

# Our Recruitment Top Tips

SOME HELPFUL RESOURCES AND INFORMATION TO HELP YOU IN YOUR SEARCH FOR A NEW ROLE



## CV WRITING TIPS

Get your CV up to scratch with some of our top tips on writing a CV. Includes a useful template from Total Jobs on adapting your CV for a new type of role or industry.

## INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES

Examples of some commonly used competency-based questions that you may be asked during interview processes as well as a useful guide to the STAR technique.

## TOP TIPS

Some extra information on self-development, LinkedIn and agencies to contact to help you through your job search process.



## A HELPFUL GUIDE TO HELP YOU IN YOUR NEXT STEP...

During this time, many of us have experienced difficult situations whether this be in your career, health, relationships or plans for the future. This guide aims to help support those who are looking for their next step.

# Updating your CV

Updating your CV can be a difficult and lengthy process. With these top tips on creating an impactful CV as well as useful templates, we hope we can make the process that little bit easier for you.



## Getting the basics right

Recruiting managers are often faced with hundreds of CVs to review when recruiting for a role. One simple way to make sure your CV reaches the shortlist is to focus on the basics. CVs with typos or spelling mistakes (a recruiter's pet hate) is a valid reason for your CV not making the shortlist – attention to detail is key. Make sure you check, check and check again that your CV is perfect.

CVs should be no longer than 2 pages long. Short, sharp and to the point saves recruiters time whittling through non-essential and irrelevant information. Leave them wanting a little more so that they are asking questions and will progress you to an interview to find out the answers.

## Stand out from the crowd with formatting

You will find lots of CV templates online which are great to get started. But how can you make your CV stand out from the rest? Use colour blocks, different fonts and white space to draw the reader's attention to important areas of your CV. Create a mood board on Pinterest or Tumblr to collate examples of CVs that suit your style. This will help you create your very own, unique CV.

## Tailor your CV

It is easy to use the same CV for every role you apply for. Your CV will stand out if it is aligned with the job description for the role you are applying for. This is especially the case if you are moving to a completely different role from the type you have carried out previously. This will help you to break down your CV and remove any criteria that isn't essential, keeping in the key skills and relevant experience necessary for the role. Take time to look at the company's website. Incorporate their values into your CV. Recruiters will then know you have spent time and made the effort to adapt your CV and show that you are the best candidate for the role.





### Cover Letter

Some roles will specifically ask for a cover letter and some won't. Providing a cover letter can help you to include information that you wanted to share in your CV but didn't quite have the space. It is also a chance for you to share why you want to apply for the role especially you are looking for a career change.

This template from Total Jobs is useful in sharing tips on writing a cover letter when you are changing career <https://www.totaljobs.com/advice/cover-letter-examples-changing-careers>

### State the facts

Backing up your statements with some facts can be really useful. For example, if you increased sales for the company, share by what percentage you increased them. If you managed a team, how many people were in the team? Facts and statistics can bring your CV to life and make the person on paper feel real.

### Accomplishments

When chatting through your career history, some recruiters may find it more interesting to hear about your accomplishments in roles rather than your day to day tasks.

Try to be succinct in what you did day to day and really pull out your key achievements in your roles.

### Acronyms

Try not to use acronyms when you are writing your CV. Acronyms are acceptable when they are universally known for example... e.g.! However, using industry related acronyms will only leave the recruiter asking questions. If you are moving into a different industry or role, chances are that acronyms you used in your previous job won't be familiar to the people recruiting you in your new role. Be clear!

## Top Tips and Resources for CVs

There are a number of great resources online to help you create a new CV. See below some key links:

- Total Jobs - 10 Steps to a Successful CV <https://www.totaljobs.com/advice/successful-cv>
- Total Jobs - Career Change: Sample CV template and guide <https://www.totaljobs.com/advice/career-change-cv-template>
- Reed - Career Change CV Template <https://www.reed.co.uk/career-advice/career-change-cv-template/>
- Reed - Free CV Template <https://www.reed.co.uk/career-advice/free-cv->



# The Interview Process

Interviews can be a daunting experience. Preparation is key, so we have included some top tips below to get you interview ready.



## Examine the job description

The job description clearly states the expectations, skills, knowledge and qualifications required to carry out the role effectively. Essentially, everything the recruiter is looking for in their ideal candidate. Thinking of examples that you can share at the interview stage that will help you to align with the criteria they are looking for will improve your chances of getting to a 2<sup>nd</sup> stage interview. The job description may also give you some insight into the questions that might be asked at the interview. For example, if they are looking for someone who is organised, you should think of an example of a time where you have been busy in the workplace and you have managed to maintain order, organisation and prioritised your tasks

## Research the company

It is impossible to know everything about a company you are applying to, but it is good to know the basics. Do your research on the products/services, the role itself, the company culture and values. If you are moving into a completely new role, you may want to carry out some research into the industry too.

Asking questions about the company at the interview is key. The interview process is as much about you finding out if you want to work for the company as much as them deciding whether you are the right person for the job. Think of some good questions prior to your interview that will impress your interviewers.

