



Career Farm
grow your own

**CV Workshop -
How to get into the 'interview
pile!**

By Jane Barrett

- ▶ What is the purpose of a CV?
- ▶ What makes a good CV?

- ▶ A marketing document about you
- ▶ Gets you an interview not a job
- ▶ A document
 - to sell your skills and abilities
 - that matches you to the role
 - that makes you stand out from the crowd

- ▶ ‘Most people think a quirky CV style or generic responsibilities are what employers are looking for,’ says Karl Gregory of iProfile, ‘but the research shows that it’s actually the specific achievements of individuals are what make the difference .’

www.iprofile.org

What do employers want to know?

- ▶ Do you match their criteria?
- ▶ What do you have to offer?
- ▶ Do you have the skills and abilities for the job?
- ▶ Can you be developed?
- ▶ Can they work with you?

The competitive edge

- ▶ Easy to read
- ▶ Correct spelling and punctuation
- ▶ Honest (never make up an answer or expand the truth)
- ▶ Relevant to the skills needed by the organisation
- ▶ Concise
- ▶ Talk about your achievements, linking them to the skills required
- ▶ Think about the reader

Traditional or chronological CV

- ▶ Length – specific to industry and country
- ▶ Name and contact details on both pages (header or footer)
- ▶ Minimum 10 pitch
- ▶ Good font – Arial, Times New Roman, Verdana
- ▶ No colours or fancy formatting
- ▶ Bullet points – not lots of text
- ▶ Clear, focused, concise and relevant
- ▶ Opinions are formed in about 20 seconds or by reading one third of the document.
- ▶ The quality of your evidence sells you, not the font, formatting or colour of paper used (most CVs are now emailed).

Personal profiles – not compulsory!

- ▶ A short, succinct summary of yourself
- ▶ Your unique selling points
- ▶ YOU in a nutshell
- ▶ Provides a quick snap shot of you
 - who you are, what you do, what you have to offer
- ▶ Your advertising strapline

Cover letters

- ▶ Dear
- ▶ Introduction – I would like to apply for
- ▶ This is me – what do you have to offer?
- ▶ This is you – what I know about the role and your organisation
- ▶ This is the match – what value I will add to your organisation and why
- ▶ I look forward to hearing from you
- ▶ Your sincerely

Application forms

- ▶ Used by lots of organisations, just as important as a CV
- ▶ You will be asked
 - to complete the same form as everyone else
 - for your contact details
 - for your educational background
 - to outline your work experience
 - to talk about your skills and achievements, often by answering questions with evidence
 - what else you do – clubs, societies etc.
- ▶ You may be asked
 - to explain your motivation for applying for the job and/or to the company
 - to explain why you should be employed

What are companies looking for?

- ▶ *‘Can you do the job?’*
- ▶ *‘Do you want the job?’*
- ▶ *‘Will you fit in?’*

Competency based interviews – what’s different?

Conventional:

- ▶ Focus on tasks – “what” rather than “how”
- ▶ Tends to be chronological
- ▶ Wide ranging
- ▶ Can feel routine and easy to answer

Competency-based:

- ▶ Focuses on *how* tasks were tackled
- ▶ Usually taken out of time sequence
- ▶ More focused and in-depth – makes candidates reflect
- ▶ Looking for specific examples to illustrate *how*
- ▶ Past behaviour the best predictor of future behaviour

Competency Based Interviews – what can you do & how do you do it?

THE 'WHAT'

**Tasks, activities
achievements**

THE 'HOW'

**skills, knowledge,
attitudes,
behaviours**

Example of competency based question – Communication

- ▶ Tell us about a time when you disagreed with the way things were done at work or at University. What did you do?
- ▶ Describe a situation where you've had difficulty establishing a good relationship with someone at work.
- ▶ Tell us about the most challenging presentation you've ever done and what happened.

Strength based interviews – What do you enjoy doing?

- ▶ What are you good at?
- ▶ What comes easily to you?
- ▶ What do you learn quickly?
- ▶ What did you find easiest to learn at school or university?
- ▶ What subjects do you most enjoy studying?
- ▶ What things give you energy?
- ▶ Describe a successful day you have had.
- ▶ When did you achieve something you were really proud of?
- ▶ Do you prefer to start tasks or to finish them?
- ▶ Do you find you have enough hours in the day to complete all the things you want to do?
- ▶ What things are always left on your 'do do list' – are these things you don't like to do?
- ▶ What do you enjoy doing the least? These are likely to be areas where you lack natural aptitude or skills.

<http://www.kent.ac.uk/careers/interviews/strength-based-interviews.htm>

Preparing for an Assessment Centre

- ▶ Understand the role you have applied for
- ▶ Find out about the company's values and competencies
- ▶ Ask what will be included at the assessment/selection event
- ▶ Consider your own strengths and areas for development
- ▶ Practise if possible!

Successful candidates:

- ▶ Keep their CV simple and evidence based
- ▶ Are achievement focussed rather than responsibility focussed
- ▶ Know themselves and what work suits them
- ▶ Have succinct answers at interview
- ▶ Have high engagement, are interested & ask good questions

Samples and useful information

- ▶ CVs http://www.prospects.ac.uk/example_cvs.htm
- ▶ Cover Letters
http://www.prospects.ac.uk/cover_letters.htm
- ▶ Assessment Centres & Interviews
http://www.prospects.ac.uk/interview_tips_interview_tests_and_exercises.htm
- ▶ Strengthsfinder – Access to find your Top 5 Strengths <http://bit.ly/TE889R>
- ▶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/register-of-licensed-sponsors-workers>



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