

A Useful Guide to Interview Success



Bryan Edwards

ISBN 978-1-906460-15-0

© Pansophix Limited. All rights reserved.

 Pansophix

A Useful Guide to Interview Success

Published by Pansophix Online
22 Torquay Road, Chelmsford,
Essex, CM1 6NF, England

Written by Bryan Edwards

This edition published March 2009 (a)

Copyright © Pansophix Ltd. All rights reserved.

ISBN 978-1-906460-15-0

CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction	
Welcome to the guide	4
About the author	7
Your notes	8
Building your C.V.	
Introduction	11
Properties of advertising and visual appeal	12
Content and expression	14
Suggested content	15
Examples of profiles	18
Quantified responsibilities and achievements	20
Describing your role	22
C.V. Checklist	23
A word about covering letters and emails	25
Preparing for Interviews	
Introduction	26
Interviewer strategy	27
Preparing for interviews	30
Typical interview questions	34
Behavioural interviewing	36
Typical competency based questions	37
On The Day	
Essential last minute things	38
During the interview	39
Active listening	42
Body language	44
Who's selling who?	46
After the interview	46
Appendices	
Some general job and training websites	47
Ideal Person Checklist	48
How good a Team Leader / Manager are you? checklist	49
How good a Service Provider are you? checklist	50
C.V. templates	52



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the guide

A well designed, eye catching Curriculum Vitae will lead the job seeker to the job interview. The recruitment interview, like delivering a presentation, remains one of the most daunting experiences in life.

As with all our job search efforts, we can tackle many of these difficulties and the feelings that we have, through preparation and rehearsal. A Useful Guide to Interview Success has been written by an experienced recruitment interviewer with over 20 years experience in the commercial market. This Useful Guide will help you through this preparation and rehearsal process, providing lots of tips and tactics to design an effective C.V. that gets you noticed and help you 'shine through' at interview. In addition, valuable 'insider' information is given as to what the Interviewers are looking for, and what impresses them most.

We hope you find this Useful Guide helpful and an invaluable source of reference. Good luck in your job seeking endeavours!

Copyright © Bryan Edwards 2008. No part of this pack may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

Who the Useful Guide is for

This Useful Guide has been designed as a practical resource to help you secure employment no matter what your background, income expectations or type of job. People who use this Useful Guide may be faced with the following situations

...

- Been made redundant from existing job.
- Looking for first job after full time education.
- Bored in existing job and looking for a fresh challenge.
- Returning to work after a period out of employment.
- Looking to seek a promotion role with their existing organisation.
- Seeking an alternative career.
- Having to apply for their existing job as part of a re-structuring exercise.

"Flaming enthusiasm, backed up by horse sense and persistence, is the quality that most frequently makes for success."

DALE CARNGIE

Using this Useful Guide

This Useful Guide is for the primary use of job seekers worldwide. It highlights the essential steps you should take to ...

- Save time by using one of the various C.V. templates in the Appendices to build your C.V. – just substitute your details.
- Design an eye-catching curriculum vitae that helps you to secure a job interview.
- Prepare fully for the job interview.
- Deliver an exceptional interview performance that helps you to 'sell yourself' as the ideal candidate.

It has been written to provide thoughts and pointers as to what to do and provide a detailed, step-by-step manual.

It is recommended that you ...

- Periodically refresh your knowledge of its contents.
- Share its contents with colleagues who will help you prepare for job applications. (E.g. give you feedback on your C.V.)

"The only place where success comes before work is in the dictionary."

VIDAL SASSOON

Your notes (when printed)

"Failing to plan is planning to fail."

ANON

Your notes (when printed)

"The most important single ingredient in the formula for success is knowing how to get along with people."

THEODORE ROOSEVELT

Your notes (when printed)

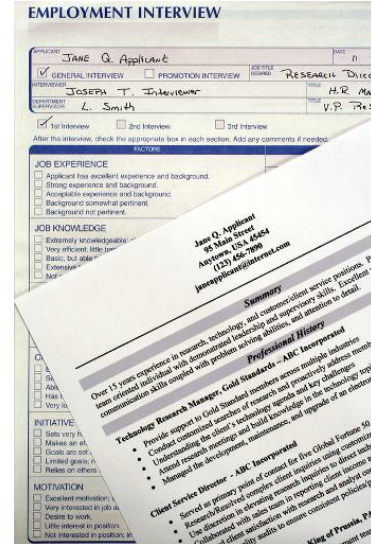
"Success is a great deodorant."
ELIZABETH TAYLOR

BUILDING YOUR C.V.

Introduction

Producing a Curriculum Vitae that is accurately targeted to your potential market is an essential element of successful self promotion. The C.V. and accompanying cover letter represent your 'sell yourself' literature and as such must contain the elements you would expect of an effective advertisement.