## Work on your interview technique

Rehearse in front of the mirror or with a family member. Practice a firm handshake, and a confident stride. Be aware of your body language and speak clearly. Interviewers can make their decision within the first 5 minutes of your interview, so think about how you can make an impact when you enter the room.

If you mess up, don't panic! Remember, interviewers won't focus on the mistake, they will consider how you redeemed yourself.

For more tips on interview, take a look at Indeed's website:

<https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/interviewing/how-to-prepare-for-an-interview>

### Using examples

Most first stage interviews will be competency based. These can also be known as structured, behavioural or situational interviews.

Questions are designed to test a skill or competency that are required for the role and you will be expected to give examples of how you may have used this skill or competency in the past. Thinking of examples for each skill and competency prior to the interview means you won't have to think on the spot on the day.



### The STAR technique

It can often be hard to stay on track and not go off on a tangent when you are answering an interview question with an example of your past experience. This is where the STAR technique comes in useful.

The STAR techniques helps you to structure your answer in to 4 sections:

- **Situation** – Start by setting the scene
- **Task** – Explain your role
- **Action** – What did you do?
- **Result** – What was the outcome?

## Top Tips and Resources for Interviews

There are a number of great resources online to help you prepare for interviews. Here are some links:

- Total Jobs – How to handle competency based interviews and more information on the STAR technique  
<https://www.totaljobs.com/insidejob/how-to-handle-competency-based-interview-questions/>
- Indeed – How to prepare for an interview  
<https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/interviewing/how-to-prepare-for-an-interview>
- Total Jobs – Common interview questions  
<https://www.totaljobs.com/advice/most-common-interview-questions>



## Self-Development

It is important to continue to build your knowledge and skills even when you are not in a role that is going to be your full team career. Every experience should be grasped and learned from. By continually building your knowledge and skills, you can face new challenges and embrace opportunities. Self-development can help you move to your next step and reflecting on your skills, knowledge and experience can support you in what that next step is.

Here are some top tips to get you started on your self-development journey.



### STEP 1 - Reflect

What do you want to do more of? Where can you improve? To find out, try self-reflection.

- **A little goes a long way.** In a study of call-centre workers, those who reflected for 15 minutes a day about what they learned performed 23% better after just 10 days.
- **Keep a journal** to capture thoughts and feelings while they're fresh in your mind.
- Don't like scribbling? **Try a journal app** such as Day One, Journey or Dabble.me.



### STEP 2 - Stay on track

**Set a deadline** - To boost on-the-job learning, impose a deadline to help you focus. Better yet, get a colleague to do it for you. Studies show externally set deadlines motivate us more than self-imposed ones.

**Find a mentor** - A coach, mentor or goal buddy can hold you accountable to meet your goals. Leaders who give weekly updates on their progress are 70% more successful.

**Try 'high-stakes' networking** - At networking events, most of us mingle with people we know. Take part in high-stakes activities that connect you with diverse others. Think team sports or volunteering.

**Track your learning** - It's easy to lose sight of your progress. So, record those webinars with apps such as Screencast, use your toolkit's 'Bookmark' feature and store news stories as a magazine in Flipboard.



**STEP 3 - Keep sight of your goals**

Long-term goals are great for pushing yourself. But they can be daunting. So:

- Break down big goals into more manageable, short-term ones.
- Tick off a to-do list for a burst of dopamine – the happy hormone.

**STEP 4 - Take stock**

It's key to regularly review your progress. Ask yourself:

- Did you achieve what you set out to?
- What new skills are you using?
- Why did that goal slip away from you?

Now jump back to step one to get the answer – and keep on learning!

## Next Steps

Now you have some top tips to help you begin your journey to your next step in your career, what's next?

### Recruitment agencies & job boards

Signing up to a recruitment agency can be really beneficial as many companies use them to help find the perfect candidate. Some great agencies we have used in the past include Denholm Associates, New Chapter, Talent Pool, Adjacency, Search and Poet. There are also a number of job boards where you can upload your CV and receive alerts for any roles that may be of interest to you such as Total Jobs, Reed and Indeed.

### LinkedIn

This is a fantastic way to make connections and share your skills and experience through your profile. LinkedIn also has a vacancies section where you can sign up to alerts for jobs. This article shares some steps to improve your LinkedIn profile <https://business.linkedin.com/en-uk/marketing-solutions/blog/posts/content-marketing/2017/17-steps-to-a-better-LinkedIn-profile-in-2017>.

### CV Support

Many recruitment agencies, websites and job boards will give you CV support and help to review your CV and ensure it is effective.

## IF YOU REMEMBER ANYTHING, REMEMBER THIS

**GET INTO A POSITIVE MINDSET BEFORE THE INTERVIEW**  
**VISUALISE YOUR SUCCESS**  
**DRESS TO IMPRESS**  
**LEAN ON YOUR SUPPORT NETWORKS**  
**ARRANGE SOMETHING FUN TO DO AFTER YOUR INTERVIEW**  
**KEEP THINGS IN PERSPECTIVE**