



RESUME TIPS

- Is a “Curriculum Vitae” different from a Resume?

While preparing to write a resume one must have often come across the term “Curriculum Vitae”. Just another synonym for resume? Not really. At least not when it comes to the U.S. of A. In America the resume and the C.V (as it is commonly known), are rather different from one another. Well, then what exactly is a “C.V” in the American sense of it? The term "curriculum vitae" translates as something close to "course of life"-- a detailed, lengthy and structured listing of education, publications, projects, awards and work history. Curriculum vitae can sometimes run into ten or more pages. Remember, it is “detailed” information.

- Who needs a "C.V."?

A C.V is required for certain positions, most common of them being educators, scientists and other academia related specialists. Job seekers with extensive academic and professional credentials applying for positions in education or research need to possess a C.V. .A CV is appropriate for PhD's, M.Phil's, MFA's, and MA's seeking teaching or research positions. Colleges, universities, and research institutions generally require a CV. It is essential for academic as well as administrative positions in education-related careers. In applying for positions in higher education, the CV generally takes the place of the printed application form. Typically, one is expected to submit a letter of application(detailed), a CV, a writing sample and other supporting documents.

- Where is a “C.V” not needed?

Be sure that you give a “C.V” only where it is necessary to do so. It may work against you if a resume was actually expected. Most employers –private business, government and the like, anyway look for a brief one-page account of your proof-of-worthiness.

- What should be included in a “C.V”?

- Name, address(es), phone number(s), e-mail address
- Objective: What position exactly are you applying for?
- Educational background: Academic preparation - College degrees with details
- Relevant work experience : position-related
- Specific skills: Computer programs, lab techniques, etc.
- Publications/ exhibitions/ performances papers etc. submitted for publication
- Current research interests
- Paper/ posters presented at conferences
- Grants received
- Honours, awards and fellowships
- Professional organization memberships
- Professional services
- Travel
- Languages known and/or other skills
- Personal interests
- References



- What to exclude?

Personal details must be strictly excluded from a C.V. Such as age, sex, marital status, race, ethnic background and religion, personal preferences, biases and political leanings etc.

Condensed version

“C.V” is nothing but a “Condensed Version” of you and your achievements. So it must effectively summarize all of this information. However, unlike a resume your “C.V” can be much longer. The CV generally ranges from two to dozens of pages in length, depending upon factors such as the extent of one's research record or the stage of one's career.

Outside the U.S, resume and C.V are synonymous the world over. So use your discretion and prepare a resume or a C.V accordingly, depending on the position and the location you are applying to.

Resume Writing Tips

- A resume is as good as an advertisement for oneself. Ensure that you market yourself well
- It's your resume, so make it as professional as you can
- The sole purpose of your resume is to ensure that you are short-listed for that much-wanted interview
- It is advisable to hand over your resume directly to the person who will be doing the hiring
- Avoid making a flashy resume. Keep it simple and precise.
- Avoid using colored envelopes or papers
- Get your resume proof-read! There should be NO mistakes! It reflects carelessness
- There should be no misspelled words or incorrect grammar.
- Print your resume on quality bond paper. Do not use dot matrix, it is not only outdated, but does not appeal to read either. Instead, use a laser print.
- Use clean paper devoid of smudges, marks, or creases
- Your resume should be easy to read. Using "bulleted points" is helpful.
- Keep sentences short and concise. Use action verbs.
- Avoid the usage of: I, me, my, and "Resume of."
- Use text formatting utilities like bold, underline, or italic to emphasize relevant sections in the resume.

Possible sections on a resume include:

Objective Summary of Qualifications
Education
Education & Training
Work Experience
Other Experience
Related Experience
Skills
Computer Skills
Additional Information
Awards and Merits
Publications

References

- Left and right margins should be no smaller than one inch
- Make sure that the document looks balanced and attractive
- Use a conservative, pleasant, and readable font



Highlight your skills and characteristics on the resume and cover letter. Examples:

- Honest Dependable Excellent interpersonal skills
- Team oriented Organized Manage time well
- Work well under pressure Flexible Quick learner
- Leadership skills Enthusiastic Assertive
- Friendly Presentation skills Sincere
- Thorough Tactful

Remember, it takes time to draft a great resume. Good luck!

Your Resume - 5 Minutes and 5 Minutes

If you spend 5 minutes building a resume, the chance of it being rejected within 5 minutes by the employer is very high. Thus, the time you spend to build OR create your resume is directly proportional to the time the employer would take to reject the resume - T.Muralidharan

You must view your resume more as a marketing tool, where you have to sell your skills to a person who has no clue about who you are. Remember he has to go through thousands of resumes, so what is it that you can do which will catch his attention? To find out how you can make your mark, stay with us. Our panel of in-house experts will guide you at every step of the way. This section will feature articles, opinions and interviews from the top management circle. Not only do we cover general resume concerns, but focus on functions and designation resumes. For instance how to write marketing or a finance resume or how to write a resume of a brand executive or general manager of HR.

The best resumes are those, which can capture and present your strongest skill sets. Our resume builder has been specially designed for this purpose of being able to grab all your skills, including soft skills. I would recommend that you use our resume builder to create your CV because it is specially designed keeping employers and their needs in mind. As a result your CV is created in a way that would appeal to them.