A C.V. may get no longer than 30 seconds attention from a potential employer. In that time you need to gain and maintain their interest and leave a clear concise image of quality, professionalism and of your likely benefit to them.



The completion of an effective C.V. takes time, and possibly several drafts. Sometimes it is advisable to 'tailor' the emphasis of content to the job that is on offer – so expand some descriptions and contract other parts of the C.V. Visual appeal, presentation and choice of words that demonstrate responsibility and achievements, are all vital components. It's got to cry out: "Look at me! Look at me!"

Although there is no set format for a C.V., this section may help you compile your 'self marketing advertisement' that should gain a positive response. The C.V. templates in the Appendices at the back have been provided so that you can see there are no ideal formats, however they may save you time in producing, or re-designing, your own C.V.

"Action is the foundational key for success."
PABLO PICASSO

Properties of advertising

Your C.V. is your self marketing tool – your chance to self advertise.

The properties of advertising include ...

- Eye catching
- Factual
- Brief
- Well laid out
- Colourful
- Believable
- Interesting
- Matches the Market
- Sells the Benefits
- Easy to Read
- Relevant
- Original
- Individual.

"We create success or failure on the course primarily by our thoughts."
GARY PLAYER

Visual appeal

No matter how well your career background and talents match the needs of a potential employer, your approach could fail if you make it difficult for the reader to absorb relevant information, or simply fail to catch the eye.

If you are to become a 'marketable product' then invest in yourself ...

- Use good quality A4 paper – at least 100g/square metre.
- Use coloured paper. Conservative shades create the best effect. E.g. parchment yellow, blue, grey, pastels. However, for sales and marketing jobs, a more vibrant colour may stand out.
- Use a good quality printer – cheap inkjet printers can deaden impact. Think of any friends or colleagues who could help you. Alternatively, your local print shop will be happy to print off copies for you.
- Ensure print is well spaced out with wide margins. Employers like space to make notes on the side of your C.V.
- Ensure key information is **boldly highlighted** or perhaps underlined.
- Use up to 2 sheets of A4 paper – 3 if you've had lots of jobs spanning a wide period of time. Anymore then it could be too detailed – remember the C.V. is your 'shop window' to get the interview, not to replace the interview.
- Type your name on the bottom of each page and number the pages.
- Use an A4 envelope to send off your C.V., to avoid folding.
- Write the recipient's name and address on the envelope in block capitals neatly. Better still, type out and print on a label or use an envelope with a window so the typed name and address can be clearly seen.

"In order to succeed, your desire for success should be greater than your fear of failure."

BILL COSBY

Content and expression

The purpose of your C.V. is to generate interviews – to give a sufficient taster to the employer that they want to meet ‘the real thing’ and probe you further. Employers are looking for evidence of what you have **ACHIEVED**, job wise, and to look at your knowledge, skills, experience to see if it matches what they need.

- Use words which suggest an active and successful career to date.
- Don't re-write a job description, with all the jargon and tedious detail. It is how you have applied that job description to **ACHIEVE** things that the Interviewer will be interested in.
- Don't clutter with unnecessary facts e.g. National Insurance number. This sort of information is only relevant later.
- Leave facts such as salaries and reasons for leaving until interview unless you feel it will help paint a balanced picture e.g. you have had several jobs in a short space of time and you think this may be seen as a negative factor by the employer.
- Your career background must emphasise **achievements, expertise** and **responsibilities**. **QUANTIFY** these wherever possible to give a clear understanding of your past levels of authority and accomplishment (see **Examples of Quantified Responsibilities and Achievements and Describing your Role** on pages 19 and 20.)
- Avoid statements such as ‘limited experience of’ or ‘quite knowledgeable’. Remain concise and positive throughout.
- Consider tailoring the content of your C.V. to the job that's on offer e.g. changing the running order of your responsibilities in previous job(s); expand on areas of previous job(s) that best reflects the characteristics required of the job you are applying for.
- If you are a school/college leaver, or returning to work after a job break, then emphasise anything you learnt from summer/part time jobs, from hobbies or from managing the home. Remember that there are lots of skills you learn that are marketable and transferable to jobs e.g. team working, planning and organising, ability to complete tasks, communication and assertiveness.

Suggested C.V. content

The sections below are interchangeable in order. For example, those with a thin employment record may wish to place Education and Training above Career Background.

Personal Details

- Name
- Address
- Home telephone number
- Mobile number
- E-mail address

Profile

- Represents the banner headlines of your personal advertisement and gives the reader a concise overview of your skills, experience and aptitudes.
- For those with a limited career background, future aspirations may also be included.

See **Examples of Profiles** on page 17.

