

## Advice for Applicants

### The CV

There are 4 main factors to consider when you write your CV:

1. **Keep it simple** – A good CV should be clear, concise and simple to read. In most cases this means that it shouldn't really exceed two-three pages. But, if you have a lot of experience, you may need a longer CV – despite what other recruiters will tell you this need not be an issue. If in doubt get in touch and we can advise you.
2. **Don't get fancy** – Your CV doesn't need a fancy typeface, glitzy pictures or ClipArt. Adding too many of these elements to a CV won't enhance it – it will become unreadable. Print the document on good quality white paper and make sure that you have plenty of white space on the page.
3. **Lying will get you nowhere** – Don't ever be tempted to lie on your CV. If you get found out – and you usually will – then you'll stop your progress in its tracks.
4. **Get in the right order** – There is an accepted order in CV layout that most HR and IT recruiters will look for as they can find the information they need straightaway. In basic terms, the layout will include:
  - **Personal Details:** Name, Address, Contact Numbers/Emails, Age, Marital Status, Nationality.
  - **Education:** List your qualifications (with results) from the most advanced down to GCSEs/'O' Levels.
  - **Technical/Professional Qualifications:** Give a basic overview of your technical expertise – this is most commonly given as a list (i.e. C++, Java etc).
  - **Current Salary:** List your current salary – if you are currently on a benefits package you can also list the components here.
  - **Career Summary:** If you have had a long IT career you might want to insert a brief paragraph that broadly outlines your career to date. This is a great place to market yourself if you make sure that this is a positive, achievement orientated paragraph.
  - **Career History:** Outline your career history here. Start with your most recent job and work down. If you have had a long career that stretches back over many years concentrate on your most recent jobs. The jobs you had 10+ years ago can often be kept to just a line or two. For each job start a new paragraph with the company you worked for at the head, followed by your job title.
  - **Interests** – You can include any hobbies or interests you have if you wish but this isn't essential – keep these at the end of the CV and keep them short. Don't be tempted to make up exciting hobbies to make you look interesting – it can backfire on you.
  - **Referees** – It's always good to have a couple of referees that will vouch for you when you get to offer stage. If you don't want to reveal their identity straightaway you can use the section with an 'Available Upon Request' statement.

## The Interview

As your consultant our aim is not just to get you an interview for the right job – it's to arm you so you can go out and get it. The interview process really is vital to your application – you need to be fully prepared and ready to make the right impression at every stage. We can help you with some of this but much of this is down to you. Take a look at the following advice to see how you can help yourself get it right.

1. **Listen to us** – Whenever we arrange an interview for a candidate we make sure that they have as much information as possible beforehand. This may include a full formal job description and our own informal perception of the hire and where it fits in the firm. We can tell you about the firm you'll be interviewed at and the people who will interview you. This is extremely valuable information – if you listen to it and think about how it relates to you and your experience.
2. **Research** - The financial markets sector has an extremely high profile. This makes it very simple to find out more about the firm you'll be interviewing with. The more you know, the more enthusiastic you look and you'll be able to ask informed questions and apply your own experience to your recruiter's hiring needs. This all adds to the good impression you could potentially make
3. **Presentation** - Unless we specifically tell you otherwise you need to dress formally and neatly for your interview(s). First impressions really do count – the way you present yourself is seen as a sign of your respect for the firm that is interviewing you. Also, try to be a little early for your interview – being late doesn't give a good impression at all – and use a firm handshake where appropriate. It's vital to treat every person you meet – from the receptionist, to the HR assistant that takes you to the interview room to your interviewer - with respect and to be courteous. These impressions count. Finally, think about your body language in the interview - the way you sit, move and react physically during an interview can all have an influence on how you are perceived.
4. **Know yourself** - Read your CV before you go into an interview to jog your memory and try to match your experience with the information the interviewer gives you about the job and the firm if you can. Be positive and keen about your experience without being pushy. Also, avoid the trap of criticising your past employers/jobs. You can be honest without being critical or negative – as soon as you start to be negative you give out a bad impression.
5. **The telephone interview** - A lot of IT interviews are now being done over the phone. If you have a telephone interview make sure that you fix a time where you really do have enough time free to talk in a quiet room with no background noise or interruptions. Don't eat or drink while you're on the phone. And, if you have to arrange for an interview on your mobile, make sure that the interviewer knows this – so, if you lose reception or things get noisy you can apologise and they will understand.
6. **Debrief us** – You should call us as soon as you can to debrief us once your interview is done. The more we know about the interview and your thoughts the more we can help you when we get client feedback. We'll also tell you about this feedback – you need to listen to what's been said about you and, if necessary, act on it next time.
7. **Learn from your mistakes** - An interview that doesn't go well can actually be a positive thing. If you do something wrong then learn not to do it again. If you don't make the right impression then adapt your behaviour. The chances are we'll have interviewed you in person before you have a formal interview – we'll make sure that we iron out any obvious problems with you before you go out on your own.

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## The Offer

By the time you get to offer stage you might think you're done – but you still need to be on the ball to make sure everything goes according to plan. The key points to remember here include:

1. **Know your current package** – Be accurate about your current salary and benefits – if necessary, check them on your last P60. Don't be tempted to over-inflate your current earnings – you'll get found out.
2. **Know what you want** – Be realistic and consistent about your salary expectations. Don't get carried away or change your mind about the salary you want once you get to offer stage. All you'll do is put off your potential new employer.
3. **Look at the whole picture** – Don't make a decision about your next move on salary alone – think about the job satisfaction factors too. Weigh up each offer you get on their individual merits and not just on salary packages.
4. **Let us help you** – Work with us closely at this stage – remember that we are working for you as well as our clients. To get you the best deal we need you to be honest about other offers, timescales and your thoughts on the choices you have. Less scrupulous agencies may put unnecessary pressure on you to accept an offer – don't be bullied by an agent into making a snap decision. Most organisations will allow you reasonable time to consider an offer.

The final thing to remember with any element of the recruitment process is that we are always here to help you. Our aim is to make sure that you have the best possible chance of getting the right job for you – so, if you have any queries or need any help then just contact us.