

Are you Job Ready?

If you've been employed before then you'll probably have a good idea as to what's required in order to gain employment. However if you're a first time job seeker or haven't had to look for a job for some years it can be a daunting prospect.

Let us help give you some key points to remember when job seeking.

I've been employed before but not sure how to go about job searching again:

- **Polish that CV**
 - Give your CV a clean-up, add any new jobs you've had or additional responsibilities.
 - Maybe you've taken up new hobbies or have volunteer opportunities that you should add.
 - You may have undertaken a course or additional training since you last did your CV, don't forget to add this sort of key information.
 - Are your contact details and reference still correct?
- **Re-think your Career**
 - Take a moment to think about what you'd really like to do, just because you've always worked in Sales it doesn't mean you can't broaden your horizons.
- **Interview Skills**
 - Be sure to research the company you're having an interview with; perhaps view their website or google them.
 - Have a think about the sort of questions you may get asked at an interview; how might you answer these questions? Also think of some questions you may want to ask them.
 - Practice with friends or family, or even in front of the mirror – good eye contact a friendly approach can be just as important as experience and qualifications.
- **Volunteer**
 - If you find yourself struggling to get interviews or job offers think about volunteering with a local group or organisations.
 - This will help you to keep busy, learn new skills, interact with people and add to your CV – volunteering can show that you're a team player and hardworking, attractive skills to any employer.

Take a look at our CV Template and Interview Questions List for more support

I've just left school/college and I've not had a full time job before:

- **Get a killer CV!**
 - Your CV is your calling card, it gives a clear picture of who you are and the skills you can bring to a job.
 - Don't underestimate your skills – you may think you have few skills, perhaps your grades were not as good as you hoped for or you've only had a Saturday job in the past – we all have something to offer and you are no different!

- Write down a list of anything that might be of interest to an employer: groups you've been a part of, part-time jobs, baby sitting, helping your gran do the gardening.
- Now look at your list and really think about what you did as part of that activity, for example you might have simply worked in the sweet shop on Saturday mornings however you probably had to handle cash, give good customer service, do stock taking, re-stock the shelves and be responsible for locking up – all these are of interest to a potential employer.
- **Covering letter or email**
 - This will give you a chance to introduce yourself, really capture their attention before they read your CV.
 - Give them an idea of what skills, passion, enthusiasm, hard work you can bring to the role.
 - Be sure to put your full contact details on the letter or email underneath your signature – you don't want them to have to search to get in contact.
 - Always end with a positive line that sublimely encourages them, for example “ I look forward to speaking with you very soon”
- **Volunteering**
 - Giving some time to your community through volunteering is a great way to prove your employability. You get to show off your skills, present yourself as a caring hard-working person and quite often you'll get a great reference from the person you are working for.
- **Schemes (e.g. NCS/D of E)**
 - While everyone is sitting around, you can be climbing mountains and getting stuck into a social action project with new friends. Schemes like the National Citizen Service and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award are good teamwork exercises. Don't underestimate the value of certificates, either! They'll help you stand out.
- **Work shadowing/traineeships**
 - There's no better place to learn about the workplace than in the workplace, and there are all kinds of different ways to get work experience. You can shadow someone in the job you want or at the company you want to work at to find out all about the ins and outs and if it's right for you. You can show your passion for the industry if you like it. If not, you're still spending time in a work environment, with working adults, which can go on the CV and will help when you land that role you're after.
- **Blogging/Social Media**
 - Knowledge of the industry you want to work in is becoming more and more important, especially in competitive industries like fashion and advertising. A great way to show that you know your stuff and are more passionate than everyone else is to start a blog, writing about interests you. There are many benefits including improved communication skills to help you get that first foot on the career ladder.
 - Make sure your social media accounts are cleaned up, some employers now view potential candidates Facebook accounts to gauge what kind of a person they are!
- **Sports**
 - Entry-level roles are quite commonly team roles where you'll work with lots of other people. What better way to prepare for this than by getting involved in a sport you enjoy? There will be lots of opportunities in your local area to get involved in sports teams from football to netball to rugby.
 - Remember that sport also offers the opportunity for trophies and awards too, which can all be mentioned on your CV.

