

## **A successful application**

### **How to write your CV**

Your CV should be typed rather than handwritten, and printed on good quality paper. It should also be clearly laid out. Try to maintain a good balance between space and amount of information. So use plenty of white space, don't crowd the page with text, and make your headings bold and/or underline them so that your document is easy to navigate.

When writing your CV, keep it plain and simple. Avoid flowery language, and use jargon terms only if they are universally understood. Consider using 'bullets' to highlight specific responsibilities and/or achievements. And if you find it difficult to summarize a complex issue in a single phrase, try setting out the elements as bullet points.

Broadly speaking, your CV should include the following:

- Personal details (name, address, email address, phone numbers)
- Education (colleges attended with dates and qualifications)
- Work experience (job titles, dates, employers, responsibilities and achievements)
- Skills (languages, particular vocational skills etc)
- Interests (hobbies, extra curricular activities)

You may also want to put in a personal statement, perhaps highlighting your Personal Profile, objectives of focusing on the kind of role you really want. If so, keep it succinct and relevant.

All of this should cover no more than 2-3 pages, if possible. If not, consider abbreviating your work experience of more than 5 years ago. You could change the font or point-size. But try not to mix styles too much in your document

Finally, always make sure that your CV is spell-checked – and get someone else to read it and encourage them to critique it for you.

## **Winning ways in interviews**

### **Preparation**

Spend some time before the interview making sure you're fully clued up on the opportunity. Make sure you've studied and understood the job description. Make a note and memorize some questions you want to ask to show your interest. Visit the company's website for background research. You should be able to learn something of the company's culture, read about their products/services and latest press releases. Knowing about their competitors, share price or board members may come in useful. And you'll probably find answers to basic questions about locations and staffing levels.

### **1<sup>st</sup> impressions**

Get in the right frame of mind before you arrive – professional, confident and in control. And treat everyone you meet with the same respect from the moment you arrive. Your main focus may be to impress your future boss, but you really don't want to irritate your future receptionist. So, wear appropriate business dress whether male or female. Make sure you're properly groomed for the occasion – clean pressed clothes, combed hair, fresh appearance. Make plenty of eye contact when speaking with people, listen attentively and give a little smile to show you're pleased to be there. Travel light, but make sure you have your essential accessories.

### **Answering interview questions**

Most importantly, listen carefully to make sure you understand the question and be concise in your answer. Be prepared to provide information that adds to your interviewer's understanding of your CV. Give clear and simple descriptions of your past successes, and well-considered assessments on any weaknesses and what you've learned from them. Provide honest reasons for wanting to move on, explain what motivates you as an individual, and what your personal goals and ambitions are. When discussing the opportunity itself, concentrate on what you see as a personal strength relevant to the role – and be enthusiastic about your capabilities and suitability for it.

### **Asking interview questions**

Ask how the opportunity came about. You may get a fresh insight into what might be expected, and confirm what the main priorities and responsibilities will be. Try to stick to open-ended questions – who, what, when, where, why – to encourage in-depth answers.

### **Quality finish**

Be positive and as if the job is suitable for you, then agree to the follow-up process. And of course, close with a smile and a definite handshake. Look them straight in the eye and say to yourself 'This is where I will start'.

### **Absolute no-no's**

However great the temptation is to be yourself, there are some things you should definitely save until later. So look forward to all of these – once you've left the building: interrupting others ... criticising previous employers ... implying you have sensitive information ... drinking alcohol or smoking ... swearing ....chewing gum ....getting personal .....

If you've enjoyed reading this, then enjoy the interview and walk out as a winner.