



Tips on how to land that first job



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Compiling a winning CV

A curriculum vitae (CV) is a written description of your work experience, educational background, and skills.

It is a description of your strengths and working experience. In a situation where there is no work experience, your CV will highlight your ability and characteristics that are relevant to the position you are applying for.



HOW DO YOU COMPILE A CV?

CV's with pictures and borders do not make an impression. Recruiters are more interested in the information provided in the CV.

WHEN PUTTING YOUR CV TOGETHER, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

- Make sure all your information is correct and accurate.
- Your CV should look professional
- Tailor your CV for each position you apply for based on the information given in the advert. Highlight the strengths that you have which are applicable to the position.
- Never lie or guess on a CV- it just might get you into trouble or cost you a great job/opportunity.

COVER PAGE

Whenever you send a CV, it is important that you include a cover letter with your application. The following can be included in your cover letter.

- Awards during your senior years at school and university
- Team participation
- Cultural participation
- Sport participation
- Foreign languages spoken
- Talk about how the skills you have match the position's requirements, in a way that highlights your interest.

WHAT NOT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR COVER LETTER

- Do not say why you desperately need a job. People do not employ desperate people. Do not explain how hiring you could help you!
- Do not include your salary requirements in your cover letter.
- No more than one page



YOUR CV SHOULD HAVE THE FOLLOWING DETAILS

- Full names
- Physical address
- Contact numbers: Cell, home telephone and a number of a person residing with you as an alternate contact number.
- Highest education level achieved with subjects and achievements as per your last results.
- Home Language and additional languages that you speak.
- Academic achievements
- Other achievements that you may have been commended for during your High school career. Specifically from grade 10 onwards.
- Specialized programs you enrolled in
- Grants, fellowships and scholarships you were awarded
- Any publication credits
- Conferences in which you participated
- Professional or scholastic associations and offices held in them as well as date of membership.
- Student Number.
- Any work experience, giving full details of:
 - Job title
 - Name of organization
 - Start and end date.
 - Reason why you left
 - Industry
 - Responsibilities
 - Software packages you have been exposed to.
 - Contactable referees with telephone numbers.



FORMAT YOUR CV

Your CV should look professional.

Pick a clean font. Never use different fonts on the same CV.

E- MAIL CORRESPONDENCE

- When sending your CV via e-mail, take advantage of the subject line to make your e-mail stand out. Do not include a generic "CV Submission" subject line, unless specifically requested to do so.
- Make sure to include your full name and contact information in the email.
- Spelling and grammar still count so do a spell check.
- Mention where you heard about the position.
- If there's a job ID/ reference number, list that.



That all important interview

Being granted an interview is an opportunity that just cannot be taken for granted. Don't just show up for the interview. The more information you have prepared in advance, the better impression you will make on the interviewer. Make sure that your references are good and take a written copy with you, before you start looking for a job.



PREPARATION IS IMPORTANT

- Research should always be your first step. Gather background information on your potential employer. This is a crucial element in successful interview preparation. Knowing as much as possible about the company's past performance and future plans can make your interview more interactive and could be just the leg up you need in a competitive job market. Before the interview review the company's web site and don't be afraid to contact your prospective employer to request details on the position you are interviewing for or to ask for company literature. Google the company to see what other information is available online

- It will be extremely important to be on time for your interview. And this means at least ten to fifteen minutes early. If need be, take some time to drive to the office ahead of time so you know exactly where you are going.

- Know the interviewer's name and use it during the interview. If you're not sure of the name, call and ask prior to the interview.

- Remember to bring an extra copy of your CV and a list of references

- Be prepared for the possibility of behavioral interviews:

Behavior based interviewing is becoming more common. It is based on the premise that a candidate's past performance is the best predictor of future performance. Rather than the typical interview questions on your background and experience, you will need to be prepared to provide detailed responses including specific examples of your work experiences. The best way to prepare is to think of examples where you have successfully used the skills you've acquired.

- Take the time to compile a list of responses to both types of questions and to itemize your skills, values, and interests as well as your strengths and weaknesses.

- Prepare a list of questions you want to ask the interviewer. Remember, you aren't simply trying to get the job - you are also interviewing the employer to assess whether this company and the position are a good fit for you.



What to wear for an interview

First impressions are lasting impressions. You'll want that first impression to be not just a good one, but, a great one. A candidate dressed in a suit and tie is going to make a much better impression than a candidate dressed in scruffy jeans and a t-shirt. It's always important to dress professionally for a job interview, even if the work environment is casual.