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TOP 10 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

It is fair to say that you might not be asked every one of these questions at an interview. You may even be asked other, more bizarre ones, like 'if you were an animal, which would you be?'

Such questions are designed to see how good you are at thinking on your feet so you cannot truly prepare for them. Just relax and say something sensible. For the other common interview questions, consider how you might answer them before you get face-to-face.

1. What can you tell me about yourself?

Talk about yourself in summary and avoid rambling. Your detailed work history can be found on your CV, after all, so focus on elements that you want to highlight rather than going through everything.

It is okay to discuss your personality and what ambitions you have. Ideally, you will give the interviewer a positive insight into how you would fit in as an employee.

2. Can you list your strengths?

An exhaustive list of adjectives, such as 'capable', 'hard-working' or 'diligent', won't really portray you well because anyone can make such claims about themselves. Instead, think about three things that you do well and give concrete examples.

If you are a strong organiser, for example, then talk about a project that you coordinated, or a new procedure that you formulated. If you are good with numbers, then talk about your skills with spreadsheets or financial matters.

3. What weaknesses do you have?

Never say that you have no weaknesses. Everyone who does this comes across like they have simply not prepared for the interview. Likewise, avoid giving yourself a back-handed compliment, such as, 'I work too hard.'

Remember that being able to identify a weakness is a strength. Focus on an area of your work that needs to be improved. You might have been trained in something that you'd like to take to the next level, for example. Point out that this is a weakness, but something you have identified and are focussing on resolving.

Interviewers want to understand that you have the ability to be honest about yourself and to seek self-improvement.

4. Why should I consider hiring you?

If you are highly qualified for the job you are applying for, then you should point this out, but don't forget that other people being interviewed may match or exceed your suitability. In such cases, focus on what else you can bring to the job, perhaps with your soft skill set, like being able to integrate well with existing members of the team, for instance.

Don't give up on an interview if you're not fully qualified for the job. Appeal to the interviewer's desire to hire someone with drive. If you are not the finished article, then point out how keen you are to learn and be mentored. Accentuate the positive aspects of what you can do now and how quickly you will be able to progress with what you don't know if hired.

5. Where do you see yourself five years from now?

This is your chance to talk about your wider ambitions and goals. It is okay to say you'd like to progress on from the position on offer in most cases. Bosses want to hire people with determination so don't be shy about

sounding ambitious or hungry for success. Ideally, try to contextualise your ambitions within the organisation that you are applying to join because this tends to go down better.

6. Why do you want to work here?

This is your chance to show that you have researched the company you are applying to work with. Avoid saying anything negative about your current employer which makes it seem you are simply after any job at all. Typical things you might say are that the company operates in your chosen sector, that it provides a clearly structured career path and that the organisation has a good reputation. Don't simply trot these ideas out, though. Do your research!

7. What is your salary expectation?

This is one of the most troublesome questions for many interviewees. For some people, however, it causes no bother at all. It will depend on your personality as to how you feel talking about salary expectations. That said, there are some tips to help you deal with the question.

Firstly, it is okay to talk about pay in terms of ranges and not to be specific about a particular number. It is also okay to include other benefits, like healthcare, pensions and time off within the context of salary. Make sure you have looked at other, similar jobs being advertised in other organisations so that you have an idea of the pay rate in the market.

8. What motivates you?

Motivation is personal, so there is no wrong answer that you can give. It might be down to your desire to succeed and build a career, but it might also be because you want to provide for your family – both perfectly good answers if you choose to give them. In some professions, caring or vocational motivations might be worth mentioning, too.

