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How to Manage Your Lost Career

Coaching for Career Planning and Management

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
How to Manage Your Career	5
Begin With the End in Mind.....	7
Forming a Vision for your career.....	14
How to Put Together a Winning CV?.....	2122
Preparing For the Interview	3334
Managing the Interview	4748
How To Negotiate For The Best Deal	6768
What To Do After The Interview.....	7475
Interview Planning And Preparation Pro-Forma	7577

INTRODUCTION

Your work is to discover your work and then with all your heart to give yourself to it

- Buddha

The key to have a sustainable career is to find one that you really love and enjoy. However, it is not at all easy to find a job that gives you immense satisfaction, just working on it.

So many people these days change their field of work several times in the search for a better and fulfilling career.

Mostly all of us have faced the ups and downs in our working life. That's not something to worry about. That's life. The high and lows are inevitable.

However, how many times have you faced the downs because you are not comfortable with the area of work you have chosen, and the resultant uncertainties?

If that is the case, you do not have to feel doomed.

The options are many, and choosing a career you enjoy is no longer an impossible dream. Sustaining it is where the challenge lies.

The job market is highly competitive, and one false move can leave you out of the game!

Meticulous planning is critical to having a career of your choice and sustaining it.

In this course we will look at different techniques and strategies on how to go about managing your career.

First let's look at the scope of the e-book. We are aiming to help you achieve the following essentials by the end of this course.

Objectives:

After completing this book, you will be able to:

- Produce your career and life goals
- Know what direction you need to move in
- Know your career priorities
- Produce a winning CV that sells you effectively

- Answer any interview question that is thrown at you
- Overcome any interview nerves
- Communicate your strengths without bragging
- Deal with your weaknesses and learn to work around them
- Understand what interviewers are looking for in a potential candidate
- Prepare and plan beforehand to ensure a successful interview
- Negotiate for a better pay deal
- Negotiate for better terms and conditions
- And last but not the least, you learn how to be content and at peace with your choices

So let's get on to charting a career plan that can help you get where you want to in life.

HOW TO MANAGE YOUR CAREER

How do you find an ideal career that is just right for you?

Many times, people tend to drift into careers that probably their parents decide for them. As long as it is what you can do better and are comfortable with, there are no problems in going for it. But, if that is not the case, is it worth choosing for?

There are a thousand career options open to you today. So there are all the chances that you can get into a line of work that you can excel in and which also gives you sustained gratification.

How to know what career would suit you the best is the question.

Starting out to make money is the greatest mistake in life. Do what you feel you have a flair for doing, and if you are good enough at it, the money will come

- Greer Garson

A number of factors act as motivators, and money usually tries to be the top most. It involves some serious thinking at your side to come up with the right choices or the probability of your searching for another option within 2-5 years would be high.

Most people change their careers at least 7 times over the course of their life!

However unbelievable that sounds, it's a fact!

How successful you'll be in making transitions among careers can at least be partially attributed to the amount of career planning and preparation you've done.

Different people are driven by different things at different points of their career. It's all about getting your priorities clear and fulfillment will be on its way home!

Now, every job-seeker needs to take the time to step way from the day-to-day grind of work and do some introspection. It will set the base for the development and enhancement of your careers options.

Career planning isn't just restricted to people who are frustrated and confined to their job, it also applies to those who are happy with their current jobs too.

There is always room for improvement and scope to grow. You just need to explore the realms of your potential and the options at hand.

This book is about career management, and it can serve as a useful tool to anyone who wants to make a success of their working life, and that's possible only if people find fulfillment in their work.

We will help you determine the vital criteria in your chosen career and help you produce a winning CV that sells you right off the page!

We will also look at varied interview techniques and how to prepare for them. We will also help you hone your negotiation skills to acquire better terms and conditions.

If a career in HR is what you are after, this book will be an essential resource in your quest for getting that role that you want and deserve.

We spend more than half of our lives working, so we might as well get it right by putting in a little effort.

It pays to make the right career choice and it doesn't matter whether you are preparing for your first job or looking for a career change – it is never too late.

Here's something to think over.

Say, it's your endeavor to be in a high profile executive role, but you also aspire of having a balanced personal life, wherein you intend to reach home by 7 every evening.

Now these are very conflicting goals; one usually gets compromised to achieve the other effectively. If you try to manage both goals you might end up fulfilling neither and making yourself unhappy in the process.

This is where career management can come real handy. It helps you sketch a career plan that see to it that your personal and professional goals, aspirations, values and belief are in perfect cohesion.

If this balance is not achieved, then you might achieve a lot on your professional front but at the expense of your personal happiness.

Is it worth it?

There are no rights or wrongs here – but you need to start with the end in mind.

Hence before we go into techniques and strategies to manage your career, we need to spend some time looking at your own overall life plan and where your career fits in your scheme of things.

BEGIN WITH THE END IN MIND

Know where you are going in life!

To achieve that, there's only one place to start that's inside your mind.

Creating a vision and a mission of what you want out of life will provide you with some direction and momentum to move forward and manage your career.

If you have laid out your goal and a plan with a realistic and worthy vision for your life ahead, you will notice how differently you perceive and react to things.

A compelling vision will make you feel good about yourself. Also, it leaves you with a clear mind, which allows you to make rational career choices and decisions and fit them in your scheme of things, keeping the bigger picture in mind.

Ask yourself the following question:

What do I really want to get out of life?

A true mission has to express your purpose for existence.

Here we have devised a series of questions for you to ask yourself. These questions will probe your mind and help you get valuable insights. You can aim at some soul searching and seeking answers to those unanswered questions.

Take the time now, and spend 30 minutes answering them before you move on.

- When you were a child, what did you want to be “When you grew up?”
- Name three people who have had the biggest influence on your life and why?
- If you could do anything for a living and get paid whatever you wanted, what would you do?
- Name your top three achievements of your life so far?
- What was so special about them?
- When you are at your most happiest in life? What are you doing?
- Name three people that you admire the most?
- Why do you admire them? What characteristics and qualities do they have?

- Have you ever done anything for anyone less fortunate than yourself?
- If yes, what was it? If no, why not?
- What are your greatest strengths?
- What could you do in life to maximize your strengths?
- Is there anything that you would be willing to put everything on the line for?
- What would it be and why?
- If you could have your time over again, what would you have done so far?
- What results are you currently having in your life, which you are pleased with?
- What results are you currently having in your life which you are not pleased with?
- If you could pass on a piece of wisdom to the whole world that you have learned in your life to date, what would it be?
- What do you value the most in your life?
- What would you really like to do with your life?

This exercise will get you thinking ... really thinking...

Answer these questions honestly, that's very important, or exercise would be either futile or the results misleading.

We all have had dreams and aspiration while growing up, but somehow we lose them as we get caught up in the wheel of life. Our aspirations take a back seat and our commitments and responsibilities take over.

Now is the time to start from scratch again and achieve that heavenly feeling called contentment!

Take a glance over your answers to these questions and then move on to the questions that follow.

Q.

The purpose of my life is to

Writing a mission statement can be a very enriching experience and it is better to think it through and not rush through it. It's your very purpose of existence that you are laying down after all!

If possible you should try and get away from your routine environment. Go for a walk, or take a short break – your mission in life is far too important to be skimmed over.

When people lack a mission in life, they tend to just have materialistic goals and want “things”. Not that it is wrong. Material things can only serve as a means but confusing the means to be the end can create problems later on.

Here's an example.

Charles, a 55-year old bachelor, had till now thought he had lived a full life. His glass factories are now spread across six countries, churning out more and more money. He has properties across the globe, and lives life as he wants to.

But something happened when he became 55 years old. He discovered he had cancer, a brain tumor that will only give him 6 more months to live. Undergoing treatments, he was cut off from the web of activities and people he was previously involved in.

During this period he met some people who were also suffering from the same disease as he was. But his 'new' friends had other problems. They were actively making plans as to what they should do in the next six or seven months so that their family will miss them less.

It was thus suddenly one day that Charles realized he had nothing to leave to anyone. The Managing Director of his company had as such been the one running his business and he will continue to do so.

His passing away was not going to make a difference to anyone....

That was a really sad realization, but there was not much now that Charles could do.

You might not understand the full meaning of Charles's realization, however, the bottom lines are 'what difference has our life made...what will we be leaving behind for our family, society, world?'

