

This is an ideal opportunity to highlight your appropriate skill set and all your relevant employment history and qualifications.

- **How can you be contacted?**

Include your current address and preferred contact telephone number.

CV Tips

WRITING THE PERFECT CV

A CV should be tailored according to the role you are applying for i.e. highlighting appropriate skills and experiences that are relevant to the role.

When sending your CV to a recruitment consultancy the more information that you can supply the better as your recruitment consultant will tailor your CV for you when sending it to a company on your behalf.

Take time when preparing your CV. A poorly presented CV calls into question the plausibility of the information it contains.

“When sending your CV to a recruitment consultancy the more information that you can supply the better.”

Your CV should include the following:

- **Personal / Contact Details**

Address, contact telephone number, email address.

- **Education & Qualifications**

Professional qualifications and membership.

- **Career History**

Positions held, company name, responsibilities and achievements for each role. Your current / last position held should be the first listed. All dates and length of time served should be indicated for each role. Keep this concise and ideally tabulate your information for ease of reading.

- **Personal Achievements**

Personal awards received and significant sports achievements.

- **Hobbies & Interests**

Genuine personal interests that can be discussed in interview.

The Interview Guide

PREPARATION

Find out information on the client, plan your journey and if possible request a copy of the job description. Find out whether you will have to take any tests at the interview.

DURING THE INTERVIEW

Start the interview with a strong handshake. First impressions are very important, appearance is vital. It's difficult to recover from a bad first impression, whereas the good one will give you the confidence to build on your initial success.

A strong handshake while maintaining eye contact is a good start. Keeping eye contact will show that you are interested and alert, as will sitting upright in your chair.

Don't ramble, keep your answers clear and concise. Describe your skills and experience in a positive way. The interviewer will be looking for confidence and interest in the position.

It is always best to ask for clarification if you do not understand a question. Take your time and think through all questions before offering an answer.

An invitation to ask any questions is generally a sign that the interview is drawing to a close and that you have one more chance to make an impression. Find out anything that is relevant and that has not been covered during the interview.

Information that you have obtained about the company will show commitment and this effort will be seen in a good light by the interviewer. It may give you that extra edge when a decision is being made.

Be sure that you understand the job description. Think of ways that your experience and skills fit the company's requirements.

Try to pre-empt any questions that the interviewer might ask about your CV and have well thought out answers ready.

“First impressions are very important ... a good one will give you the confidence to build on your initial success.”

The interviewer will be impressed if you have salient questions about the company. You could also ask about career progression but don't let your questioning in this respect eclipse your interest in the position under offer. Employers will not want someone who is keen to move on and leave the position as soon as they are employed.

Below are some areas that you might like to cover with your questions:

- Ask the interviewer out of courtesy if you may take down notes.
- Why is this opportunity available?
- How will my performance be measured?
- What are the longer-term opportunities?
- How does the role fit into the structure of the department and how does the department fit into the organisation as a whole?
- Ask the interviewer how long they have been with the company and what their background is.
- Ask the interviewer what the next step will be.

Make sure you allow plenty of time for the interview to be carried out. Always remain positive and affirm your continued interest in the position.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

If you have been unable to take notes during the interview write a few notes down as soon as you can, so as not to forget any important information you may need for the next stage.

Send a letter thanking the interviewer for their time. This will allow you another opportunity to express your enthusiasm and interest in the role. Re-affirm issues raised at the interview, if you think it is necessary.

If, at the end of the process you are unsuccessful, try to find out why. This could prove invaluable for the future as you can address any problems and move on to your next interview with more confidence. Above all, be positive.

Do's

USEFUL ADVICE

- Get to your interview **ten minutes early**.
- Use the interviewers name.
- Make sure that your application form, letter and CV are delivered to the person who is responsible for recruiting the position.
- Ensure that all correspondence is **well presented** and there are no mistakes.
- Give a firm handshake.
- Wait to be seated. Sit upright and look interested and alert at all times.
- **Smile** and display good eye contact.
- Be **positive** about your experience and skills.
- Give the interviewer space to talk to show that you are a **good listener** as well as a **good communicator**.
- Relay your appropriate skills accordingly, whilst following the interviewers lead.
- Show you are interested in the opportunity and be **positive at all times**.

“Give the interviewer space to talk to show that you are a good listener as well as a good communicator.”

Don'ts

“Don't be overly negative about your present or former employers.”

THINGS TO AVOID

- Remember, most companies operate a **no smoking policy**, so it will probably be best not to smoke just before your interview.
- Never answer questions with a yes or no. Elaborate on the answer but **don't ramble**.
- **Don't exaggerate or lie**. You are unlikely to secure a position if the employer thinks you are dishonest.
- **Don't be overly negative** about your present or former employers.
- Unless you are sure your potential employer wants to give you the job, leave questions about salary, holiday, bonuses etc to subsequent interviews.
- You want to be at your sharpest, so **avoid a late night** or alcohol the night before the interview.
- If during the interview you become unsure about the position, don't show it. Remain positive. You may change your mind as more information becomes available to you throughout the course of the interview.

www.epprofessional.co.uk