Career Background /Employment History

- Set out in reverse chronological order covering the last 10-15 years at most. Beyond that, mention the job roles with dates to show a complete picture, but avoiding too much detail, unless it adds value.
- Unless you are considering a complete career change, emphasis should be placed on your current or last position. This is what the employer will be particularly interested in.
- Set out in block paragraphs or bullet point form.
- Emphasise and quantify key responsibilities, achievements and levels of authority.

**Career
Background /
Employment
History
(continued)**

- Main achievements in each of your appointments must also be included.
- If you have spent your entire career in one or like disciplines, thereby duplicating achievements / responsibilities, consider encompassing them all into one separate section.
- If several appointments have been held at similar levels in a relatively short space of time, it is important not to be perceived as a 'job jumper'. The problem can be overcome by incorporating several positions into one paragraph E.g.

1998-2002 PROJECT MANAGER

During this period, Project Manager positions were held with several multinational companies on fixed term contracts including major development projects for Bradford and Bingley, Barclays Bank etc

Followed by a summary of responsibilities and achievements throughout the period.

**Education and
Training /
Qualifications**

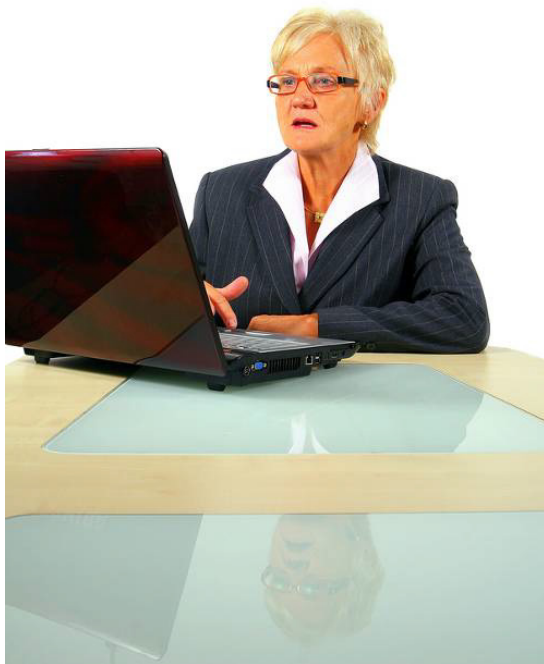
- Do not overload with lists of dates/schools. If you have been educated to 'A' level or beyond, put in number of GCSE/O/CSE /A levels but avoid grades (unless you are in your early 20's and have limited work experience).
- State the year, not the month, of starting and finishing the various educational establishments.
- Include any specialist training undertaken which may be applicable to your next appointment, together with membership of professional bodies.
- Interests can demonstrate a lot of personal qualities e.g. leadership, fitness, team working, intellectual capacity, communication skills, planning and organising.
- Include any that may serve as a comfortable topic of discussion at interview. Don't put down anything that you can't justify.

Interests

Other Skills

Optional Personal Details

- E.g. full clean driving licence, Microsoft Word and Excel skills; first aid certificate; fork lift truck driving qualifications; etc.
- Could include date of birth, nationality, marital status – not mandatory (and could be seen as a factor to 'discriminate' against you e.g. sexual or age discrimination).



Examples of Profiles

Secretary

Experienced, reliable and flexible **Secretary** with accurate shorthand and word processing skills, particularly enjoying legal work. A good sense of humour.

Administrator

A highly competent and versatile **ADMINISTRATOR** with excellent communication skills. Capable of working on own initiative or as an effective team member. Ability to work under pressure and used to working to tight deadlines. Computer literate with in depth knowledge of many word processing and business computer packages. Always enthusiastic to learn and undertake new challenges.

Retail Manager

A highly motivated **RETAIL MANAGER** with over 15 years experience in target oriented companies. Proven ability in the achievement of sales/profit targets. Able to demonstrate strong leadership skills developed in a fast moving customer focused environment. Effective co-ordinator and administrator.

Enthusiastically seeking to broaden retail management skills and experience.



Administrator

A competent and conscientious **Administrator** with significant organisational skills. Used to working in a team whilst very capable of utilising own initiative. Skilled at dealing with problems in a resourceful manner and negotiating constructively to achieve agreement. A wealth of skills gained in the successful running of a busy office environment, including word processing and database management.

Sales Person

Experienced at expanding customer base, generating enquiries and successfully closing technical sales. Skilled in negotiating with design, engineering and technical personnel at project manager level.

Human Resources Manager

Senior Human Resource Specialist with first class extensive experience in a recently privatised energy company and the country's second largest Family Health Services Authority. Key attributes include effective oral and written communication skills, developing and presenting business strategies to senior management and extensive involvement in change management.