If it was nothing much, then how do we say our life had been a success?

If you are going to end up with superficial goals, they might make you happy in the present but when you have achieved it all, you still might end up asking yourself "Is that all there is?"

We have time in our hands now, and we can make a difference.

There's another exercise to help you plan. How about penning down your obituary?

Yes, it might seem a little too early to write that, but penning down what you want the world to remember you by can really help you set a higher bar for yourself.

This is an ideal way to get you to think about what you want to do in your life time.

As you look back on your life, you may find that your goals and desires may have been a bit skewed. Hang on! This is how the revelations will come through and get your life in perspective for you.

Instances which you brush off as usual happenings in your life, might strike out and appear in a different light if you look at them this way. Make sure your priorities are in place.

For starters, answer these...

What do you want to be remembered for when you pass on?

What has your life been about?

Have you made any difference in others lives?



This is where we end our first module. Hope you did find some answers, and things are clear and in focus.

What is Success?

Everyone in life wants to be a success.

Success is a state of mind. You are able because you think you are able!

Different people perceive success differently at different points in their lives. When you are younger you identify success with a high flying career and oodles of disposable income. On the flipside, as you grow older you are more susceptible to fall prey to the fallacy of success being the proportional to your social standing.

Whatever your definition is, it sure is susceptible to change and there's always scope for improvement.

One thing that is common amongst everyone is that everyone wants to be successful and conforms to the fact that there's nothing so fulfilling in life!

Just take time out and think what success actually means to you.

Jot down your definition of success in the space below or on a piece of paper.

Think hard and think clear. Make sure you are specific.

Do not carry on reading this until you have done so.

If you haven't filled in the above space do it now! Don't cheat yourself!

A number of factors influence your definition of success.

How is your definition of success formed?



- Your upbringing
- Your beliefs
- Your traits
- Your attitude
- Your peers
- Society
- The crests and troughs you have been

Subconsciously you have encompassed all of the above factors while putting down what success means to you.

All of the above will contribute as to what success means to you.

Success is not necessarily achieving every goal you set, but how enriched you came out striving to achieve it. Don't shun your mistakes; take them in your stride because these are nothing but valuable life lessons, which in hindsight look like golden words of advice thrown at you by life itself.

There is a myth that states that people are born winners or born losers.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

There are techniques, methods and ways of behaving that will enable and help you to succeed. Certain latent attributes can determine whether you will succeed or not. These are not attributes you need to inculcate; we all have them. All you need is a little clarity of thought and voila the revelations will rain in!

You owe it to yourself to get the most out of your life.

The worst thing that you can do is to look back in 40 or 50 years time and say, "I wish I had done this" or "I wish I had done that"

So don't shy away from treading where your heart is set!

Making sure, you are in the right career will solve half of your life's problems.

If you feel life hasn't been too fair with you, don't lose hope it's never too late to make a stint in the marathon called life, just needs a little revving up, and you have come to the right place!

FORMING A VISION FOR YOUR CAREER

It is extremely important to know where you are going in life.

In this section, we will work out exercises that will help you enhance your career choices and explore other options. We aim to help you form a career vision and determine your perception of an ideal day at work!

Forming a vision is an engaging and an introspective exercise. However, it can be optimally formed if you rid yourself of any “life conditioning” that you have had in the past.

We want you to unlearn it all and do this exercise with a blank fresh mind. This way you can keep biases and prejudices as bay and look at the options available to you in a totally different light.

Don't think about the advices and suggestions given to you by your family and friends. This is all about exploring what you want and where do you see yourself. Steer clear, that there is no such thing as an ideal or unconventional career. What suits you is the ideal and right career for you.

Don't get bogged down by the intentions of your parents to find a respectable career that they did not have.

This is the chance for YOU to create the career that YOU want!

So kick start the process and rid yourselves of all personal barriers such as lack of motivation or laziness and of all the expectations and aspirations of your friends and family.

Career Planning Exercises

The following exercises will help you to determine your likes and dislikes as well as your career aspirations.

Please take your time in answering the questions.

As you answer the questions, you will start to formulate some conclusions as to what is “right” and what is “wrong” in a career for you.

Q

LIFESTYLE

Identify the key characteristics of your ideal lifestyle – what would they be?
i.e. 2 hours quality time with the kids every night, earn £30,000 pa, 30 minute travel time to work, 2 holidays per year, work in a team, etc.

Does/will your current career allow you to achieve your ideal lifestyle?

Q

LIKES/DISLIKES

What are your likes and dislikes at work? Make 2 lists below.

What activities do you enjoy?

Which activities would you rather avoid?

Does your current job have more likes or dislikes?

Q

STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES

Put yourself in the shoes of a potential employer.

What are your key strengths and weaknesses?

Think experience, qualifications, training, ability, attitude and knowledge.

Q

PERSONALITY

Does your current career fit with your personality type? Are you an introvert or an extrovert?

Do you like to learn by doing or by thinking and reflecting?

Do you like variety and changes to the work that you complete or do you like routine and certainty?

Q

Ideal Day at Work

Describe in as much detail your ideal day at work - what sort of things would you be doing?

Q

Ideal Career – Characteristics

Based on all that you have written in this book so far, determine the ideal career for you.

Imagine you are a kid again, what would you like to be when you grow up?!

HOW TO PUT TOGETHER A WINNING CV?

The abbreviation CV stands for Curriculum Vitae, which literally means Life List.

The purpose of writing a CV is to sell you and your unique skills to get an interview. It refers to what you have done in your career till date and specifics regarding your qualifications.

It aims at providing enough evidence of your skills to whet the employer's appetite; don't write your life story.

It covers essential information about you as a person; stating your hobbies/interests, your personal profile and your life objectives, all of which should be covered in the document.

A good CV will add value to your job-searching plan. It's the quality of your CV, which will determine whether or not you get an opportunity to present your case at the interview.

Remember that a CV is an organized document. You need to work from a specific template or draft every time you send it over to a prospective employer.

You will only really use your standard CV when you write to an employer on spec, which means that an application to a company that hasn't necessarily posted any vacancies but which you would like to apply to.

Let's go through writing your personal CV step-by-step and we will give you some tips along the way too.

Getting Started

Before you sit down to write your CV, compile all your information and sort it within the sections we have suggested as a CV layout.

Q

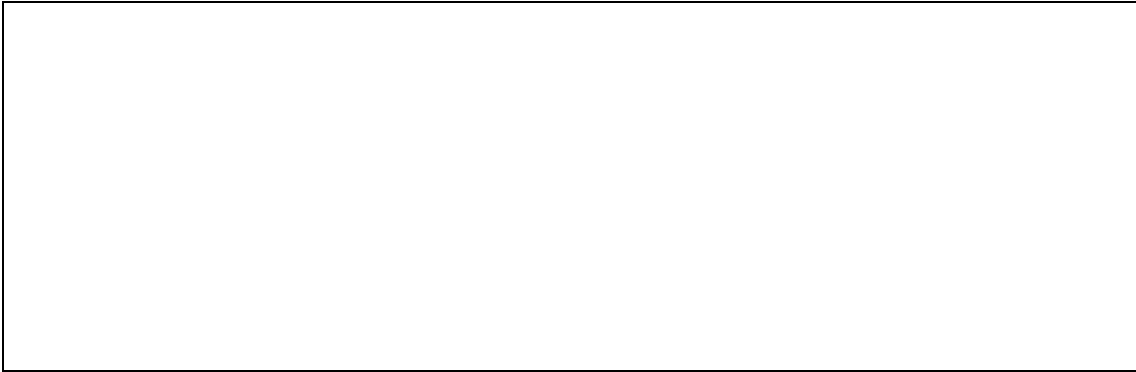
Write down every qualification that you have