Look out for articles tailored to meet the needs of the Indian professionals working in various industries.

- The Art Of Resume Writing

A resume has to be compact in style and organized in presentation; It is not an autobiography. Therefore, it is important to identify relevant details from the heap of information. Academic qualification, professional experience and current job description are of primary importance.

Resume has to be simple and lucid in appearance. Avoid high-sounding and formal language. Do not fill it with ins and outs of work life. Give a chronological pattern in case of a continuous career. Go as per skill-sets, if otherwise.

Here are a few pointers to drafting a resume:

Name and address: Write the first and the last names without indicating marital status. The contact address must have residence telephone, fax and e-mail and not office numbers. Specify if somebody else's facilities are being used.

Work experience: List the assignments beginning with the latest. The challenges faced must reveal your forte. Divide the experience in each organization in to tenures and list the accomplishments in a way that brings out the managerial expertise picked up by you while on the job.



Education: Give the academic qualifications especially if you are from prestigious institutions and have had an exemplary academic record. Briefly mention scholarships and medals. This is at the junior level. At the senior level, give the details of professional qualifications attained.

Personal information: This is optional. Do not go over board on hobbies. This gives an impression that personal interests supersede the professional ones.

Additional information: Details that might be relevant to employment objectives but do not fit in any category are to be given in this.

Focus on the following :

- Depth and range of work experience
- Variety of projects undertaken
- Proven skills
- Type of companies worked for
- Current job profile

- **Strictly avoid :**

- Reasons for leaving the current job -you can talk about it in the interview only when asked.
- False information on the resume, you are likely to get caught.
- Personal beliefs on communal and political, racial and gender issues.
- Present and expected salary details
- Spelling and grammar mistakes
- Verbose style

- **Program Your Resume:**

The good old paper resume is a trustworthy ally in any job search process. You can check its contents over and over again to ensure that everything is all right. You are certain that it will reach the employer with the same contents.

With electronic resumes, however, you cannot be so certain, for they are quite unpredictable. For all you know, they may end up on the employer's system as a tangled web of pictures, graphics, and undecipherable characters. You are blissfully unaware of what has happened, and are pleased with your neatly formatted work of art.

What can you do to minimize such mishaps? Just minimize the beautification. Those of you who have spent a lot of time in doing exactly this, worry not! You can use this formatting for the paper version. The beautified resume can be sent as a word attachment to employers who accept them in such a form. However, when pasting into your e-mail or into a form on the company's website, formatting is out!

- **Some Tips on Formatting :**

- Don't use tabs, as they don't appear properly on e-mail. Your resume ends up looking scrambled and the alignment disappears.
- Left alignment is perhaps the best and simple solution to your formatting problems. Your resume appears professional and neat.
- There is no need to use special fonts or font size. Irrespective of how you format your file, the font is likely to be the same for all of the text. The reason is that text font is generally determined by the employer's e-mail reader.



How do you differentiate different sections in your file?

You can use capital letters or hard returns ("enter" key on your keyboard). Capitals are easily translated in e-mail, while hard returns provide spacing between paragraphs. You can use capitals to indicate the titles and sub-headings.

"Pop" Up

A multitude of companies advertise openings on the net. The jobseeker may feel that there are several companies, which accept resumes by e-mail. In reality, however, the response rate for such applications is dismal.

You can however, beat the system to some extent by using the right keywords. With the right arsenal of keywords, your resume can pop up on the employer's screen. How does this happen? Most of the job sites allow employer to search for resumes based on their requirements. Based on the search word used, a list of resumes is displayed, as in any other search process. For your resume to appear in such a list, it must contain the keyword used.

Keywords are the common words, which may be used by an employer to search for resumes. How do you identify the keywords? The best answer would be the advertisement. Include as many words from the advertisement in your resume as you can, blending them meaningfully with the body of the resume.

More importantly, be honest to yourself. Do not include terms and words, which are not true to you! With the right combination of keywords, you may just grab the employer's attention. So, just go ahead and put in the magical word!

A Résumé that Talks Turkey

Whenever you see good potential opportunities what do you do? Incorporate subtle changes to your existing resumé and send it to the employer? Its time we got out of the conventional way of writing a resumé. A brief, concise resumé that is not contradictory is what is needed. A resumé reflects what you have accomplished so far. Make your resumé in accordance with the job profile you are applying for. Companies invest quite an amount in recruiting people and would expect a detailed resumé profiling all that they are looking for.

It is not very interesting to go through a four-page resumé no matter how many achievements you have to your credit. Nobody will tolerate a CV more than three pages long!

Tips for an effective resume

- 'Resumé or 'Curriculum Vitae' nicely centred at the top of the first page. (What else can it be!)
- Do not begin any statement with the word 'I'
- Avoid using bright, eye-catching paper - red, pink, yellow, or green or a quaint font to print your resumé. It does not look attractive!
- Do not tape or staple the resumé to the inside of the envelope so that it won't 'fall out.' It can be very irritating!
- Ensure the inclusion of address and telephone number on your resumé, and in case of a change of address do mention so but not by writing on the resumé or on the back of the envelope.
- A clear, descriptive resumé puts you across as a good communicator. Be specific in what you need to tell to your potential employer.
- A resumé is not just a document of credentials, it is the most powerful channel between you and your potential employer.
- It should tell him everything that you want him to know about you without making it sound dull.