Examples of Quantified Responsibilities and Achievements

- Successfully managed auto centres over a period of 10 years, consistently achieving a top 5 position out of 60 Centres.
- Won 3 European holidays for Employee of the Year Awards.
- Successfully co-ordinated 12 training courses for approximately 100 people per month.
- Implemented policy which achieved a reduction in requirement of trained staff to 10% of original complement.
- Managed 11 staff in the daily processing and settlement of foreign exchange transactions to the value of 6.8 million UK pounds. Approximately 900 trades daily.
- Responsibility for £230,000 departmental budget.
- Solely handled a switchboard operation of some 700 calls per day.
- Achieved a call quality target of 96.5% which was 7% above department average.
- Consistently operating at 18% above the department call rate target.
- Maintained computerised training records for 750 employees.
- Implemented cost cutting techniques including more effective use of materials, resulting in a 20% saving in costs.
- Produced a procedural manual for the Securities Settlement department. This enabled the streamlining of some tasks and the elimination of others, reducing overtime by 25%.
- Increased sales by 60% over 3 years.
- Achieved just over 85% occupancy on courses (client target was 70%).



- Attended up to 20 networking meetings and events per year to develop relationships with local businesses/organisations.
- Producing and distributing a 6-page quarterly newsletter.
- In the last 12 months have been in top 3 Call Handlers (out of 40), as measured by volume/quality of call handling.
- Co-ordination of all departmental deliveries to customer's addresses, managing up to 80 separate deliveries per week.
- Received 5 customer compliment letters and £120 gift vouchers as a reward from Shop Owner.

"Behold the tortoise. He only makes progress when he sticks out his neck."
ANON

Examples of Describing your Role

For Read Our Local Readers: This table has 2 columns and 5 rows.

Poor	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Duties included the supervision of staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successfully supervised and led a team of 8 staff.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible for department budget. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personally controlled a budget in excess of £25,000.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operated computer equipment as part of my duties. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learnt and increased computer inputting speeds on a variety of equipment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reorganised administrative procedures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Successfully rationalised procedures with savings in excess of £15,000 per year / 5 people hours per week.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible for production in workshop. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased unit output by 50% utilising same resources.

For Read Our Local Readers: This table has 2 columns and 5 rows.

"I am an optimist – it does not seem to be much use being anything else."
SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL

C.V. Checklist

The only proof of a good C.V. is whether or not it generates interviews. The following checklist is not a set of rules – there are none – but a code of practice you may find helpful.

Appearance

- Is it well typed?
- Is the font the same throughout?
- Are the font sizes/areas of bold consistent throughout?
- Is it on good quality paper?
- Do the margins have sufficient space for potential interviewer comments?
- Is it no more than two pages (unless you have a lot of work experience)?
- Is it page numbered?
- Do you have your name and phone number in the footer of each page?
- Will it photocopy easily?

Clarity

- Are spelling and grammar correct?
- Are all the words used in their simplest form?
- Is it jargon free?
- Is there a logical flow to the document?
- Are the qualifications and the job history stated in reverse chronological order?

Content

- Is it achievement orientated?
- Is what you have achieved quantified where appropriate?
- Does it emphasise your special skills?
- Does it emphasise special achievements outside of work?
- Are there any 'gaps' that could cause anxiety for an interviewer?
- Have you used significant or emphasising adjectives? (e.g. **excellent** experience, **sole** responsibility)



A word about covering letters and emails

- Keep them brief.
- Don't repeat things that are already in your attached C.V.
- Use A4 paper with typed print on good quality paper.
- Try the **3 paragraph – YOU – ME – US** approach. E.g. ...

YOU

"I understand that you are recruiting for a highly experienced ..."

or

"John Bloggs suggested that I write to you ..."

ME

"Please find my C.V. attached. I feel that my skills and experience perfectly fit the person you are looking for."

US

"I would welcome the opportunity to discuss my C.V. further with you."

- Do check for clarity/spelling/appearance before sending (particularly with an email covering note with C.V. attached)

"People are always blaming their circumstances for what they are. I don't believe in circumstances. The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want, and, if they can't find them, make them."

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

PREPARING FOR INTERVIEWS

Introduction

For a few people, the job interview will be a really exciting opportunity to be able to show others what they can do. For most people though, it is a very daunting prospect. It may be years since you were last interviewed and you simply have no idea what you are going to say, or how you are going to say it. The formality of the occasion and that you don't go through it very often all add to the stress levels.

As with all our job search efforts, we can tackle many of these difficulties and the feelings that we have through preparation and rehearsal. Of course, it will not overcome all your issues, and nerves will still prevail. However being nervous can make you more alert and 'think on your feet'. Interviewers will recognise your nerves and be empathetic, settle you in and help you through the ordeal.

This section will help you through this preparation and rehearsal process, providing lots of tips and tactics to help you 'shine through' at interview. In addition, valuable 'insider' information is given as to what Interviewers are looking for, and what impresses them most.