Q

List all the jobs you have had

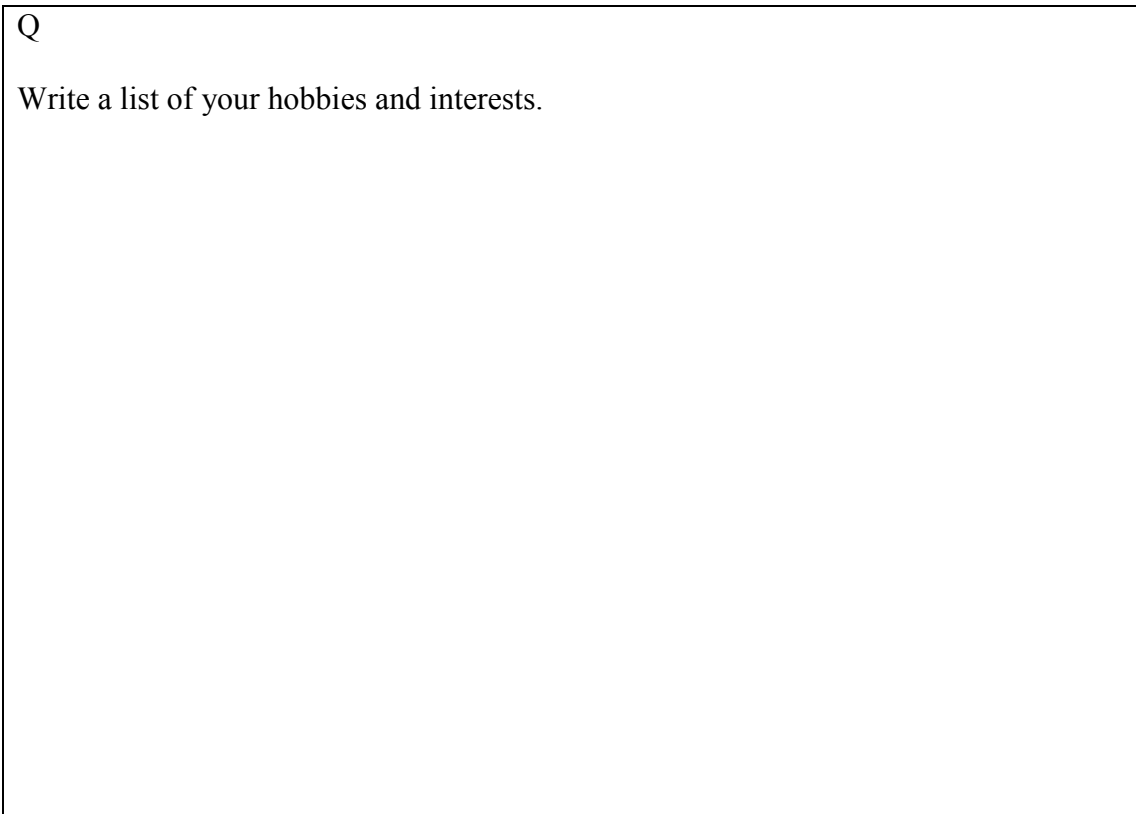
Q

What additional training have you acquired over the years?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, occupying the upper middle portion of the page.

Q

Write a list of your hobbies and interests.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, occupying the lower middle portion of the page, intended for writing a list of hobbies and interests.

Q

What are your personal attributes and assets? What are you good at? Are you organized, dynamic, a good team-worker etc

Make sure you have access to a computer or a typewriter and a printer, a handwritten CV doesn't make the required impact.

Use a disk to store your CV on for future use.

It is always a good idea to have more than one copy of your CV on a couple of disks, just in case you lose one or something goes wrong with it.

This way you won't have to start from scratch every time you want to send out your CV for an application.

Your CV is the first impression a prospective employer gets of you – Don't make it the last!

According to statistics,

85% of CVs go in the bin; talk about being read, they don't even get as much as a glance.

So make sure yours catches enough interest and does not get over looked – you are the receiving end after all!

CV Layout

The following are the sections that should be displayed in your CV, typically in the order suggested although some variations can be incorporated, these are mentioned later in the document, for now look at this layout:

Name:

Address:

Telephone No:

Mobile No (optional):

E-mail (optional):

Make sure you make no error in this section, as the employer needs to know where and how to get hold of you.

Give those contact details where you will be available at most times. If you don't have a telephone number ask a friend or a family member to take messages for you, but remember to include that information in your covering letter. (A separate template on how to write a covering letter can also be availed)

Specify your full name and include the post-code, to make sure that any mail they may send, reaches you promptly.

You can place your name at the left hand corner like above or...

On the right hand corner as such or...

In the middle on the top of the first page...

However, starting from the right or in the middle is the most preferred option today.

It's at your discretion how do you want it to look, as long as it is displayed before anything else.

You can make your **name stand out** by making the **font larger and bold** and then have your address and the rest of the information in smaller writing than the rest of your CV.

Make sure it's clear and in legible font of an ideal size, and that it's readable without a magnifying glass.

Look at this for an illustration:

CURRICULUM VITAE

James Smith

78 James Street, Smithville, JS2 9SJ
Tel no: 1111111111, Mobile: 2222222222
Email: jamesmith@jamesmith.co.uk

Some Criteria before you start

- *Here are some vital points that you should keep in mind as you construct and send out your CV.*
- *Your CV should never be more than 3 pages long. If you have just left school or university it shouldn't be any longer than 2 pages.*
- *Write your CV on quality paper. Don't get watermarked paper because most CVs get photocopied and a watermark will not show up on a photocopy.*
- *Don't send a photo copy of your CV.*
- *Make sure that it is free of coffee stains and the paper is straight.*
- *Don't fold your CV. Get an A4 size envelope to put it in even if you are handing it in personally.*
- *Post it first class. Second class gives the impression that you are only mildly interested in getting a job – that the job is a second priority to you.*
- *Your CV has to be typed, not hand written.*
- *Don't use abbreviations in your CV, the person that reads it may not understand what you are talking about and you risk your CV being put in the bin.*
- *Don't include funny little pictures, or quirky little symbols it isn't a party invitation.*
- *Don't lie on your CV. You will only be found out. If not at the interview then once you have started your new job, and you risk being fired. You don't want that on your next CV. Make yourself look as good as possible but you don't need to lie to do that.*

Career Objectives

Stating career objectives in your CV gives it the required seriousness and shows you as being a focused and solved person.

A career statement if written well can act as a focal point from which the employer analyses your CV.

Put your career objectives or a career statement right after stating your name and contact details.

Your career objectives/statement should reflect what you intend to do with your career now and in the future.

It will give the employer an indication about your career aspirations and level of ambition and commitment to the job.

However, the employers want to know what you can do for them, and not what you want from them. So make sure you keep that in mind while forming it.

For the format, you can choose to make a box around it if you want to highlight it; if that is your intention then go for it!

Here is an example of a career statement where our fictitious job hunter James Smith is looking to get an IT Project Manager's role for a high profile company.

James Smith is a highly motivated and ambitious manager with a thorough knowledge of IT systems that has been built up over a successful 23 year period. A thorough and proven professional, James is hard working, determined and is looking for a fresh challenge that will stretch him. James has managed and delivered several large projects including a European expansion programme where James was responsible for a budget in excess of £20 million.

Work History

Your work history should have a brief but precise background about where you come from. This section is dedicated to the jobs you have had in the past and the one you have now if applicable.

Make sure you put your work history before your formal qualifications, if you are currently working. If you just finished studying, you should put formal qualifications first.

From the list you made earlier with all your past jobs, make a list in reverse chronological order. Specify dates, job title/position and company name. Also, provide a brief write up about your job profile, also try and incorporate your responsibilities and achievements.

Look at specific examples mentioned below.

Put the date first, then the name of the company you worked for followed by your job title in bold, as follows:

01/09-date Company name Sales & Marketing Executive

After this, lay down a brief overview of your job profile and details about the responsibilities. You can put this in bulleted look to give the CV a sharp look.

Main Duties & Responsibilities (this is effectively the main points from your job description)

- *To maximise industry sponsorship and advertising sales for company name products and services for industry and other suppliers*
- *Etc.*

Now list down your achievements for the particular job, also in bulleted form, as follows:

Achievements

- *Increased sponsorship and funding levels by 10% over a one year period*
- *Etc.*

Put though specific and related achievements, in sync with your core responsibilities. This will show how you evolved in the organization and how it benefited the organization.

This is an opportunity to show your prospective employer what you are capable of and all the success you have achieved.

Too many CV's focus on what you are responsible for rather than what you have achieved. Make sure the onus in your CV is on the latter.

Employers want to see evidence that you have done a good job in the past, and this is where you lay it out for them to see.

So the work history will look like this:

DATE COMPANY NAME IT PROJECT MANAGER

Main Duties & Responsibilities

- Main duty 1
- Main duty 2
- Etc.

