



Career Advice

When moving jobs it is important to realise that you are about to enter a period of time that will have a major impact on your life on a personal and commercial level. This is not a move you should take lightly.

The very first thing you should decide upon is why? The reason you give can have a major impact on a potential company decision to interview you. If you do not have a clear and understandable reason for your desire to leave your current position, potential employers could be put off, thus losing the opportunity for an interview.

Making time for the process is just as important. If you start contacting recruitment agents and clients directly and then fail to make arrangement to meet, it sends out a negative image of you. If you change your mind at the start or during your search, potential employers will be reluctant to view your application in the future.

CV Preparation

CV's are viewed in 2 ways. The most common way today is on a PC. The second is printed. In both cases they lack the human touch that you will provide on a 1-2-1 interview.

Therefore, the layout of your CV is very important. As most are now read from a PC, you should avoid the over use of colour and the desire to create a work of art. Bright colours prove difficult to read and in some cases, send out an impression that may prove negative to others. Do not try and create the CV that has not been seen before. People could find them difficult to read and unnecessarily complicated. Do not attach your photograph. We would recommend a dark font colour on a white background.

Companies tend to find 2 pages sufficient for most CV's. We would only suggest 3 pages if you have held senior roles. Too little can be read as limited in experience and over that amount becomes boring.

The most important rule in the construction of any document and that includes a CV, is the grammar and spelling are correct. You should also remember that the CV should be written with the reader in mind.

Personal details should always lead your CV.

- Name
- Address
- Contact details

The next section should cover Educational and Professional Qualifications.

- School/College/University
- Course Studied
- Results Achieved

You should also outline all the computer systems that you are familiar with and include a list of hobbies, if you so wish.

Employment History should be the next section, starting with your most recent or current Employer.

- Employer Name
- Dates of Employment
- Position Held

You should then give a good profile of the positions covering responsibilities, duties and achievements. Make sure the information provided is relevant.

This should then be repeated for all positions you have held in the past.

NB. Once you have prepared and presented this document to any company, you must then be ready to support any claims you have made.

Preparing for an Interview

It is now very easy to find out about most companies. The majority of companies have a website that gives vast amounts of information. A lot of these companies use their website for promoting or selling their products or services. The detail provided can cover their history, product range, staff number, locations, careers and in some case the philosophy of the company. This will prove invaluable information in preparing for an interview, as well as, the opportunity for you during an interview to demonstrate that you have researched their organisation.

Make sure you get a profile of the role you are being interviewed for. Read it on a number of occasions so that you fully understand the responsibilities that is required for someone to be successful in the role. It is also an opportunity for you to start linking your own expertise and capabilities, thus improving your chances of securing the appointment.

Know the location of the interview, the time arranged and allow sufficient time to get there. Find out the names of the people that are conducting the interview, including their positions within the organisation.

Dress appropriately.

Always check that the following are polished, clean and neat: Shoes, Shirts and Suits. Most people that conduct interviews are experienced and tend to dress in a conservative manner. Make sure you do not have too much jewellery or body art showing.

If your employer operates a dress down policy and going to work in attire that suggests you are going for an interview, we recommend that you let the interviewer know in advance that you will be attending in business casual. Same conservative approach should be taken.

Make sure the following are turned off: Mobile phones, Blackberry's and alarms on watches etc.

Prepare the answers to obvious questions. They tend to be:

Describe yourself, strengths, weaknesses, education, current and past roles, reasons for leaving all jobs, current salary and benefits
Allow enough time for the interview. If you are going to be restricted on time, let them know at the start of the process.

The Interview

It is only human to be nervous before and during an interview. A firm handshake is a must at the point of introduction.

The initial stages of an interview tend to be a meet and greet format. This way, the interviewer is trying to assist you into a comfort zone, which will allow you to be more open during the interview. It is not a formula to trick you.

From this point, all the benefits of the preparation should assist you. If you have prepared your answers they will flow showing you in a positive light and allowing more time to focus on the role being offered and the relevance of your skills to the opening.

Interviewees that flounder through questions around the obvious (Describe yourself, strengths, weaknesses, education, current and past roles, what do you know about our company etc) are seen lacking in preparation and poor communicators, leaving potential employers concerned that they will bring the same characteristics to the role.

People who demonstrate during the meeting that they can describe themselves and the roles they have fulfilled in the past clearly put themselves ahead of others.

Ask questions. Do not come out of an interview not fully understanding the role, its responsibilities and career path. Interviews are there for both parties. Find out why the role exists. Would the role develop over time beyond its current profile? Training on offer both for this role and progression.

When the interview concludes, thank everybody for their time and another firm handshake.