One thing is for certain – there is no excuse for not devoting enough time to help you prepare for that crucial interview. You never know, you might even enjoy the interview too!

"If you are leaping a ravine, the moment of take-off is a bad time to be considering alternative strategies."

JOHN CLEESE

Interview strategy

It might be useful to think about recruitment interviews from the perspective of the Interviewer. What are they doing? What is their strategy? What are they looking for?

The Interviewer is there to ...

- Gather information
- Evaluate information
- Make the decision as to who is successful



Interviewers will only be able to make decisions based on what you tell them (on the C.V. and in the job interview). Careful preparation and impactful delivery are key.

Interviewers are looking to get the 'right fit' between what the job **requires** and what the candidates can **offer**. Invariably, interviewers don't get the right fit. They get the **best** fit based on who has applied for the position. Interviewers are often under a lot of pressure to take the 'best' without getting the 'ideal'. For example, Human Resource departments often do the first interview. They have to provide a timely service of ample candidates to operational management to undertake second interviews.

Operational management need to get the position filled quickly to avoid inefficiencies, poor department performances and keep the staff happy, particularly if they are covering for vacancies waiting to be filled. All of this means that candidates don't have to be 'perfect'. Of course, they do need to 'tick most of the boxes'. However, lots of candidates are offered jobs still having development areas to work on. Employers are prepared to develop successful candidates once 'in post'. In fact, recruiters actively look for people who have identified their weak areas as it shows a degree of self-awareness – so don't think all weaknesses are bad!

If you are looking for a position in a skill shortage area, then you have a better chance of competing with less numbers of candidates.

Interview strategy

There are 3 criteria that Interviewers are trying to satisfy for the 'fit' ...

1. Skill
2. Will
3. Fit The Bill

1. Skill

- Has the candidate got the best level of knowledge, skill and experience to fit what we are looking for?
- What is the gap?
- How much effort do I need to devote to get him/her performing effectively?
- How quickly will he/she become fully efficient in the role?

2. Will

- What is the motivation level of the candidate?
- How hungry is he/she for this position?
- How interested does he/she appear to be in the job that is on offer?
- What is the likelihood that he/she will stay for a reasonable length of time?
- How ambitious is he/she?



3. Fit the Bill

- How will he/she fit in with the general culture of the organisation? For example, someone coming from a fast paced organisation where decisions are made quickly, where decisions are sometimes implemented without a full picture of the situation and where use of initiative and self management is key, may struggle in an environment which is slow paced and bureaucratic.
- How will he/she get along with the rest of the team? Will he/she fit in?
- How long may it take him/her to adapt?
- What evidence exists about his/her adaptability and ability to cope with change?

Clearly the challenge for the interview candidate in this situation will be to demonstrate that he/she can adapt to different environments/teams/cultures quickly.



Preparing for interviews

- Find out as much as you can about the organisation by ...
 - Asking around.
 - Checking out their web site.
 - Phoning the organisation and asking them to send you any literature over and above what is on the website. E.g. a product catalogue; a copy of the Staff Newsletter; recent press releases.
 - Looking up the organisation in library business information reference books.
 - Researching the organisation on Google.
 - Obtaining some trade magazines for references to the organisation.
 - Asking your friends if they know anyone who works, or has worked, for the organisation. What was it like? What was the culture?
- Write out some key facts about the organisation to memorise. You don't need too many – sales turnover, product areas, key clients, competitors, innovations in products / services – at least it shows that you have done some research.
- Find out about the interview ...
 - Will you be given a tour of the building/work area?
 - Will you have to sit any tests?
 - Who will be interviewing you? Can you find out anything about their interviewing style? If the job has come through an agency, they may be able to brief you on personality, sense of humour etc.
- Read and re-read the job advert, the person specification and job description.
- Make a list of the reasons why you want this job.

- Use the **Ideal Person Worksheet** in the Appendices to check against skills and qualities you feel they may be looking for and do a self assessment of how you feel you measure up. There are 2 other questionnaires included in the Appendices. One is for service roles (arguably we are **all** in the service game). The other is for team leader/ management roles. Both questionnaires do one thing – to help you see your skill sets – what you do well and what you could improve on.
- Make a list of your own strengths and weaknesses in relation to this particular job. Can you turn any of your weaknesses into something more positive? E.g. "I've never worked with MS Excel spreadsheets before but I'm willing to learn and I pick things up really quickly."
- Think of the questions you are likely to be asked and your answers to them (see **Typical Interview Questions** on page 32). Jot some points down to remind you.
- Review your C.V. for ...
 - Date gaps – How will you explain them? (Interviewers are trained to look out for them)
 - Competencies/key skills you have stated you possess. E.g. good team worker. What examples will you quote to demonstrate these skills?
- Think of the things you would like to ask. Jot them down on a pad (not a crumpled bit of paper) and take into the interview. It shows you are committed, confident and prepared.
- Gather together anything that can demonstrate your skills or achievements and place in a presentation folder to show at interview. You may think that it could come across as a being a bit of a 'smart Alec'. However, far from it. You have to show off a little bit, and employers tend to warm to something visual that demonstrates your portfolio of competence, achievement and recognition.