- A resumé should cover everything about yourself that is relevant to the job on offer and just touch upon your skills in other areas.

As a professional you will be responsible for strategic decisions and activities, and it is imperative that your resume reflects this. Ensure that your resumé has the readability factor and is information packed.

Walking tall and standing apart

Curriculum Vitae are a cinch!

EVERYBODY tells you to write fresh Curriculum Vitae every time you apply for a job and to update it every couple of months, perhaps assuming that you will whip it out the moment a likely employer heaves to on the horizon. I can think of nothing more tedious than composing paeans about oneself month in and month out! However, over the years I have managed to develop a method that is nearly painless. One essential factor needs to be fixated in your mind. To make a CV readable and interesting, it must stand out from a crowd of CVs churned out by hundreds of other applicants. I'm not one for the Mission/ Vision/ Objective statements at the beginning. Everybody does that and it sounds so incredibly fatuous that as an avid CV scanner myself I find myself zipping through the rest with a cursory glance. You need to be clear, concise, and businesslike and put all that down in an attractive format that doesn't jar the delicate sensibilities of the hiring authorities!

To do this and to ensure getting your CV to the top of the heap you need to make certain you follow these pointers:

- Getting it right:

There are two types of CVs. One is ideal for professional butterflies who leap about from career to career with the occasional employment break. Hirers are, at least in India, not overwhelmed with long breaks in employment and the best way to downplay such breaks is to create a functional CV. In such CVs, you describe your skills in categories [Automobile engineer, institutional manager, finance professional] and list the designations you have had lower down. This provides a clear, unequivocal overview of what you are good at and how former employers valued your services. For those of you with steadier career paths, and whose employment gaps have been insignificant or non-existent a chronological CV is the best bet. In these, you list your jobs and the designation you held in reverse chronological order. The same format can be followed when you mention your educational/training background. This is the way dyed-in-the-wool HR functionaries like to see things, as they tend to be sticklers for form and tradition.

- Types:

When you construct the chronological CV do make certain you describe your experience, education and skills telling the reader what it is that you have achieved thus far. Please remember that the functionaries that sift through the mounds of CVs that cross their desk like to make very light work of them. Therefore if they cannot immediately understand what you have to offer, they'll summarily shred your CV. On the other hand if they are able to instantly see what they are looking for, the CV will make its way up the corporate ladder! You must understand that the average time for reading a CV is about a minute and a half, so if you fit the job, say so at the outset, or indicate it right upfront! While work experience precedes education, in the event you are applying for your first job, your education should be showcased first. Work experience or education; list them down in reverse order of chronology. Do not clutter a CV with details of your consuming interest in bee-keeping and the like, save it for when they ask you at the interview



about your interests! I am often asked if CVs should talk about the division or class of educational qualifications. There is no hard and fast rule about this but if your scraped through, waxing eloquent about your division may not further your case too far, on the other hand, you might like to mention the fact that you received a gold medal or a merit scholarship if in fact you actually did. A top performer can usually be depended upon to be consistent and is generally a safe bet with any employer. If you haven't been formally employed as yet, it may not be a bad idea to list down any relevant experience you may have in the functional area required. This could be in social service you may have undertaken at sometime during school or college. Computer skills are another nice thing you might like to include, and if you have written articles for a paper or anchored a TV show, do mention it. Language skills are a major draw, so you may like to mention them too.

- The Look and Feel

We have talked above of the way a good CV needs to be organised to be noticed, but if it even looks tatty, the busy HR executive will not give it the time of day! Bottom line? It has to be attractive and spending time on formatting will pay dividends.

- The Format:

Lotus SmartSuite and MSWord have CV templates. While they are attractive and do present the material well, please remember that hordes of other applicants will have thought of that too, and in using them reduced your CV to the boring sameness that will tire the person who looks at it. It is normal human tendency to assume that a similar looking document has the same contents, so if the screening executive sees a dozen similar formats, he is likely to give yours a cursory glance instead of the attention it deserves. This does not mean that you embellish your CV with fancy fonts and colourful pictures and graphics! Simple and easy-to-read should be the effect to strive for. Do not be too lavish with bold print and avoid italics as far as possible. Bulleting is a good way to make a list but keep it simple and do not fall into the trap of having a varied series of them. Pointing fingers, graphic arrows and check marks are best avoided.

- The Paper:

This is important if you need hard copies of your CV. Today, despite many Indian corporations going electronic, HR departments still prefer having their records on paper. To be noticed, your CV needs to be 'good-to-the-touch'. This does not mean that you etch your CV on beaten silver but the quality of paper matters. Go in for thickish executive bond paper (75 gauge) or, better still, royal executive bond (100 gauge) that looks great and takes computer printing excellently. Avoid writing your CV or typing it out on a manual typewriter. This is passé and will not get a second glance. Please remember that your CV, cover letter and the envelope should match, since these are often clipped together when 'moved up' the HR ladder. I have always felt that paper that is not pure white attracts more attention, so using ivory or cream textured paper will at least cause your CV to stand out from the motley pile. Besides, print stands out well on ivory and cream.