9. What makes a good team player?

Many people say in their CV that they are good at working cooperatively or are team players, but few say what this actually means. Think about examples from your past that demonstrate your ability to build bridges, form networks or simply get on with people. This needn't be from your professional life. You could cite any examples from clubs or organisations to which you belong.

Answering this question well is especially important for people who want to be team leaders or to manage a department.

10. Is there anything that you would like to ask me?

Always have at least one question prepared in advance. This is your chance to drill down into an area of the business that might not have been covered in the interview. Alternatively, you may simply like to ask for feedback on how you have done in the interview.

A good tip is to pick up on something that has been mentioned in passing by the interviewer about the job. Ask him or her to expand on this. Not only does it make you appear interested, but it shows that you have been listening attentively to what has been said. It should leave the interviewer with a good final impression of you.

These ten questions are certainly not the only ones that can be posed, but they are the most common ones. Remember that you don't need to answer all questions at an interview if you feel they are too personal or you are not comfortable with them. Getting yourself prepared for common questions is necessary prep work before attending an interview.

Don't make the answer come across as rehearsed; rather, just remember the gist of your answer and then let the sentences flow freely during the interview, which gives the interviewer a much better impression of you. Good luck!

CURRICULUM VITAE - TEMPLATE

Name
Address
Tel Email

PROFILE

This is an opportunity to give 2 or 3 lines about the type of person you are and how you like to work i.e. keen to learn new skills, meticulous and dedicated, enjoy working as part of a team although I'm just as comfortable taking the initiative and working independently – always give examples of how you may have worked like this.

SKILLS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

This is an opportunity to talk about things you have achieved that are not necessarily connected with work, if you don't have anything specific to mention then simply delete this section. Format these as bullet points to make it easier for potential employers to view them – some examples are below:

- *Raised over £20,000 for St. Wilfrid's Hospice*
- *Was Treasurer for local Scout Group*
- *Developed a database for local charity*
- *Volunteer driver for local Community Bus*

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Your employment history should show your most recent position first, provide no more than 7 key bullet points outlining your role and responsibilities. Using words like 'responsible for', 'managed', 'developed' etc. show that you can use your initiative and take responsibilities. For example:

Sales Advisor (Job Title), Budgens (Company) – Jan 2004 to Present (Date you were employed)

- *Responsible for stock management and ensuring retail areas remain tidy (might be a good way to say that you would take stock and put on shelves and keep a shop tidy)*
- *Responsible for cash management and customer service (This is a good way to say that you used the tills and dealt with customers in a retail role)*
- *Responsible for managing own workload adhering to site procedures (This might be a good way to say you worked as a trades person on a site)*

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Put the most recent training or education you have undertaken first, be sure to include any training you may have had whilst working. If you have no formal training don't fret, come and chat to one of our advisors for further support and advice. For Example:

In House Training:

Introduction to Health & Safety

Chichester College – 2004

NVQ Level 2 Business and Administration

Manhood Community College – 2002

5 GCSE's including English and Maths

INTERESTS

This is a chance to say something more about the sort of person you are, to show that you are more than just an employee – you are well rounded and interesting. Some employees like to see that you're involved in team

or group activities as this may show you're good at working as part of a team. If you don't have any firm interests be broad about you like so that you don't get caught out if questioned in an interview! Below are two examples of what you might say, one if you have a firm interest and one broad:

I'm a keen cyclist and have completed the London to Brighton Charity ride 6 times raising over £5,000 for local charities. I love the theatre and assist with Chichester Youth Theatre technical department

OR

I enjoy socialising with friends and family, where possible I walk daily with my beloved dog Ruffles.

REFEREES

Many companies, after a successful interview, will request details of Referees – individuals who can give a testimony about you and how you work. These will often be a previous employer, manager or work colleague; if you have not had a job before it might be someone from a youth group you've attended or perhaps your head teacher.

We do not recommend putting your referees details (Name, Address and Contact number) on your CV, but simply put the following at the end of your CV:

Referees details available upon request.

You can add lines to define clear sections on your CV

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