"Nothing can stop the man with the right mental attitude from achieving his goal; nothing on earth can help the man with the wrong mental attitude."

THOMAS JEFFERSON

- Some ideas could be ...
 - Certificates for attending training.
 - Compliment letters and emails from customers or senior management.
 - Reports of exemplary sales figures you have achieved.
 - Copy of a key presentation you delivered to senior managers.
 - Exemplary customer service award certificate (or a picture of a trophy that you were presented with).
 - Newspaper cutting of you doing something out of the ordinary.
 - A trade journal article you've written.
 - A photograph being presented with something by the Managing Director/Chief Executive.
- Find out how to get to the interview venue. If it's fairly local, do a dummy run so that you know exactly where you are going and how long it will take (you'll be stressed enough on the day so try to minimise any other causes of stress). Don't forget to allow for 'rush hour' traffic.
- Think about what you are going to wear and make sure it looks good e.g. take to the dry cleaners if the garment looks tired or creased; polish shoes the night before, not 10 minutes before you leave and the polish still drying when you put them on!

"I know that you understand what you think I said, but I am not sure you realize that what you heard is not what I meant."

RICHARD NIXON

- Other appearance thoughts ...
 - Cleavage and midriffs should be covered up.
 - Beware about bright colours e.g. men's ties.
 - Don't accessorise too much – it can be a distractor.
 - Subtle make up.
 - Avoid strong perfume/cologne.
 - Cover up tobacco smells (e.g. peppermints after last cigarette).
 - Remove piercings and body jewellery.
 - Cover up tattoos.

Typical interview questions

There are numerous questions that can be asked at interview. You can't learn them all. However you can predict some. Remember, candidates have 2 challenges – **WHAT** they will say and **HOW** they will say it.

The following questions are the most common. The trick is to anticipate the ones that have a good chance of coming up, and have well-rehearsed answers ready. Then you can concentrate on **HOW** you're going to say it – the enthusiasm in your voice and the positive body language you will display.

How you see yourself

- Tell me about yourself or How would you describe yourself?
- Describe a time you had to deal with a difficult colleague or boss?
- How well do you fit into a team?
- Tell me about a time you had to deal with an angry member of staff?
- Give me an example of when you contributed to team work?
- Describe a time when you were under pressure?
- What motivates you?
- What are your particular strengths/ weaknesses?

How others see you

- How do others describe you?
- What will you be remembered for in your last job/company?

Positive things about your job/organisation

- Describe your best achievement in your last job?
- What gave you the most satisfaction in your last job?
- How would you sum up the contribution you made to your last organisation?

Negative things about your job

- Why did you leave your last job?
- What was the biggest problem you ever had to overcome?
- Tell me about a time that you've had to handle criticism?
- Describe a situation when your work was criticised?
- Why did you change jobs so often?
- Why did you stay so long with one employer?
- What was the last thing/person to make you annoyed?

Career development

- What do you see as the next step in your career?
- Where do you see yourself in 5 years time?
- What is the ideal job for you?
- How ambitious are you?
- How do you cope with repetitive jobs?

Research and fitting in

- How did you prepare for this interview?
- What do you know about this organisation?
- Why do you want to work for us?
- What attracted you to apply for this organisation?
- How do you prefer to be managed?
- What sort of team do you thrive in?
- What did you think of our web site?
- What experience do you have of this type of work?
- Why should we employ you?
- What makes you think you will fit in?
- What would you bring to this job?

Training and development

- What training have you done in the last year, and who initiated it?
- What have you accomplished in the line of self development in the last 2 years?
- How do you keep up to date with changes in technology?
- What skills have you worked on in the last 12 months?

"You never get a second chance to make a first impression."
ANON

Behavioural Interviewing

Interviewers often ask 'behavioural' or 'competency based' questions i.e. asking you to describe an example of how you **ACTUALLY** behaved in a work situation. Not "What would you do to motivate a flagging staff member?" but "Tell me about a time when you had to motivate a flagging team member?" They will then probe you for detail. For example ...

- What exactly was the nature of the de-motivation?
- How did it affect theirs and others' performance?
- What exactly did you do to tackle this?
- Tell me exactly what you said to them?
- How did you overcome any resistance?
- What was the effect?