- Fonts:

If your CV needs to go in soft copy form, remember that some e-mail packages may not recognise your choice of font. They may even insist on text font CVs that will play havoc with all your careful planning. The font must necessarily be plain and easy to read. The size should not be larger than 12 points except for the header, which includes your name. These can be bold as well. The best read fonts are Arial, Tahoma or any other uncomplicated sans serif font that will come out much better if they are scanned or faxed as they are likely to be when your CV moves up to the next level. Avoid Times New Roman or Lucida Handwriting. Even sans serif fonts like Comic Sans are not recommended.



- The Meat of the Matter

Having ensured that your CV looks good and is well organised we come to the meat of the matter – what to put in it so that it holds the attention of the people who will read it.

- The Long and Short of it

If you are a fresher or a person with about 5-10 years of experience, keep your CV down to a single page. On the other hand, if you are a seasoned professional with 15+ years of service some of them in senior positions keep it to two pages at the outside. For one thing it is quick to read and if the salient points are clear, it is all that is required. It is not a bad idea to have a detailed CV saved on your system from which you can cut and paste as required to suit the job profile for which you are applying.

- Proactive Prose:

Grammar sometimes needs to be modified to suit the need. Start descriptive sentences with active verbs like ‘Advised the Managing Director’ or ‘Supervised the conduct of the session’ or ‘Trained new entrants’ etc., This gives an impression of activity and high energy. Even something like ‘Exclusively responsible’ will catch the eye. This advice may not thrill grammarians, but hey, you’ve got to get that tired HR executive to take notice, right?

- Figure it right:

If you need to quote numbers or percentages or statistics, do so. Nothing catches the attention like a series of figures. There seems to be a magic associated with numbers that fascinates often even if the numbers are not substantiated in the text. For some reason, people generally feel that numbers cannot lie so by association the text that accompanies the numbers must be worth reading too!

If you have managed to incorporate all the suggestions above, your CV must be really something that will aid your immediate employment! You can be reasonably certain that it will be read and with interest that may prompt them to call you for an interview. Once there, you will have the task of living upto the standard of your CV, so stick to the truth and memorise everything so that you aren’t caught off guard when they ask you about an entry in the CV. Never forget to carry an extra hard copy of the CV when you go for the interview.

Congratulations, you've just been offered the job!

Tips for Interview

Job and Salary Questions

Why Should We Employ You?

For this question, your answer should list out strengths that you feel are relevant to the job. Given below are some answers which could help you with your answers. However, structure them to suit your requirements.

- I have good co-ordination skills
- Good analytical skills
- I can persuade people to see my point of view, and get the work done
- My greatest asset is my ability to motivate people
- Even during emergencies, I do not loose my cool



- I have good entrepreneurial skills
- I have consistently met my deadlines and targets
- Can say “no” to people when required to do so!
- I am very co-operative with my sub-ordinates, and would like to see them grow
- I am a good team player
- I am very flexible, and have the ability to work hard under difficult work conditions
- I have the experience and knowledge relevant to this job (Here, give appropriate details and examples)

Have You Applied to Any Other Company?

This is of course a difficult question to answer. Obviously, you must have applied to other companies if you are looking for a job. Therefore, do not lie that you have not. However, you are on thin ice here! The interviewer could be checking your honesty. On the other hand, he/she may also be trying to find out how focused you are - are you applying randomly, or is there a well-planned strategy?

Whatever your answer, it should match your career goals.

What Is Your Job Profile In the Current Job?

The interviewer is trying to find out if your experience can help the company – if you have the relevant skills or not! While answering this type of a question, give all details about your job profile, and also mention any special skills that you imparted to the job.

What Salary Are You Drawing?

The question is not difficult to answer – just be honest and give the figure. In all probability, your next employer may base your salary on this amount. However, the problem arises when you feel you are being underpaid in your current organisation. You may feel tempted to lie, but do not give in, as checks can be easily made and you may be disqualified. In case you are getting additional perks, incentives or commissions, do not forget to mention them, as they are important while negotiating salary.

What Salary Are You Expecting?

Try not to get into salary details early in the interview. If pressed, you could say that it all depends on the job, and would like to talk about it after a job offer. Say this in a convincing tone. In case you are asked this question in your latter interviews, give a direct answer. Do not sound apologetic while quoting the figure you have in mind.

Understanding the Interviewer's perspective

Most of us are by now familiar with the various do's & don'ts of interviews. If not, there is always plenty of interview tips floating around us all the time. Tips on how to be punctual, how not to be anxious, when to answer, when to stay quiet, how to do one's homework on the organization, how to send a thank-you note after the interview, how to impress the interviewer and so on.



In all of this religious interview-preparation, we forget a rather important thing however – the anxiety of the interviewer, who has the power to hire. Anxiety? ” What on earth should make the powerful anxious?” you might ask. Let us remind ourselves for once that with power to make decisions, comes accountability for the decisions made. Hence the interviewer is anxious to make the right decision which is to hire the right person.