MEN

Possible Interview Attire

- Suit (solid color - navy or dark grey)
- Long sleeve shirt (white or coordinated with the suit)
- Belt
- Tie
- Dark socks, conservative leather shoes
- Little or no jewellery
- Neat, professional hairstyle
- Limit the aftershave
- Neatly trimmed nails
- Neatly groomed facial hair

What not to wear to an interview

- Light suits
- Sandals
- Leather bracelets
- An unshaven face
- Open shirt

WOMEN

Possible Interview Attire

- Suit or appropriate attire to the industry and position
- The suit skirt should be long enough so you can sit down comfortably
- Coordinated blouse
- Conservative shoes
- Limited jewellery (no dangling earrings or arms full of bracelets)
- Professional hairstyle
- Neutral stockings
- Light make-up and perfume
- Neatly manicured clean nails

What not to wear to an interview

- Short mini skirts
- Bold jewelry
- Underwear that sticks out or show through clothing
- Tight fitting clothing
- If you have a tattoo COVER it!



INTRODUCING YOURSELF

- Announce yourself with a confident strong voice at reception and tell the receptionist who you will be seeing. Whilst she is making contact with your interviewer observe the activity in the reception area. Also observe the furniture in reception as it tells you a lot about your future employer, like the company culture and the dynamics of the people
- Good eye contact shows confidence.
- Speak to the receptionist. She is a wealth of information. She can tell you all about the company and the person who will be interviewing you.

BODY LANGUAGE

- Don't slouch or lay on the furniture, its just plain bad manners.
- When greeting your interviewer introduce yourself by announcing who you are with a firm hand shake and keep eye contact.
- Wait to be shown the way and follow the interviewer.
- Wait to be told to sit.
- Answer all questions with good eye contact. If you do not understand the question ask the interviewer to repeat it. This will give you enough time to think of an answer.
- Listen carefully to what the interviewer tells you about the company and the position so that you understand the expectation. Ask questions where necessary to obtain clarity.



TYPICAL QUESTIONS TO EXPECT AND SOME SUGGESTED ANSWERS THAT CAN HELP YOU SECURE THAT DREAM JOB!

How do you deal with conflict or criticism?

Always answer this frequently asked question with a positive approach. Explain how you have dealt with the situation and learnt from the experience.

What do you know about our company and why do you want to work here?

All that time spent researching will now pay off! Talk about the information you learnt in the research, but be open to correction should you have interpreted research information incorrectly.

Answer the reason for you wanting to join their establishment by specifying what interests you about the industry or company and how you feel you could contribute to its longevity. Make sure that you understand the company's objective as well as their vision and mission, and explain how you plan on sustaining this or improving on it, based on your relevant skills and attributes.

Describe a short term goal you have set for yourself and how you intend on achieving this goal?

A short term goal generally falls within a one to two year delivery period. The goals that you describe should be career focused, based on areas where you would like to improve on a skill or achieve a qualification that will boost your career growth. Your goals should be realistic and attainable within this short period. By displaying your enthusiasm and desire to succeed, this will indicate to the employer that you are a motivated and inspired employee.

What are you looking for in a job?

This may seem like an easy, common interview question to answer, but it is in fact quite tricky. While the interviewer is asking you what you are looking for in a job, in actual fact they want you to answer with what they are looking for from you. Again when preparing for this question, be sure to have the job ad close at hand in order to assess in precise detail what the recruiter is looking for in a candidate.

What are your salary requirements?

Prepare ahead of time prior to your job interview on how you intend on answering this question. A good place to start is to research the industry standard or market related salary that employees in similar roles are earning. In your interview, try not to discuss exact figures but rather give a ball park figure that you will be able to negotiate on later on should the employer makes you an offer. Never discuss your salary goals unless asked by the interviewer.

Do you have any questions?

When asked if you have any questions about the role or the organisation, always have a few questions prepared to ask the interviewer. It is important to ask questions as this will illustrate your enthusiasm and desire to join their company.



In conclusion

As mentioned before there are no set structures to any job interview and every interview will be completely unique and different to your last. Preparing in advance and familiarizing yourself with frequently asked job interview questions will give you the confidence you require in order to outshine any other candidate by emphasizing your skills and accomplishment relevant to the job.

General Tips to remember

- Practice your interview skills with friends and family members. Do it again and again until you feel confident that you are getting it right.
 - Keep a diary and make sure that you don't overlap opportunities.
 - Warn your parents in advance that you will need their help with transportation.



Good luck!