The technique is investigative with the Interviewer put in the role of a reporter out to get the story behind each incident. Behavioural Interviewers are not interested in hypothetical situations e.g. "What would you do if you were faced with a difficult customer who was getting abusive?" They are assessing how you performed, as a demonstration of your skills set. The premise is that past behaviour is the best predictor of future behaviour. If the Interviewer liked the way you actually tackled the situation, there is a good chance that you will replicate this in the job they have on offer. The interview technique, because it probes in detail, makes it harder for you to fake your answers.

It is very difficult to predict the actual questions that might come up for the range of jobs we may apply for, however a good selection is listed overleaf. How would you get on with these? Perhaps a little thought beforehand might help. Look at the main skills you feel are required to do this job and think about how you can demonstrate experience of this skill. Think of actual examples that might demonstrate your abilities.

If you are not able to answer the question, or do not have any specific experience to answer the question, then it's probably best not to try and 'bluff' your way through the question. Ask the Interviewer if they would like you to explain what you might do if the situation did arise.

Typical competency based questions

1. Tell me about the last time you had an irate customer? How did you deal with the situation?
2. Give me an instance at work when you had to go beyond the call of duty to get a job done
3. Give me an example of when you coped well under pressure
4. Tell me about a situation where a misunderstanding with a colleague or client arose. How did you solve the problem?
5. Think of a situation in which you had to use your initiative
6. Tell me about a decision your boss made which affected you but you didn't agree with
7. Tell me about someone you have found it difficult to work with. How did you handle the situation?
8. Describe a situation at work where you had to influence someone
9. Describe how you organise your day/week/month
10. Describe a time when you had to deal with a member of staff who was under performing
11. Tell me of a time you've had to be very flexible
12. Tell me about a situation where you have had to make a difficult decision. How did you approach it?
13. What have you done to encourage team spirit amongst your own team?
14. Tell me about a stressful situation at work and how you coped with it

"Its funny but the more I practice the luckier I get."

GARY PLAYER

ON THE DAY

Essential last minute things

- Plan to arrive at least 30 minutes early (Better to be 30 minutes early than 1 minute late!). However it is probably best not to report in this early – the Interviewer may feel a little pressurised to not keep you waiting.
- Cast a final look at your preparation notes – the organisation facts and figures; your planned answers to interview questions.
- Think positive thoughts to help dispel nerves e.g. think of your best strength that you can bring to the job.
- Remember the interview can 'start' as early as reporting in to the Receptionist at the main entrance – you never know how much influence he/she may have on the Interviewers. Be positive, friendly and enthusiastic right from entering the building.
- Whilst waiting to be picked up by the Interviewer ...
 - Visit the toilet and check your appearance in the mirror.
 - Check small, less obvious things such as shoes, collars and pocket flaps pulled out.
 - Turn your mobile off.
 - Glance at the questions that you intend to ask.



- When being picked up by the Interviewer ...
 - Stand up as they are approaching.
 - Smile.
 - Make eye contact.
 - Give a firm (but not knuckle duster) handshake.
 - Make a positive greeting.
- On the way to the Interview Room, initiate small talk ...
 - "This is an impressive building."
 - "How many people work here?"
 - "Your Receptionist seems friendly."
 - Ask a question such as, "How's your week going?"

All of this shows interest and rapport building skills, which are an essential part of most jobs. However, beware not to overdo it and almost become 'too friendly'.

During the interview

- If the Interviewer offers you a drink, take it – even if it's a glass of water. If you get 'dry mouthed' during the interview, you have a lubricant. Besides, it's a good rapport builder with the Interviewer that both of you are drinking, rather than refuse the offer.
- If the interview was arranged at short notice, and you are asked what you know about the organisation, never say "I didn't have much time to prepare" – it may demonstrate a lack of commitment to do the job.

"It takes 72 muscles to frown and only 14 to smile."
ANON

- Look for opportunities to build rapport with the Interviewer. Some suggestions include ...
 - Use 'small talk' e.g. the weather; the football last night; asking about their weekend (on a Monday interview) or asking about the forthcoming weekend (on a Thursday/Friday interview). Beware not to overdo this.
 - Use his/her name in the interview.
 - Compliment him/her sincerely e.g. "that's a nice colour you're wearing today. The emphasis is on the word **sincerely**, and don't do it too many times.
 - Look for common links e.g. "You've got 2 kids, so have I. They're a handful at times aren't they?" or "We like Devon too."
 - Positive body language – see page 44.
 - Use their words / phrases to mirror their language e.g. if you are a Customer Services Advisor in your Contact Centre, however the Interviewer refers to them as 'Agents' , then use the word 'Agent' in your interview responses.
 - Give empathy when appropriate.
- Avoid being rude or negative about previous employers (even if you do think it's justified). Getting it off your chest might make you feel better, but it might form an impression that you're a bit of a moaner.
- Deliberately slow down your voice. In stressful situations like the interview, we tend to speed up. It's as if our body is trying to minimise the ordeal and get to the end of the interview as quickly as possible. Remember to think in the Interviewer's shoes – it's the first time they've heard this and they need to write things down.
- When appropriate remind the Interviewer of any achievements on your C.V. Don't assume that, because it's on your C.V., he/she will have read it or understood how significant it was.