Achievements

- *Achievement 1*
- *Achievement 2*
- *Etc.*

Continue this process for the second job also.

If you studied, worked at home, or anything else, and then just mention the job you did before that.

If you have only one job to list, then milk it for whatever it is worth. Make sure no important detail is left out.

Make sure you account for any gaps in your CV in your covering letter.

It might be something as simple as staying back home to look after your family. Don't forget that looking after your family is a full time job and teaches you quite many invaluable lessons you can incorporate in your career.

Now, if you have a third or more jobs, you can't follow the same approach for them, this will make your CV too long, eating up valuable space.

In such a case, after you mention the date, company name and the job title, list down a few bulleted points describing your achievements.

If you have worked at more than 5 places, then you should consider grouping some together.

For example, if you had a year where you tried out a couple of jobs you may write them within the same heading and briefly explain them.

Remember that, if you are over 35, you don't necessarily need to include jobs that you took up during your school/college/university years, unless you think it will increase your chances of getting an interview.

Formal Qualifications

This section is headed as Education sometimes, however we think putting it under qualifications sounds more relevant.

List your qualifications in a reverse chronological order, just like you did with your work history.

Here you can mention the apprenticeships and traineeships you would have undertaken, also mention if you have undergone any work based training during your career.

If you have achieved a high level of formal qualifications you need not include all your GCSE's or equivalent, a mention of when and where you did them would suffice.

If you hold a degree, you may want to list your subjects and your dissertation title.

Follow this format, put the date first, followed by the qualification and then the name of the institute you got them from.

Other Achievements

You can list down your other qualifications and training you might have, not necessarily relevant to the job, but still it shows how eclectic and active you have been otherwise. Some examples would be:

- *Life saving diplomas*
- *Coaching qualifications*
- *First Aid courses*
- *Piano levels*
- *Etc.*

Be as brief as possible here, make sure it is in bulleted form and you can include dates too. Make a very concise and short list, putting down only some of the relevant achievements.

You may add your linguistic skills here, if you possess any. However, if you speak more than two languages you can put them under a different heading, as it language skills add value your CV.

Personal Profile

In your personal profile you may want to include some or all of the following details:

- *Date of Birth*
- *Gender*
- *Vehicle Mobility – i.e. full current clean UK drivers license*
- *Marital Status*
- *Number of Children/dependants and their ages*

Put them as per your preference.

Interests & Hobbies

This is of the crucial sections of your CV. Most of us shrug this one off as unimportant; on the contrary, this is one of the sections employers really give quite a lofty weightage on.

Most people who apply for the jobs have similar qualifications and broadly similar work history. However, this is the section that differs and can act as the deciding factor for many positions.

This section tells a lot about the person, his interests and his attitude; giving the employer a sense of the soft skills, the person might possess.

So state your hobbies and interest, because this is where you can be different.

Most people like music, films, socializing, and some form of exercise/sports. But it isn't enough to just list these things.

Expand it. Make a little story out of it.

You can use phrases like:

“I work out regularly, although this is not a hobby to me, I consider it an important part of a healthy lifestyle.”

This gives the reader the information that you are a healthy person but not too obsessed with sports.

Also, instead of writing that you like socializing you can pad it out by saying:

“After a full week's work I know nothing better than gather my friends around my dinner table and share my culinary arts with them”

“After an hour of a hard workout down the gym, I relax to Mozart or spend an hour with my butterfly collection”

Try to make it flow and write about 5-6 sentences.

However, there are certain things you should keep in mind while putting down your hobbies and interests.

Don't write something down that you don't do on a regular basis.

If you love hiking but only do it in the summer, say so.

If you have done only one bungee-jump, it isn't a hobby and you shouldn't include it in your CV at all.

Apart from that, it is a dangerous past time and a prospective employer may get the impression that you will pose a health risk with too many days off work if you regularly undertake dangerous sports, etc.

If you do like dangerous sports, we would say steer clear it from your CV.

Spend a good amount of time to get this section right, it will definitely pay off.

References

This is and should be the last section on your CV.

Don't put your references down.

They can come back to you and ask for them.

They won't need them until after your interview anyway so they don't need them.

And you don't want them contacting your current, which could prove to be fatal if they are not aware about your job switching plan.

PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

Now that your CV has done its job, its time to start preparing for the interview.

Let's look at the different ways you can go about it and be ready for anything that the interviewer throws at you.

Many people believe that the interview is the hardest part of getting a job but I actually believe it is getting the interview that is the toughest.

After all, when someone is going through your CV you are not there to provide help if the reviewer has any questions – they merely make their minds up based on what you have presented there.

You should give yourself a huge pat on the back!

You made it through to step 2 – the interview!

Lot of different avenues are to be taken care of while preparing for an interview. Like a recent assessment of skills, interests, values, and accomplishments.

Research on the targeted company/organization and position can act as an added advantage.

Go over some typical and expected interview questions.

Besides, make sure you are equipped with details regarding the dress and appearance, knowledge of the location of the interview, what to expect, and protocols for follow-up.

Being prepared shows that you are all equipped for the job and qualities like initiative, proactiveness and enterprising nature come through, making an impact.

An interview is an opportunity to build up a mental picture in the minds of the interviewer and give them a peak into what you can do in the future.

With some careful planning and preparation, the job will be as good as yours!

Remember that the company has gone to a lot of time, effort and expense to get you where you are at in the selection process.

They would probably have:

1. Paid for a job advertisement
2. Hired a recruitment company
3. Spent time and effort producing a detailed job description

4. Spent time and effort producing a personal specification
5. Spent time and effort in planning out start dates and contracts
6. Spent time and effort in planning out an induction programme for when you start

The company has done its part of the task and they expect you to be well equipped and prepared too.

The cost of getting a wrong “fit” goes way beyond the financial implications of recruitment and selection, so they will be very cautious.

How To Prepare A Career Statement

During an interview the interviewer, asks causal questions to know more about your basic nature and attitude.

They typically ask open-ended questions like:

“Tell me about yourself?”

“What kind of a manager are you?”

“What are your strengths?”

Now whilst these questions on the outset seem to be asking for a certain type of specific answer, all of these 3 questions give you the opportunity to tell the interviewer almost anything – even something that you have prepared beforehand – like a career statement!

A career statement is a brief 20-second piece that highlights some of your most powerful and beneficial skills, behaviors, knowledge and experience.

Here are some examples:

“I am a highly motivated and ambitious person with a 23 year proven track record in delivering major projects from inception through to post implementation review”

“Having worked in HR all of my working life I have a vast experience of all of the elements in HR and have worked across multi-functional teams across 5 industries – there is not a lot that I haven’t seen”

Preparing these statements before hand gives you an edge, and besides these statements can be used for multiple questions just by amending them a bit here and there. Like in the questions we gave above you can answer with the statement to all, by just making some changes.

By having the career statement up your sleeve you can use it when the time is right.

Let's have a look at some examples:

QUESTION

“What are your strengths?”

REPLY

“Well, having worked in HR all of my working life I have a vast experience of all of the elements in HR and have worked across multi-functional teams across 5 industries – there is not a lot that I haven't seen. One particular strength of mine is that I am able to relate to people at all levels – I have found this be an essential skill over the years that I have had to master to become successful at what I do. ”

This way you can optimally use your career statement to answer the questions posed.

This approach shows you in a good light, as you are not going about it the conventional way with replies like “My strengths include xyz”.

You are conditioning the interviewer before you answer the question and you are providing him/her with some further evidence of how good you are.

The response sounds more professional as well.

Let's take another example:

QUESTION

“What kind of a manager are you?”

REPLY

“I would say that I am a highly motivated and ambitious manager. With a 23 year proven track record in delivering major projects I found that my style of being firm but fair gets the results. Being highly motivated myself means that I am able to motivate others easily....”

What you are doing here is using your career statement to lead into and actually answer the question that has been posed.

Preparation goes a long way!!!

Q

Think of three different roles or positions that you would like to apply for and for each one write down a career statement.

Why Should I Select You?

Along with a career statement, you need to have an answer to the following question:

“Please tell me, why should I select you?”

Now an interviewer might not come straight out with that direct question but somewhere down the line you are really going to need to sum up what you have to offer the company and it pays to do so without endless amounts of waffle!