A statistical research once indicated that fact that 95% of the time when we think we are being watched in public , we are actually not .Because every other person is busy wondering if he or she is being watched. This is precisely what happens with the interviewee. As an interviewee we are so worried about being “watched” that we forget to watch. The only thought is desperation. “I need this job.” “Will I get the job.” This way you are creating an image of yourself as the “job-seeker”.

It is important to understand that you can project yourself as a resource person. That is , rather than “I need this job” , you convey “I need this job AND I am needed for this job.” The danger here of course is self-promotion. What is advocated is not an aggressive stance but a non-meeek & non-defensive one. Which means – Do not just approach the interview as an opportunity for the interviewer to understand & evaluate you. The interview is also an opportunity for you to understand & evaluate- the interviewer & the company & the position that you have applied for.

Interviewing is no science . Hence the interviewer inspite of following the best hiring practices may not make the perfect decision. There are a lot of questions in his mind that will remain unanswered, however long an interview may be. They come through only once you begin working with the organization. Questions such as :

- Will you put in full working day regularly ?
- Will you stay around or quit the job early & suddenly?
- Will you take long to master the job & become profitable to the company?
- Will you get along with co-workers & boss?
- Will you try & get away with the minimum?
- Will you display initiative or wait for every response?
- Will you turn out to have character flaws: laziness, irresponsibility, incompetency, sexually harassing, gossiping, drug or substance abusing , lying, incompetent?

These unanswered questions definitely keep the interviewer anxious .Very much so since these answers hold the key to whether you are the perfect hire or not. The kick-backs of a bad decision, of an imperfect new-employer are varied.

- Boss of hirer displeased
- Brings discredit to dept/ section/ division or even company’s loss of face.
- Possibly costs the would-be-boss his raise or promotion.
- Monetary loss in hiring a bad employee

Once you realize that the interviewer is under stress as well while conducting the interview, the entire process becomes less intimidating. Remember no organization wishes to antagonize a worthwhile employee. So go ahead and don’t forget that there is two of you who want the interview to go the right way- you and the interviewer.



Good luck!

The Steps of an Interview

Scheduling the appointment

Make sure you write down the time, date and location of the interview, as well as the name of the person you will meet. Ask for concise directions and building numbers if applicable.

Bring with you

- Copies of your resumes
- References and letters of recommendations
- Portfolio or sample of your work, if appropriate

Traveling Locally

Leave early because you never know what might happen. You may get stuck in a traffic jam, get lost, or there may be an accident on the freeway. It is always a good idea to give yourself extra time to get there so you don't feel pressured.

Keep in Mind What the Employer is Seeking

- Professional experience
- Training and education
- Willingness to learn and grow
- Good attitude
- Maturity
- Teamwork
- Flexibility
- Reliability
- Responsibility
- General qualities

- First Impressions:

There is a common saying that minds are made up within the first 5 minutes of an interview. So keep in mind these important first impression indicators. Walk in the door as if you already work there, carry yourself as though you feel perfectly comfortable with the situation. Arrive on time or a little early. In the waiting area, politely tell the receptionist who you are meeting and in a friendly way, ask where you should sit. Take slow, deep breaths to help you remain calm and focused. When introduced to the interviewer, have a firm, but not painful, handshake. Smile. Have good posture when sitting or standing. Introduce yourself in a relaxed, confident manner. Have a well-groomed, professional appearance. Project a feeling of confidence. Bring extra copies of your resume, some thing to write on and something to write with.

- Interview Etiquette:

General

Etiquette counts when it comes to getting a job today. In an age when employers must decide between candidates with equally impressive credentials, the best way to distinguish yourself is through proper attitude and appearance. Good manners and business etiquette empower you to present yourself with confidence and authority to outshine the competition.

Avoid acting less than professional towards professionals: be punctual and polite. Employers look at you as potential employees, not students. The ability to display confidence through good manners can be as valuable as job skills. Do not overlook social graces like handshakes and introductions. Stand until you are invited, by word or gesture, to sit down.



Employers with an eye on long-term employees - in other words all of them, are also aware of how you present yourself as a leader. Leaders are able to function well in formal settings, such as an interview. Because they want employees who are able to command respect among a variety of associates and situations, it is important to select individuals who adapt their attitude, demeanor and behavior to suit the situation.

Specific Do's and Don'ts

Do

- BE ON TIME!!!
- Be polite to everyone you are in contact with - you never know who they might be
- Have specific, relevant questions about the company/position - it shows you are interested
- Exude confidence, poise and a sense of energy
- Get a good night's sleep so you'll be fresh and well rested
- Maintain good eye contact with the recruiter
- A firm handshake for men AND women communicates self-confidence
- Try to learn the interviewer's name in advance so you can pronounce it correctly
- Sit up straight and lean slightly forward, but be comfortable as well, this projects interest
- Follow up with a handwritten Thank You note

Don't

- Be too nervous if you can help it! Remember to take deep breaths, it will help
- Put on a false self - be your best self, but be you
- Forget to turn off your pager and cell phone - it's disruptive and inappropriate
- Say negative things about former employers, even if they are true. It will make you sound like you complain too much
- Leave early if you can possibly avoid it. While it is like you will have several companies to interview with, try and give yourself plenty of time between them
- Allow your nervousness to show! Your preparation will go a long way to calming you
- Don't fidget or touch things - breathe deeply to relax

Interviews - Basics to Know

The initial busy job search days have now ceased. There's an interview call letter in your hand - the employer thinks you are suitable for the job. However, this does not give you immunity from the "exam type" feeling you get. The process tests you to the core, and hence, the fear may bring negative feelings to the fore.

