

Tips, Techniques, Advice and Information to help you get that New Position

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Introduction

The information outlined in this PDF document will hopefully provide some useful tips and advice in your search for that all-important new job.

Answers to the most frequently asked questions are to be found here, from how to network, write your CV and interview questions answered.

Make the most of this resource in your search for that new job, it should only take a short time to read and it may provide you with the solution you have been looking for in your search for your perfect job.



GOOD LUCK!



The Action Timetable

The following timetable will help you in your quest to find that fantastic new job you have been searching for.

Whilst time is always a difficult hurdle to overcome, if you follow the timetable and commit to the timetable your focus will be maintained and you will not lose sight of your goal (That New Job!)

Try to free up a few hours each day, we have started at nine o'clock but you can start at any time you wish.

- 09.00 hrs Review all recruitment advertising in your local press.
- 09.30 hrs Review the National Press (On the relevant recruitment days to your ideal position)
- 09.45 hrs Check out the online recruitment boards, (Monster, Fish 4, Total Jobs etc)
- 10.30 hrs Carry out any research on the organisations you have selected as possible matches for your talents)
- 11.00 hrs prepare for any interviews you may have, carry out research, what the company does, it beliefs, culture etc.
- Finally, file any applications you have made in to some order of relevance for easy review for the time when you are selected for interview?



Don't let the workload get you down, stay focussed and committed and you will reap the rewards. Failing to prepare is preparing to fail!!!!!!!

Networking Skills

The number one priority to successful networking is to use your available resources to market yourself and at the same time try and uncover the hidden job opportunities. Finding opportunities this way can give you a real advantage over other suitable candidates. Networking is not as complex as it may seem, yet it should become a key aspect in your search for that new position.

Perhaps one of the best examples is that of the people you know. When you are looking for a new position it is important to let those influential people around you know of your skills, qualifications and the type of position you are looking for.

Compile a list of current friends and family who are employed as well as those people you have met during your working life, even old teachers, once you have this list you can begin contacting them by 'phone, e-mail or even a letter, this should be a formal communication as you already know them, some questions to ask are: -

- ❖ Do you know how I can begin working in.....?
- ❖ Can you recommend people for me to talk to?
- ❖ Do you know of anyone who employs people with skills like mine?
- ❖ Are you aware of any organisations that are recruiting now?

If you have a good relationship with these people then it could also be beneficial to include a copy of your CV so they can pass on your details to other associates.

Networking with people you do not know is also another important step you can take, many companies arrange open days, stands at Industry trade shows etc where you can talk to people within that industry and even apply for positions there and then. Check them out via the Internet, or trade publications, if you do attend any of these events make sure that you are prepared with some questions and have an up-to-date CV.

Alternatively, you can find the names of the key HR professionals in the companies you wish to work in, once a list has been established write to each of them asking for advice or even an interview to learn more about the organisation, this should form part of your networking strategy so try and get some leads and make connections if they do indeed agree to help, ensure you have your CV.

When networking, it is a good idea to compile a sixty second profile of who you are and what your skill set is, take some time to practice this, at first it will seem strange and you may be nervous but it is good to drill down to sixty seconds who and what you are all about.



How to write an effective Cover Letter

The key point about a good covering letter is that it CAN differentiate your CV from the countless others that pass through employers hands.

- ❖ Always include a covering letter with any CV application, whether it is by e-mail, letter or fax.
- ❖ It should be treated as an important part of your personal marketing plan, which merits attention and consideration.
- ❖ The covering letter introduces you to a future employer and it is a good time to provide them with good first impressions of you.
- ❖ It should entice the reader to take a few extra moments to consider you against other candidates.

Appearance and Layout.

There is still some debate within the recruitment fraternity as to whether covering letters should be hand written or typed; the jury appears to be still out on this one. However, with the frequent request for details to be e-mailed the written option is a non-starter obviously.

Whichever method you use make sure that it is neat and tidy, presentable and on a nice piece of paper (similar in style and quality to that of your CV) Typo's and grammatical errors are a pet hate of recruiters so take some time to ensure you have no errors in your covering letter, ensure that all the font sizes are uniformed, they should emulate a handwritten letter in style.

- ❖ The letter should address the relevant contact
- ❖ Avoid Sir or Madam if at all possible (it is acceptable to write a cover letter in the first person)
- ❖ Content should be brief and structured.
- ❖ Avoid lengthy repetition of information already covered in your CV.
- ❖ Establish your approach (if replying to an advert say so)
- ❖ Include Job Title, Reference number if required, when and where you saw it.
- ❖ Always follow any instructions that are given specifically for the job you are applying for.
- ❖ Be brief; outline your current position and why you are seeking a change.
- ❖ Include current or last job.
- ❖ Qualifications, professional and academic training.
- ❖ Try to make the information as relevant as possible.
- ❖ Tell the employer a little about them (demonstrate you have researched the company and you have properly read the advert)
- ❖ State why you are interested in the job.

- ❖ Put your marketing plan into action, succinctly tell them why an employer may want to meet and recruit you.
- ❖ Include any transferable skills, achievements and your versatility.
- ❖ Try to include some of your personality traits; especially any, which are relevant to the position applied for, although, try not to be too subjective.
- ❖ Allow the letter to flow freely and not to let the letter slavishly follow the advert contents.
- ❖ Negative information should be avoided in your covering letter or CV.
- ❖ Close with a polite expression of interest in further conversation with the recruiter.
- ❖ Do mention that you would like the opportunity to discuss your suitability further at an interview and that you await a response in due course.



How to write a strong CV

With the exception of any covering letter, your CV is probably the first impression a prospective employer has of you. Here are some tips on how to present your CV.