Some call this your USP.

Unique

Selling

Proposition

The whole reasoning behind a USP is that you will be in competition with a number of candidates for the same role and you need to stand out from the rest.

The interviewer sees how you articulate your USP and other unconventional can you get other than the “I m a team player” or “I m very punctual”.

What will make you stand out from the rest?

What will make you so different?

What is your uniqueness?

Usually there are a number of candidates that will fit the specification for the job, perform well at the interview and be on the short list of 3 for the role.

This is where you have to score in and stand out from the rest.

Seeing as you are nearly all the same it will be the uniqueness and the USP that will sell you are a prospective employee.

Q

Make a list of your USP's.

What makes you unique?

What will make you stand out from the rest of the candidates?

Preparing Your Successes

Many a times when we come out of an interview there are certain things we wish we'd said differently or rather hadn't mentioned at all.

Preparation doesn't leave you dumb founded or stammering at unexpected questions. The interview is your only platform to show the interviewer your worth and capability.

This is where you show them how productive and successful you have been in the past and your chance to convince them about how successful you can prove to be in the future.

To have a smooth interview, think beforehand about the various successes you have had over the years, the key skills you can bring to the role and what you are good at.

Another important point to remember is that the interviewer will only know what you tell them!

They are not psychics!

You can't expect them to assume how good you are, what you are good at and all the things besides the ones mentioned in your CV you have done.

They will judge you based on what you portray yourself to them as. You have to tell them everything and assume that they know absolutely nothing about you!

Preparation in advance is critical for this.

Make a mental note of 5-20 key achievements, strengths, skills and attributes that you can call upon at will when the time is right.

However, there is a certain approach you need to follow as you talk about your strengths. You need to frame the answer in a manner that it sounds sincere and genuine without making you look too conceited.

Like for example, you shouldn't just say:

"I am very good with people"

Instead, mention your strength and then back it up with evidence from your work experience.

Being bashful in an interview hasn't helped anyone!

So in our example above let's assume you are going for a HR job:

“I would say that one of my main strengths is that I am very good with people. Having worked in a HR department with over 50 people I have had to work well in a team as well as on my own and I have been in constant contact with employees everyday helping them out with their problems and providing support for them”

Do you see how a simple question such as “Tell me your strengths?” can be used to your advantage?

Lets look at the response again:

“I would say that one of my main strengths is that I am very good with people. Having worked in a HR department with over 50 people I have had to work well in a team as well as on my own and I have been in constant contact with employees everyday helping them out with their problems and providing support for them”

Firstly, you have highlighted a strength – “very good with people”

Then you have given evidence that you have worked in HR before and since you are going for an job HR this is a vital point to bring up – “Having worked in a HR department”

You then pointed out that you have worked in a department “With over 50 people” This means that you have worked in a large team and most likely with a lot of experienced people.

After that you have pointed out further strengths and attributes!

“I have had to work well in a team” and “as well as on my own”

Means that you are a good team player, you have had to get on with other people but at the same time can work on your own and get things done so that you are not dependent on others!

“I have been in constant contact with employees everyday”

Once again evidence of working with others especially employees – if you are going to have contact on a regular basis with employees in the role that you are going for this will be a big plus point for you.

“Helping them out with their problems and providing support for them”

Brings out the qualities of you being helpful and friendly with your employees, with all the help and guidance you provide them for issues.

Use the following structure when answering questions like these:

Start off by saying:

“One of my key strengths is that... (mention your strength)

then

“In the past I have.... (link in your strength to your past experience)

then

“Which means that.... (give a benefit to your strength)

For example:

“One of my key strengths is that I can deal with difficult people effectively. In the past I have had to do this on numerous occasions when faced with difficult situations when in my previous HR role for example when I helped with the redundancies or when workers were asked to take a pay cut. This means that I have the skills and knowledge of how to handle tough situations that come up from time to time in a HR department”

Practice makes perfect!

Q

List down 5 of your key strengths and back this up with evidence.

Use the model as described before:

Start off by saying:

“One of my key strengths is that... (say what your strength is)

then

“In the past I have....(link in your strength to what you have done in the past)

then

“Which means that...(give a benefit to your strength)

KEY STRENGTH 1

“One of my key strengths is that...

“In the past I have...

“Which means that...

KEY STRENGTH 2

“One of my key strengths is that...

“In the past I have...

“Which means that...

KEY STRENGTH 3

“One of my key strengths is that...

“In the past I have...

“Which means that...

KEY STRENGTH 4

“One of my key strengths is that...

“In the past I have...

“Which means that...

KEY STRENGTH 5

“One of my key strengths is that...

“In the past I have...

“Which means that...

Q

Next, make a list of:

5 of your key skills and stress what you have done in the past and the benefits to the role that you are going for

5 key achievements in your working life

5 key achievements outside of work

MANAGING THE INTERVIEW

How To Answer Interview Questions

Many a times, people go all equipped bursting with confidence and prepared with all the probable answers, but one awry question and the all the confidence comes crashing down.

This could show you in really bad light. Sometimes you can't help as you can't necessarily know it all. But it's the way you tackle the situation and work around your answer is what the interviewers will judge you on.

An interview is all about answering questions and there are techniques and strategies you can use to answer the questions in a way that the job's assured.

Typically, within an interview you will be asked 3 types of questions.

QUESTION TYPE NUMBER 1

“Are you capable of doing the job?”

QUESTION TYPE NUMBER 2

“Will you do the job?”

QUESTION TYPE NUMBER 3

“Are you a team player and will you fit into the company?”

That's it!

The questions might be formed in a different way, but the basic intention behind most of them would revolve around these three core questions.

So make sure you're armed with competent and effective answers to these questions. This will not leave you baffled at a twisted question and definitely gives you an edge over other candidates.

It's easier when you know how!

Now let's see how to approach these questions and customize your answers if asked in an askew manner.

QUESTION TYPE NUMBER 1

“Are you capable of doing the job?”

Questions falling under this category are basically an attempt by the interviewer to probe into your past experiences and basically getting a sense of where you are coming from.

It's on the basis of your past experiences and achievements that the interviewer will assess how suitable or otherwise you are for the post you have applied for.

Don't get confused with askew questions, most of them can be responded to with the same answers. Relate the answers to what all you have done in the past and make sure you **PROVIDE EVIDENCE**.

Avoid vague statements such as:

“I have worked with all types of people from all different backgrounds”

“I have managed teams of up to 10 people in the past”

“I enjoyed working at BLOGS COMPANY”

These are just generalizations; they provide no substance or evidence.

Instead you should say:

“I have worked with all types of people from all different backgrounds this has meant that I have been able to build up a tool box of communication skills so I can get the best out of people and also know what motivates different people to get the job done”

Can you make out the difference?

Isn't the latter a making a powerful statement?

Start to think like an interviewer.

Ask yourself the “So what?” question.

This means that whatever you say in response to a question pretend that the interviewer says to you “So what?”

This will make sure that you provide benefits and real life evidence of what you have done, how you did it.

QUESTION TYPE NUMBER 2

“Will you do the job?”

Questions falling under this category are basically probing your motivation levels and comprehending your positive and negative character traits.

Such an assessment helps the interviewer an insight on whether you will do the job and what kind of approach would you adapt to work.

It is about your attitude and what you will bring to the workplace in terms of your outlook and positivity.

Now-a-days the onus has shifted from academic qualifications and work experience to various soft skills and personality traits a person possess. This is what sets you apart from people with similar caliber.

The interview tries to probes what kind of person you are with such questions. You need to convince them that your personality, your drive and your will to work hard is exactly what they need.

When answering the questions you need to bring in your motivations and your character traits into the conversation to prove to the interviewer that you are willing to do the job.

Some examples could include:

“I am a highly motivated person and like to get the job done”

“On occasions plans have to change and I am extremely flexible when this is concerned – if it is a case of staying behind to get the job done I will do this”

“I have only ever had 2 previous jobs that both lasted for a period of 8 years each. This means that I am fully committed and don’t look for jobs often and when this one came up it looked a perfect fit”

Food for thought:

“How can I demonstrate that I am willing to do this job?”

QUESTION TYPE NUMBER 3

“Are you a team player and will you fit into the company?”

On the basis of the answers you give the interview is building a mental picture of how you'd fit in to the scheme of things of the organization.