Look at the bright side - An interview is the best chance to convince the prospective employer that you are suitable for the job! You can do this with preparation. So what should preparing for an interview involve?

Research

Do not go for an interview without proper company and industry research. Knowledge is power, wield it!

Gather information regarding the company, and industry (ies), it operates in. The data should cover industry trends and statistics, company's products, financials, and other areas related to the company's operations.

Try and establish a rapport with the staff, as you could get important information about the company from this source.



Prepare a Checklist

Generally, during interviews, people tend to lose control over what they are talking. They offer unsolicited information and talk too much.

To ensure that you do not fall into this trap, make a list of things you do not want to talk about, and stick to it. There is nothing you can do if some pointed questions are asked about something you are not comfortable about, just be honest. Otherwise, just be silent about potentially harmful topics such as your petty habits. Do not also bore the interviewers talking about the medical history of your entire family.

Keep Your Cool

The idea behind an interview is to check how you act under pressure. Interviewers could deliberately ask you difficult questions with an aim to throw you off your balance. Therefore, just maintain your cool!

What Should Your Answers Reflect?

Your answers to the questions posed by the employer should contain some important attributes. These include honesty, maturity, clarity of thought and purpose, a structured and balanced way of thought, presence of mind, an open mind, good conceptualization skills, and good knowledge of the fundamentals.

Dress Code

The way you dress reflects what kind of a person you are, therefore, the dress code and grooming are very important while attending an interview. Look into the mirror and ensure that you are formally dressed and properly groomed. HR people are very particular about how you present yourself, and expect that you have trimmed hair, and wear polished shoes. This does not mean you should be over-dressed; just strike a balance!

Other Key Issues

- Before going for the interview read the newspaper for the day! The interviewer may want to check your knowledge of current affairs.
- What and how you eat is also important! Have a light meal. Do not skip a meal, it could lead to loss of concentration.
- Ensure that you have all the required papers such as CV, call letter etc., with you. Arrange and carry them in a folder.
- Reach the interview destination 10-15 minutes before the interview. Do not, however, be there long before time; it could make you nervous.
- Do not experiment with your mode of transport, travel in a manner that is comfortable and reliable.

COMMUNICATION - A MUST FOR SUCCESS

The interview seemed to have gone well, Sarita, the finance officer appeared to have presented her skills and expertise well to the Vice-President (Finance) . The resume indicated that she was the right fit for the job. The result, however, was completely different - she was not selected. According to the VP, Sarita was quiet and withdrawn, and did not show an ounce of interest. The company finally chose somebody less talented, but more enthusiastic and interested. Sarita lost out in the areas of communication and self-promotion.

The situation described above has occurred several times in the real world. The first thing an employer looks for is the ability of the candidate to communicate effectively and enthusiastically.

Flexibility - An Essential Attribute

Flexibility is the key for effective communication. A person with the capability to express ideas to all sections of the organization, is ultimately the most successful. Flexibility also means that you



can identify an opportunity to communicate. You should also have the ability to understand that different situations and personalities need different communication styles. For instance, getting into details with somebody who likes bare-bone facts would be inappropriate.

Self-Promotion - A Maligned Concept

For many, self-promotion is in bad taste, and considered to be egoistic or pushy. Moreover, enthusiasm is viewed as inappropriate. This type of group fails in interviews, wherein strong persuasion skills are required. This could explain why two people with similar backgrounds find themselves in different career positions. Selling yourself is crucial, how else would the employer know what you are capable of? People, who can promote themselves, literally leave no stone unturned while searching for opportunities.

Several people think that hard work and talent speak for themselves. This perhaps is true in the context of the academic world, but the corporate arena requires some persuasion for one to move ahead.

The work rules have changed dramatically. Merely being intelligent, hardworking, and loyal is not sufficient, you have to push yourself into the limelight. Assuming that your superiors would recognize your interests, capabilities and achievements is impractical. Therefore, if you want something, go ahead and ask for it!! Put your feelings into words. If you don't, it most probably will be perceived as a lack of interest on your part.

The inability to self-promote has been the waterloo for several talented individuals. After all, it's up to you to convince the employers about the benefits of hiring you. Why be modest about your achievements? You should live up to who you are and what you are capable of doing!

Self-promotion does not, however, mean that you have to change your personality or principles. It does not mean you have to resort to unethical promotion techniques. Just emphasize your capabilities, which combined with good communication skills and flexibility, would be the best assets to have for an interview.