- ❖ Start with your personal information. (Be sure to include useable contact numbers)
- ❖ Avoid superfluous information such as religious affiliates, children's names etc.
- ❖ Education, professional qualifications should follow, including the name of any institutions and dates attended etc.
- ❖ University before school.
- ❖ List the grades and passes attained.
- ❖ Include your computer skills (these must be genuine)
- ❖ Any foreign languages.
- ❖ Relevant training/development to the role applied for.
- ❖ Your CV should preferably be Chronological.
- ❖ Career history in reverse order.
- ❖ Achievements and responsibilities are listed against each role.
- ❖ Emphasise your most recent positions achievements and responsibilities.
- ❖ Leave hobbies and interests until last.
- ❖ Advise that references are available upon request.
- ❖ Salary details should NOT be included.
- ❖ Don't forget your cover letter!

Your cover letter and CV should create a picture of you, your career to date and illustrate why you are different from the competition, with this and a bit of luck you will secure yourself a place on a shortlist.

Interview Advice

Recent research has shown that people make their mind up about someone within the first few seconds of meeting. So it's good to get off to a great start.

No matter how well qualified, how good your letter is and indeed your CV, this is still "on paper" an employer will still prefer to meet and to understand your personality and see your presentation skills.

Practical Tips

- ❖ Double check the date, time and location of the interview (Don't be late)
- ❖ Become familiar with the name and title of the interviewer.
- ❖ Take your interview confirmation letter with you.
- ❖ Ensure you are dressed both smartly and comfortably.
- ❖ Do a dummy run to the location; ensure you leave sufficient time to get to the interview on time.
- ❖ If you are delayed, make sure you contact the recruiter immediately (if possible)
- ❖ Remember first impressions do sadly count for a lot, be courteous to any people you meet within the organisation, their opinions may be sought after you leave.
- ❖ Research the company as thoroughly as you possibly can, most have a web site so check them out before hand.
- ❖ Greet your interviewer standing with a strong firm handshake and don't forget to smile.
- ❖ Body language will play a part!
- ❖ Try to maintain a comfortable level of eye contact.
- ❖ Be familiar with your CV and be prepared to answer questions from it.
- ❖ Also ensure you have read the job description and try to think of ways in which your skills are best suited.
- ❖ LISTEN to what is being asked of you.
- ❖ THINK about your answers carefully before proceeding.
- ❖ Give positive examples.
- ❖ Prepare questions you have regarding the company and the position.
- ❖ Be enthusiastic about the role applied for.
- ❖ Thank your interviewer at the end of the meeting and reaffirm your interest in them as an employer.

The Top Ten Interview Questions.

And how to answer them.

Q1 Tell me about yourself?

A *Identify some of your main attributes and memorise them. Describe your career, qualifications and range of skills emphasising those relevant to the job.*

Q2 What have your achievements been to date?

A *Select an achievement that is work related and fairly recent. Identify the skills you used in the achievement and qualify the benefit it had to the company.*

Q3 Are you happy with your career to date?

A *This is really about your self-esteem, confidence and career aspirations. The answer must be “yes” followed by a brief explanation as to what it is about your career so far that made you happy. If you have hit a career plateau or you feel you are moving too slowly then you must qualify your answer.*

Q4 What is the most difficult situation that you have dealt with and how did you tackle it?

A *The purpose of this question is to find out what your definition of difficult is and whether you can show a logical approach to problem solving. In order to show yourself in apposite light, select a difficult work situation, which was not caused by you and can be quickly explained in a few sentences. Explain how you defined the problem, what the options were, why you selected the option you did and what the outcome was. Always try to end on a positive note.*

Q5 What do you like about your current job?

A *This is a straightforward question. All you have to do is make sure that your “likes” correspond to your skills etc, required in the job on offer. Be enthusiastic, describe your job as interesting and diverse as possible but do not overdo it – after all, you are looking to leave!*

Q6 What do you dislike about your current job?

A *Be cautious with this answer. Do not be too specific as you may draw attention to weaknesses that will leave you open to further problems. One approach is to choose a characteristic of your present company, such as its size or slow decision making processes etc. Give your answer with the air of someone who takes problems and frustrations in your stride as part of the job.*

Q7 What are your strengths?

A *This is one question that you know you are going to get so there is no excuse for being unprepared. Concentrate on discussing your main strengths. List three or four proficiencies e.g. your ability to learn quickly, determination to succeed, positive attitude, and your ability to relate to people and achieve a common goal. You may be asked to give examples so be prepared to provide them.*

Q8 What is your greatest weakness?

A *Do not be tempted to say you do not have one – this will lead to further problems. You have two options here – use a professed weakness such as experience (not ability) on your part in an area that is not vital for the job. The second option is to describe a personal or professional weakness that could also be considered a strength, and the steps you have taken to combat it. An example could be, “I know my team think I’m too demanding occasionally – I tend to drive them pretty hard but I am getting better at using the carrot and not the stick”.*

Q9 Why do you want to leave your current employer?

A *State how you are looking for a new challenge, more responsibility, experience and a change of environment. Do not be negative in your reasons for leaving. It is rarely appropriate to cite salary as your prime motivator.*

Q10 Why have you applied for this particular job?

A *The employer is looking for evidence that the job suits you, fits in with your general aptitudes, coincides with your long-term goals and involves doing things you enjoy. Make sure you have a good understanding of the role and the organisation, and describe the attributes of the organisation that interest you most.*



Where to Find Work

1. Newspapers
2. Professional Journals/Magazines/Periodicals
3. Employment Agencies
4. The Internet
5. Direct Speculative Applications
6. Job Centres
7. Finally, get yourself updated! Now may be a good time to update your skill set, qualifications training and or education. Particularly if you are a little ring rusty.