As per your answers they are determining your capabilities and the kind of attitude that you possess, also if it's good enough to get the job done.

Besides getting the job done, they also see how you fit into the bigger picture in terms of the organizational culture.

Companies have their own culture, missions, values and ways of working – they will be forming a mental picture of whether you will fit in with that or not.

Some offices have a more open and casual environment, while some others have a staid outlook.

How you look and come across at the interview will determine your best fit to the company and it is one of the most important factors in whether you will get the job or not.

Let's think about this for a moment.

You might have all the right qualifications and a proven track record and also a first class attitude, but if the interviewers don't think you would quite fit into the team and the company as a whole, it's skeptical that you might get the job at all.

Why is this?

The potential interviewers might perceive you as a misfit in the team. Maybe they'd found you to be disruptive in your attitude, which could cause a negative impact on the team.

Maybe if the organizational approach is very casual and light veined, and you came on as a serious business-like person, they might write you off considering you would be a total misfit in there.

The opposite is true if you are a very outgoing, outrageous person yet the company is known for conservatism and a serious outlook.

It will be a bad fit for you and a bad fit for the company.

The employers make sure of these factors before recruiting as they want to avoid any ridges or conflicts that would eventually affect the productivity and the basic decorum of the organization.

Make sure you also assess the company and how it fits your scheme of things and future plans. You don't want to end in an organization who's ways you cant get used to.

What's in it for the Employer?

We have discussed how important it is to stress on the benefits of your skills and past experience to your prospective future employer in an interview.

Articulation is the key, its all about the way you portray yourself and sell your image. Sometimes it is not straight forward to see the benefits in what you have done but if you question yourself enough times and use the "So what?" approach you will find that you start to produce some benefits almost straight away.

You need to answer the question:

"What's in it for me?"

This is exactly what the interviewer is thinking as he is assessing you. You need to step into their shoes and look what appeals to him.

What better way than to answer it for them!

Think of certain phrases that you can use that stress the benefits of your skills or experience.

Use these phrases at the end of talking about your skills and experiences:

Which resulted in...

Which meant that...

The benefits of this were....

The advantage of this were...

We achieved...

The end result was...

Interview Scheduled? What do you do next?

Want to know how you can go into an interview fully prepared, ready for any question, and ready to sell them on the best thing that ever happened to them—your candidacy?

You have an interview scheduled.

It's a company you'd really like to work for.

And, the job is perfect for you—it's just what you've been looking for.

Now, all you have to do is convince them!

Not so fast!

Besides being prepared with the answers to the interviewer's questions there are some other aspects you need to look at and be prepared with.

Whether your background provides a clear match for the job, or, it's something you've been working your way up to, and represents the next step for your career, following are some guiding tips for how best to present your background, skills and talent so that you can confidently ace that interview!

Research the company

Find out as much as you can about the company before you even go in.

Check up their website and other related information on the internet.

Make a note of the company's history, mottos, values, mission, and vision.

What have they already accomplished, and what are they striving for?

Knowing how you can contribute to the big picture will communicate a clear interest and capability.

Understand the position they are working to fill

Find out as much as you can about the position before you go in.

Why is it vacant—is it a refill or an add-on?

What are the responsibilities?

To whom does it report and who reports to it?

Consider your career plans

Where do you want to be in five years?

Then ask yourself: “Can this position be a step in the right direction?”

It may be a step to the side, or a step up, be sure it will ultimately help you achieve your career goals.

Know beforehand whom are you going to meet

Is this the individual to whom you will be reporting?

What is this individual’s role in the organization?

Does he have a say in the hiring process?

Outline your strengths

Complete the work that we covered in the earlier session

Know your strengths—you know this is a perfect job for you, but how can you convince them?

Outline your strengths—your skills, your qualifications, and your talents.

Don’t forget to mention your personal qualities—these will help the interviewer determine whether or not you are a “fit” for the role/department/organization.

If you are truly a team player, say so.

Manager of the year at your last job? Mention it!

This is not the time to be bashful.

Tackle the “challenges” question with confidence

As an interviewee, your least favorite question is probably:

“What are your challenges/weaknesses?”

Sometimes it's positively rephrased as

“If there were any skills or talents you would say/your references would say you could benefit from improving, what would they be?”

Either way, it still gets to the same thing—what don't you do well?

This is a part of the stress technique that a lot of interviewer's take on to, to see how you react when nervous and stressed out. They try and probe into you cool and break your confidence to see if you can really manage difficult situations or what it just some baseless blabber you were doing all this time.

However, like they say

“Disguise a negative with a positive”

This might be a good strategy, but be cautious while you are trying to cover up your weakness with a red flag e.g. a common false negative: I'm overly-independent—might be considered a red flag for an organization/role where teamwork is especially considered important.

Make sure you consider the role for which you are being interviewed, the company's mission/culture, and identify something that would not be considered a red flag.

Answering the weakness question

Now let's see how to go about answering the weakness question.

It is a question where the interviewer is trying to make you uncomfortable but frankly its one of the best questions that could be thrown at you at an interview.

It's giving it right up to you to fill him in on just how great you are!

If you learn the technique we are about to teach you, you can turn the weakness question into a MASSIVE positive for yourself.

Answer the weakness question incorrectly and you could very well hear the interviewer shouting “next!”

Answering the weakness question always seems to be difficult on the outset.

All of us would love to reply with “I HAVE NONE” but this would make you sound so full of yourself!

Ok, let's get to it!

To answer the weakness question you must first go into the interview with 2 that you have prepared earlier.

Answer the question "What are your weaknesses?" in the following way:

- Start by stating a positive about the weakness!

Say, you think you can be a little impulsive and impatient at times, to this you can say:

"Well, Mr Bloggs, I am very result oriented and see to it that the job gets done on time and to the highest quality I can assure. Although, I can get a little impatient at times when things do not go my way. I'm aware of this though and I am working to be a little less hard on myself"

How simple was that!

A weakness of impatience is suddenly turned into a MASSIVE positive.

Answer structure should be:

- State a positive "I am very....."
- What do you get "Because I like to....."
- Bring in the negative "Which means at times I have a tendency to....."
- "However, I know this and I am doing....."

When you go into the interview I mentioned you should have two of your weaknesses.

But that doesn't mean you come out with both of them, come out with the first one yourself. But make sure you don't tell the interviewer more than one weakness unless he asks for it.

If he/she does come in with this then you can use this:

Weakness = working too hard

"I am very dedicated to my job and give 100% in all that I do because I believe in giving it your all and being fully committed. However, I do have a tendency to working very long hours. This can make me feel tired at times. Although I've got the best intentions of the company and my work at heart, I need to pull back the throttle at times. I am aware of this and I am trying to lower the intensity at times, but it is very difficult!"

But make sure you are sincere in what you are saying, or else this can go really awry for you coming right in your face with questions to counter this.

So now it's your turn!

We have already done one for you.

Now write down 3 weaknesses that you have got and turn them into POSITIVE responses, just like we showed in the above example.

On Pace

You might be saying all the right things, but do you think you are going to get anywhere if the interviewer isn't able to understand a word of it!

Maintaining the pace as you speak and voice modulation - the art of being clear and audible, are big determinants in an interview.

The key is to try your best to "mirror" your interviewer's pace.

If you are an energetic, fast-talker, but your interviewer's idea of speed seems to be a turtle race, slow down!

And, vice versa.

This simple technique can give you a thumbs up in the "establishing rapport" requirement.

However, don't hesitate to pause when asked a question, or make sure you ask them to repeat or rephrase a question you are unclear about.

If you are asked for a specific example, or for a "time when," don't hesitate to ask for a minute and pause before coming up with the right response.

It's better to appear thoughtful, than uncertain by offering up a less than stellar example—so much for being quick.

The right way to go about it is informed and prepared to the core if you really care for the job.

See how you ace in the interview then!

And, practice—take on the role of interviewer.

If you were hiring, what would you want to know?

But, above all, be yourself—it's the glove that fits best anyway.

Impression Management

Doing all the preparation would sure come handy, but if you don't pay heed to how you present yourself it might spoil the party for you.

The first impression that you make as you enter the room and greet them is really the base of how things could go from there.

An affable dress sense, smart etiquettes and a confident body language can go a long way in giving you that initial edge.