TIPS FOR DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF INTERVIEWEES

For Fresher, Unemployed And Those Shifting Career

Your current position and status can impact the way you are interviewed. Here are some tips based on the segment you belong to:

Fresh Out of College

- The basis on which you will be judged is your academic background, family background, and interests.
- If looking for your first job, ensure that your previous experience, even if it is part-time, is noticed.
- Mention projects or responsibilities you may have undertaken. This will indicate your area of aptitude
- You should be willing to put in regular hours, in line with the company's policies. The interviewer needs to know whether you can be punctual and put in full-time work.
- In case you have applied for the post of management trainee, you should display an ability to adapt, and indicate all-round interests. Moreover, you should have good interpersonal skills.
- You should be enthusiastic to learn, and show commitment towards the organization, as the company will be spending a lot on your training

Unemployed

People who have been unemployed or terminated generally suffer from feelings of anger, depression and resentment. All these have to be sidelined before entering the interview room. In



case you belong to such a category, you could undertake some confidence building programs. You should go into the room with a positive attitude, after all, you have been given an opportunity to prove your abilities.

- Even though it's painful, indicate that you understand the reasons for your termination by the previous employer. Do not let your bitterness creep in.
- Present your termination in a positive light - you could say that you had made a mistake in making a career choice, something that will not be duplicated again!
- Prove to the interviewer that the time you were unemployed was well spent! In case you quit just to take some rest, show that it was worth it!
- You need to show that you are well in touch with your skills.
- Never give the impression of being a "drifter".
- In case you can start off immediately, say so to the interviewer, as it could be an important point in your favour. A person who is already employed will definitely not be able to join duty immediately.

Change of Career

- Try to convince the employer that even though you have changed your career, there is still a link between them.
- You also need to tell the employer why you are looking for a change in your career.
- In case you are bringing up a family, indicate that the obligation will not hamper you, and you are thoroughly committed. You need to convince that you can be depended on, and can work longer hours if required.
- The interviewer will be concerned about how stable you will be in the job, and its up to you to clear such apprehensions. You could indicate that you have settled down, and will put in a reasonable amount of time in the company.

Telephone Interviews

Tricks to ace that phone interview

First of all, get your telephone number /contact number across clearly. Mention the country code, area code and city code. This is a must for MNC's and positions overseas.

If you are giving a contact number, intimate the people who are likely to receive the call. If the name by which you are known differs from your official name (as mentioned in the CV) intimate this to them to ensure you receive your call.

Telephone interview could range between 30-90 minutes. It is better not to list an office number, Public Call Office number that would disturb your concentration and consequently affect your performance. Avoid noisy places.

Make sure the interview is conducted in your TIME ZONE. When you are informed of a tele interview, confirm the date/day and time in your time zone. Get to the phone 30 minutes ahead of scheduled time. Cut all your friends short to ensure you have a clear line.

Take note of the name, designation and phone number of the person who is interviewing you. If the interview is more in the nature of a teleconference, ascertain the name of at least one of the members of the panel.

Practice a 'self-introduction' in 1-2 minutes. Remember, this is also a test of your presentation & communication skills.



If the job is in America, familiarise yourself with American English. Listen to audio/video cassettes specially designed for students appearing for TOEFL. You could also listen to CNN news bulletins or watch American movies. Do the same for any other country you might be considering moving to.

Have a copy of the CV mailed to the organisation before the interview. If there is an update since the time of applying for a position, appraise them during the course of the interview, and fax/e-mail them a revised copy.

Listen to the questions carefully before you frame an answer. Don't get tense and 'jump the gun'. Do not answer in 'yes' or 'no' or speak too fast. If you don't understand a question, ask the interviewer to repeat it.

No long pauses in the conversation. Keep the conversation lively and engaging. At the same time don't be excessively hearty or flippant.

Familiarize yourself with some American phrases like "Come again" etc. which mean that you need to repeat what you have just said.

Don't refer to books or materials while being interviewed. Nor should you ask another person to help you out. Be truthful, the interviewers have conducted hundreds of tele interviews. It's highly unlikely that you will get away with lying.

Ask questions about the company, about your job and any other information you think is critical for you to take a decision on joining the company

Be precise and clear with technical questions. Explain your current role and work assignment clearly. It could be that the interviewer is also interviewing some of your colleagues. Discrepancies detected could cost you your job.

Be prepared for a power failure during the interview. Have an emergency light handy.

Don't forget to thank the interviewer at the end of the interview. Ask when you could expect to hear from them about the outcome of the interview. Send a polite reminder if you do not hear from them after the stipulated time.

Right person for the right Job!!!!!!!!!!!!

Interviewer usually evaluates candidates within a span of 10-30 minutes. So give the best you have got! Here are some tips to ace that interview

What do interviewers look for?

An interview is conducted with an aim to identify candidates with skills suitable for a particular job. Apart from your educational qualifications and work experience, personality and inter-personal skills are equally stressed on. The interviewer usually evaluates candidates within a span of 10-30 minutes. So give the best you have got!

Employers look for some specific skills in candidates they are interviewing. These include:



Resource Skills

Can you make optimal use of the resources available to you? That is what employers are keen to know. You must have the capability to identify, manage, plan, and then allocate resources such as time, money, raw materials, and employees.