Dressing The Part

During the interview it will not only be your skills, experience and personality that will be weighed up but also your appearance as well.

The way a person presents himself/herself through the way they dress up can tell a lot about the person. A shabbily dressed person might come on to be irresponsible and too casual in his approach to situations, while a smartly dressed one can give the impression of being organized in his/her ways.

Many people just go with what they would normally wear to any formal function but you really do need to give a lot of importance to your appearance – the interviewer will be giving you the once over from head to toe!

Besides the impression you will lay on the interviewer, more importantly it's your state of mind that will be boosted when you look great.

You look great and you feel great!

So get ready to take on the interview and show them what you're worth!

Here are some top tips for dressing the part:

Research the company - companies and even industries (for example Accountants) have definable corporate cultures. Find out what the corporate uniform is - and flaunt it!

Much as you may want to be an individual you will really want to play it safe at an interview. Interviewers will want to recruit team players so as wear the corporate uniform as close as you can.

Even if the company dress code is casual i.e. no ties, or that you can wear jeans etc, make sure your interviewing clothes are formal and conservative.

Select an outfit you have worn before that makes you feel good and confident.

A couple of days before the interview go over your clothes with a fine tooth comb! Look for any repairs that need doing, missing buttons etc. It's better to find them then than on the morning of the interview!

Make sure everything must be clean, neat and ironed.

Body Language

Body language plays a very important role in an interview.

It can make or break your chance to get through it.

We might be saying something but if our body language doesn't necessarily relate to it, you might be digging your grave right there.

When asked about your strengths, you might state that you are a confident person ready to take on anything, but if you don't feel confident on the inside it shows in your weak body language. There's nothing worse than saying something and portraying some thing else.

What we communicate through our non-verbal actions and signals always has a direct impact upon whether we are successful or not.

Experienced interviewers can easily look through people and read them.

They will catch you right on the moment you try to fib around with them.

The interviewers can pick up "clues" as to whether you really mean what you say, whether you are being honest and your state of mind, all by reading your body language!

It's important to make eye contact while talking to someone.

It's a general perception that the lack of eye contact suggests anything from shyness and insecurity to the inability to tell the truth.

Some "clues" are obvious like sweating or fidgeting, while others are not.

For example, if someone rubs their nose or covers their mouth when talking this often comes across that they are hiding something or that they are telling a lie – so be careful if you find yourself doing that!

Chances are that the person you interviewed with has made it a point to look for 'signs' that will help him 'read' people more effectively.

Here are some of the signs in greater detail. They will help you to put the right image across to the interviewer

To come across as open and warm try –

- Open-lipped smiling
- Open hands with palms visible,
- Unbuttoning coat upon being seated.

To come across as confident –

- Maintain eye contact
- Have your head up
- Use hand gestures while talking
- Walk with a purpose and have an upright posture
- Have a “firm” handshake

To avoid coming across as nervous move away from –

- Fidgeting
- Waffling with your answers
- Using the same phrases
- Coughing
- Yawning
- Touching your face/hair
- Moving feet or twiddling thumbs

To avoid coming across as defensive move away from –

- Folding your arms
- Head looking down
- Closed body language
- Rolling of the eyes
- Touching your face while talking
- Frowning
- Tight-lipped grins

So steer clear, and make sure you make all the right moves out there!

Relaxation And Affirmation Before The Interview

Relaxing yourself before going in the interview is very essential. Your head is so full with all the things to say and do.

So if you keep on going through them like till the last minute you might be too stressed out to even speak in the interview.

Relaxation before going in is the key to a smooth sailing interview.

But relaxation should not be looked at as an “indulgence” but rather a necessity.

Our bodies are designed to move, and our brains are designed to think, but both function far more effectively when we allow them a little respite and give ourselves time to relax.

What is relaxation?

Well, it’s different things to different people.

It can be anything that takes your mind off the worries and stresses of the day and allows you to loosen up.

It could be anything from reading a book, playing an instrument, writing a letter or doing embroidery, right through to walking, swimming and other forms of keep fit.

It is any activity that allows your conscious mind to switch off, allows your sub-conscious to take over, and enables you to “lose yourself” in your chosen pastime.

We have all had the experience of “losing ourselves” in an activity, suddenly looking at the clock and wondering where all the time went!

That’s the activity for you, where you are in such a sense of daze and merriment that you lose track of time and leave behind all your apprehensions and worries!

A particular way to use relaxation to improve confidence and develop a positive self-image is to combine relaxation with affirmation.

Visualization is a very powerful tool for developing affirmations and creating a positive self-image.

Give yourself a few moments to lay down in a quiet space.

You may like to put on some calming and relaxing music.

Allow your eyes to close and your mind to numb down.

Create a picture in your mind of how you will look when you have bags of confidence and a positive belief in yourself.

Dream away to glory; don't let anything hold you back.

Make the picture as big, bright and bold as you can.

If you can, make it into a movie.

With all the sounds effects and serene surroundings, feeling the temperature, or maybe even a breeze.

Now imagine how you would feel inside with all this confidence and self-belief.

Let this feeling fill you up, allow it to sink in and let it grow feeling it flow through your whole body.

Don't you feel good already?

Now allow an affirmation that captures how you look, sound and feel in your dream sequence, drift into your mind.

It may be something along the lines of:

“I am a strong, beautiful and calm woman.”

“I am a compassionate, decisive, leader.”

“I am a successful person”

“I am articulate and great at answering interview questions”

Repeat these affirmations to yourself – you may say it out loud or inside you head.

When you feel ready, take a deep breath, open your eyes, stretch and wake up.

You will feel calm, relaxed and rejuvenated.

Like a reformed person – filled with all the confidence and energy in the world.

Set aside a few minutes each day to sober down, relax, and play your movie in your mind's eye.

As your movie plays along let your affirmation run through your mind and allow the good feelings to permeate through each and every part of you.

Experience the feelings of self-confidence and positive self-image in every bone and every muscle in your body.

As you allow your mind and body to relax, play your movie, and recite your affirmation, you are training your mind and body to behave in a more confident way and you are, in turn, enhancing your own self-image.

You will notice yourself doing things slightly differently – you will begin to walk taller, you will begin to speak up a bit more, and these little things will grow and develop into profound changes as you become a more relaxed and confident person with a positive self-image.

Popular Questions Asked At Interviews

Here are some of the most popular asked interview questions.

It would be a good idea to go through them and write down your customized response.

Just imagine going into an interview armed with the questions and answers beforehand!

Just make sure you don't get confused with too much information.

Take in what you can retain, no point stuffing up and purging senseless later.

However, go over these questions you will cover 95% of the questions that will ever get asked.

This will boost your confidence!

Questions:

1. Tell me about yourself?
2. Why do you want this job?
3. Why did you apply for this job?
4. What do you expect from this job?
5. What are your strengths?
6. What are your weaknesses?
7. What are you good at?

8. What are you not so good at?
9. What sort of a person are you?
10. What do you know about us?
11. How do you manage your day?
12. What type of a manager are you?
13. What interests you most at work?
14. What do you look for in a member of your team?
15. What are your interests?
16. What do you like doing outside of work?
17. What do you like to do in your spare time?
18. Why do you want to leave your current job?
19. What motivates you in life?
20. Where do you see yourself in the next 5 years?
21. What are your ambitions?
22. How do you work in a team?
23. How would you deal with difficult people?
24. How do you manage conflict?
25. How do you perform under stress?
26. When given a task, how do you generally go about it?
27. What value addition do you think you can bring to this role?
28. What role do you play in a team?
29. Where do you see this role in 6 months time?
30. At position do you see yourself in the company in another 2-3 years?

31. What salary are you looking for?
32. What package are you looking for?
33. Talk me through your work history?
34. Do you like to work as part of a team or on your own?
35. How many other jobs have you applied for recently?
36. What training have you had in the past?
37. How do you get the best out of people?
38. Have you got any questions for us?

Asking Questions

As the interview proceeds, you might realize there are some things you would like to know about the company and your role in it!

You should use this as an opportunity to demonstrate some of your key skills for the role once more.

To this end, you can make a mental note of it as they come and pose them typically at the end of the interview.

Usually the interviewers ask if you have any questions towards the fag end of the interview, this is when you pose them. However, if they don't ask you should make sure you are clear and go ahead ask your question anyways.

But steer clear of the kind of questions you ask.

Instead of just asking a question like:

“How many people will I be working with in my team?”

Bring in a strength statement first of all and then ask the question like:

Q => “Have you got any questions for us?”

A => “Well, being a team player I always stress the importance of working as a team, I'd be interested in finding out how many people I will be working with?”

Do you see how more powerful this response is?

The beauty of this type of response is that you can bring up any additional strengths, skills or experiences that you have not discussed to date with the interviewer.

Use this format:

“Being a(highly motivated person)
I would like to know.....”

or

“I have always done xyz in the past.....
what will xyz be like in this role.....”

Q

Think about the following questions that you can ask the interviewer and rephrase them in your own words using a benefits statement at the beginning:

Example:

Q = "How many people will I be working with in my team?"

Rephrased = "Well, being a team player I always stress the importance of working as a team, I'd be interested in finding out how many people I will be working with?"

Q = "How much responsibility will I get?"

Rephrased =

Q = "What are the chances of future progression?"

Rephrased =

Q = "What training and development will I get?"

Rephrased =

Q = "When are you looking to appoint the role?"

Rephrased =

HOW TO NEGOTIATE FOR THE BEST DEAL

Negotiation is an art, you need to go about it very carefully otherwise you will end up spoiling all the goodwill and brownie points you gained for yourself over the interview.

Unless there is a fixed package for the role in which you are applying, it is standard practice to discuss about your terms and conditions at the end of an interview.

However, a lot of people feel uncomfortable to talk about money and what they want.

This need not be the case!

You can act in the situation by reading the orientation of the interviewer. If you can see that the company is keen then you do have a considerable amount of power!

Here are some tips and pointers on how to get what you think you are worth!

Only ever talk about pay and conditions from a position of strength

You don't want to start negotiating over the package even before they are sure of hiring you. Keep your eyes and ears open and get into the act only when you feel that the company wants you and is interested in employing you.

Putting that you want £20,000 and a car in your covering letter is not going to get you very far!

Try to avoid talking about pay and conditions until as late as possible.

That means:

Do not bring it up on your CV
Do not bring it up in your covering letter
Try to avoid it at your first interview

Try to leave it as late as possible until you are in the room with a decision maker who has the authority and that's when you play your card.

Do your homework and prepare beforehand

Just as you would prepare to answer interview questions you need to do some pre-work in order to discuss your terms and conditions as well.

Set a minimum worth for yourself and also an ideal maximum amount you would be happy with.

But the question is how do you determine these figures?

Ideally you would have some sort of idea as to the salary range and benefits package before you applied for the job.

Start by finding out the standard pay scale for the post you are applying for in the industry. Find out how good a pay master the company is and the different kinds of incentives and perks they provide to their employees.

If the salary said circa £30,000 for example you know that it needs to be around this figure.

What happens is that this figure would probably be median point of a salary scale so the range could go from £25,000 through to £35,000.

Ask yourself “Would I be happy with £25,000?” and “Am I worth £35,000?”

Go in with a figure that serves your expertise and experience right.

How to respond to the salary question

The time has come!

It is time to discuss your salary requirements.

Don't out rightly go up and give out the figures you have in mind.

Make sure what you are playing with before getting into the number game.

Make the interviewer come out with his figure if you can manage.

Here is a great response to the question:

“What are your salary requirements?”

Response:

“This is the first time we have mentioned money, could you tell me what the salary range is for someone with my experience and qualifications?”

What you are doing here is trying to reveal the salary range what the company has to play with. So you can see if it fits your scheme of things and accordingly you can quote your figure.

Your first objective is to get a salary range out on the table so that you can compare it to what you wanted.

Poker Face Time

When the salary range is revealed it is very important that you do not show any emotion whatsoever – whether you are delighted with the offer or not maintain a poker face!

Pay close attention to your body language signals.

Don't look too happy or too disappointed

Maintain eye contact

Do not fidget or move your legs

Do not touch your face or hair

Just keep exactly the same posture and body position as you had before the salary range was revealed to you.

Giving out subtle expressions at this stage is spoiling it all!

What To Do With the Salary Range

Now that the salary range has been revealed you have a number of options.

Let's assume that the salary range is £20,000 - £30,000

Accept

You can say "The upper end of the salary range is what I had in mind"

If you are happy with the range and it is what you want then there is nothing stopping you from agreeing there and then to it.

Bear in mind however that the range that the employer gives you is normally always open for negotiation at the top end.

So don't succumb to it and try to get a higher figure. You never know, you could get it if you are a good catch for the company.

Counter bid

You can say "What I had in mind was £25,000 - £35,000"

You would put this counter offer in if the salary that you wanted was £25,000+

You will need to go over your USP's again to remind the employer why you are worth that little bit extra and what you will bring to their company.

Play it up with conviction for the desired impact!

Sit on the fence

You can say "Thanks for the figure. Could I have some time to think it over?"

This is a better option than rejecting the figures as in our last example below.

If the salary range is below what you expected it is better to take some time out to think through what it means for you and your family rather than express your dissatisfaction pronto!

It will also give the employer time to weigh up whether they are running the risk of losing you at this late stage, you never know he might just up the range considering the chances.

Reject the salary range

You can of course reject the range completely but we do not recommend this!

It is difficult to find a win-win situation for yourself and the company if you come flat out with that you do not want this position because of the salary alone.

If all the other factors appealed you and also the interviewer maybe something could be worked out so don't steer clear of the situation.

It is better to take time out and "Sit on the fence" for a couple of days.

Cost/Benefit

No one but you have to stand up for your talents, experience and the skills that you bring to the role. You need to work out a cost – the effort you put in an benefit- your gains, before you seal the deal.

It will not be enough just to say:

"I am worth £25,000"

Instead you need to justify the reasons why you are worth what you say you are.

For example, if you are vastly experienced in the subject and will not take long to "hit the ground running" then explain this to your employer.

If you can start to make an impact in month 2 for example when there is a 6 month “honeymoon” period you are giving the company 4 months of additional value than if they recruited someone else and they took 6 months to get up to speed.

The Overall Package

It is not just the salary you can negotiate on.

There is a whole list of additional benefits that can come as part of the package.

These can include:

- Profit share
- Equity plans
- Non-contributory pension
- Holiday
- Health care
- Child care
- Performance related pay
- Gym membership
- Relocation allowance
- Sick pay
- Cars
- Expense accounts
- Maternity/Paternity leave
- Paid for courses for higher education

If there is no movement in salary for example, they might be willing to grant you an additional 5 days paid holiday or they might be willing to pay for that degree that you have always wanted to take.

Most companies have this, so give it your best shot!

If you don't ask, you don't get!

Q

How would you reply to the following responses when negotiating for your salary:

Interviewer response:

“Your requirements exceed the pay range for this role”

Your response:

Interviewer response:

“We do not have the budget for what you are asking”

Your response:

Interviewer response:

“Your qualifications and experience do not warrant £25,000 per annum”

Your response:

Interviewer response:

“We cannot simply offer you any more than £22,000”

Your response:

WHAT TO DO AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Congratulations!

You've had the interview and you can now breathe a sigh of relief!

Loosen up! Go for a hike!

You have done all that you could, not it's their call to decide whether this is your calling or not!

Remember no matter how it went; there are no failures only outcomes.

Learn from each interview – you will only improve with practice.

Answer the following questions:

1. What went well from the interview?
2. What would I do differently if I could do it again?
3. Did I do enough preparation?
4. What questions did I struggle on?
5. What questions did I answer well?
6. Did I sell my benefits?

Feedback is the breakfast of champions!

If you were turned down for the job make sure that you call the employer and get feedback as to the reasons why.

You can use the information for next time – it will be most valuable for you.

And hey don't lose heart; there are thousand of other jobs out there!

INTERVIEW PLANNING AND PREPARATION PRO-FORMA

Got an interview lined up?

Use our planning and preparation pro-forma and ensure that you give yourself the best possible chance for success:

Q

Why have I applied for this position?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

What do I know about the company?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

What do I know about the role?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

What are my key strengths?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

What is my career statement?

What are my Unique Selling Propositions?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

What have been my 5 key achievements in previous roles?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

What questions do I have for the interviewer?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

What are my 2 main weaknesses – how will I answer this question?

Weakness 1:

Weakness 2:

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