- **Time Skills** – As a prospective employee you should have the ability to prioritise his tasks. You must then be able to allocate time to each depending on its importance. Always remember to keep the company's goal in mind when ranking and allocating time to your tasks. To implement them, prepare and follow a schedule.
- **Money Skills** – As a potential candidate you should be able to prepare and implement a budget, make forecasts, and maintain records. Furthermore, you should have the skill to make adjustments to meet the company's goals.
- **Facilities and Material Handling Skills** – Another essential skill is the ability to purchase, store, allocate, and use materials or facilities, efficiently.
- **HR Skills** – As a potential employee, you should be able to identify others' strengths, and distribute tasks accordingly. You should also know the basics of performance appraisal and feedback.

Communication Skills

Do you prefer to work alone or with a team? It's important that you have the ability to work with others. Team spirit is the crux here! Important interpersonal skills include the ability to:

- Put your group's objectives before yours
- Knowledge and skill sharing
- Must satisfy the customer
- Demonstrate leadership qualities
- Effective communication
- Learn to negotiate
- Work in varied environments
- Work without bias, work with different people

Information Gathering Skills

How well can you gather and use information effectively, and efficiently? Apart from information gathering, you must have expertise in evaluating, managing and interpreting.

System Skills

You must be able to understand the working of social, organisational and technological systems.

Technical Skills

Being technology savvy is the way to be in the IT era. You are expected to possess skills required to identify the technology suitable for your needs and apply the same to your area of work. For this purpose, you should be aware of the set-up procedure and operation of the equipment. The presence or absence of these skills decides the way your career moves. Your aim should be to acquire as many skills as you can and keep updating them regularly. You can become irresistible to an employer if, you are well informed and capable as you are!



Don't Call us we'll Call you!!!

Could be that you were responsible for the offer being turned down. Learn how not to repeat those mistakes!

Has it ever happened that you have attended a number of interviews, but none of the employers seem to get back to you? Probably a “Don't call us we'll call you” attitude. Lets look back and analyze. What could have gone wrong? What went wrong?

Could be that you were responsible for the offer being turned down.

Generally active job seekers are under pressure to find a suitable job for themselves. They feel more comfortable with a few offers in hand, however disinteresting it may be. In situations like this, you fail to accept that it might be you who turned the offer down. You maybe getting the best job/deal that you begin to make unreasonable demands, like asking for an increase in pay or promotion, in compensation for the uncongenial work environment.

You maybe concentrating on what you require only. Maybe you are not willing to compromise on a job that does not meet all your needs. Being caught up with your own needs, you fail to view yourself from the employer's angle.

Based on the above-mentioned factors, we have created a few guidelines that will help you along the way...

Don't just hear, LISTEN carefully

The key word here is “listen”. It will help you gather and analyse the information much better. The information may help you analyse why those offers had seemed so elusive! Is the market declining? Do you have the required background? Do you face the same type of treatment in all interviews? It's probably time for you to look within yourself and see where you went wrong and learn from it.

Approach the interviewer

It does not sound right, but if you cannot identify the reasons for your failure, the best thing you can do is to approach the interviewer. Find out where you went wrong and ask him/her where you need to improve. Trust me, the feedback is invaluable. This will make you place your own priorities above everything else.

Subconsciously we always try and match our mind set with that of the companies. The attempt at finding the perfect match is a difficult proposition but certainly not impossible. Not every interview will result in a job offer. Sometimes, even our best efforts do not meet with success. However, you must just learn to let go! No use crying over spilt milk. Each failure takes you one step closer to success.

Communication - A must for success

Communication and self-promotion is as important as the skill you possess

Rita's interview seemed to have gone just fine. She appeared to have presented her skills competently to the Vice-President (finance). Her resume indicated that she was the right person for the job. Yet she was not selected for the post of finance manager. So what happened? According to the VP, Rita was quiet and rather withdrawn. She failed to show any kind of interest towards the prospective job. As a result company finally chose someone with less talents, but



more enthusiastic and confident. The moral of the story; communication and self-promotion is as important as the skill you possess.

The first thing an employer looks for is the ability of the potential candidate to communicate effectively and enthusiastically. Here are some tips on how to improve your communication skills--

Be Flexible: A must!

A good communicator is one who can express him/her self clearly right across the organisation structure. The key to effective communication is flexibility. You should also be able to identify an opportunity to communicate. More importantly, deal with different situations and personalities accordingly. For instance, getting into details with somebody who likes bare-bone facts, would be inappropriate.

Don't blow your own trumpet but let them know

Who ever told you self-promotion is in bad taste? It's imperative to possess strong persuasion skills. This could explain why two people with similar backgrounds find themselves in different career positions. Learn to sell your skills. How else will your prospective employer know what you are capable of?

If you think that hard work and talent speak for themselves, you need to get your thoughts updated. Perhaps it is true in the context of the academic world, but the corporate arena requires certain amount of persuasion to move ahead.

Ask and you shall....

Merely being intelligent, hardworking, and loyal is a thing of the past. Now you have to make a conscious attempt to push yourself into the limelight. Don't assume your superiors will recognize your interests, capabilities and achievements. If you want something, ask for it!! It's important to put your feelings into words.

Don't be modest about your achievements. Live up to that of which you are capable. However, do not overplay your cards. Self-promotion should not change your personality or principles. Neither do you have to resort to unethical promotion techniques. Emphasize your capabilities, communicate well.