- Don't be put off if the Interviewers ...
 - Have 'unwelcoming' body language at times (e.g. doesn't smile very much; has furrowed eyebrows). They may not be aware of the impact their body language makes. It could mean that they are concentrating (and therefore interested) in what you are saying or that they are under particular pressure at the moment, or even they're not feeling very well.
 - Look at their watches during the interview – this might not be about the impact you are making, but that they need to keep to time.
 - Don't give you much eye contact. Because they have to take notes, sometimes it looks as if you're talking to the top of their head.
- The essence of your question answering should concentrate on them – what you can do for them. Some people call this the W.I.I.F.Y. (What's In It For You). For example: "I have really good customer service skills and I was pleased to receive 3 customer compliment letters last year. My boss said that we benefited from word of mouth advertising."
- Do have your pad of notes and questions you want to ask in front of you. The Interviewers can see that you've made an effort and that you don't want to forget a question
- Make sure you know the next stage in the process / when you will hear from the employer – it shows your commitment and keenness to get the job. A simple question such as "When might you be in a position to make a decision?" can help manage your expectations.
- Always thank the Interviewers for their time – it leaves a nice positive impression of you in their mind.

"I don't measure a man's success by how high he climbs, but how high he bounces when he hits bottom."

GEORGE PATTON

Active listening

Listening is a rare skill that we are not taught, but which we can develop. Most people can hear, but do they understand and take on board the message? – that's listening. For the job hunter it is particularly valuable in an interview to develop the skill of active listening ...

- Potential employers will give you clues about what they are looking for. For example through the information they have published about the role and the person they are looking for.
- If you have a lot of questions to ask, the answers may be given in the interview. If you listen well, you can then reflect this back at the stage in the interview when they ask if you have any questions. E.g. "I recall you told me a little bit about the training I would receive, tell me more about that."
- Listening concentrates the mind, so you feel less nervous.
- Listening means that you are accepting that what the interviewer is saying is important and valuable to you – and therefore that you are interested.

Listening tips

- Listen with the mind – shut off any distracters like, "What time am I going to get home? What will the roads be like? What do I need to do when I get home?" Shut them out and concentrate.
- Don't go into the interview with distractions that may stop you listening e.g. leaving the car with only 45 minutes on the car park ticket. You are likely to worry about getting a parking fine during the interview.
- Use active listening with your body ... nodding (but not too much), the occasional "Yeah" , "mmmm ...", "I see" and summarising what the person has said to you e.g. "So what you are saying is ..."
- Avoid opening a response with "Yes, but ..." It could be a sign that you are paying 'lip service' to listening.

- At times, verbally acknowledge what the Interviewers have said to you (even if you don't agree) e.g. if they are challenging you about what you said about being able to cope with pressure, you respond: "It's a good point you are making however ..." and reinforce what you said earlier to them. Or you might respond, "I can understand your concern that <<**state concern**>>. However, <<**reinforce your point**>>."
- Make extra effort to use the Interviewer's name when making comments or asking questions.
- Never be afraid of asking the Interviewers to repeat the question if you're not sure what they mean.
- Don't be afraid to take notes during parts of the interview – this demonstrates your use of tools to help you understand and listen. However, you may want to check that the Interviewer is okay with this. A quick, "Is it okay if I make some notes?" shows courtesy.



Body language



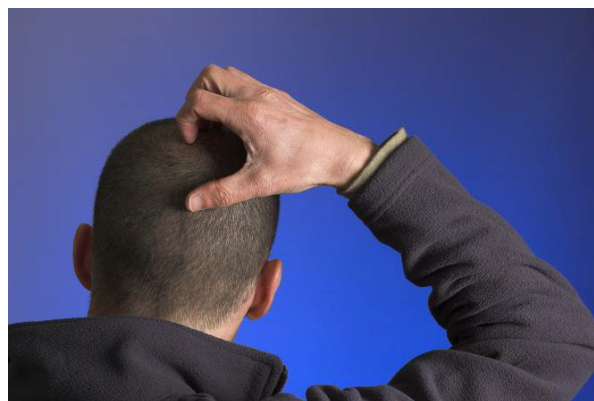
A lot of the interview is about how you present yourself. 'Looking and feeling the part' will help you convey to the Interviewer that you are businesslike, helpful and enthusiastic. Body language is another way of describing 'looking and feeling the part' which you need to convey. It is important to realize how influential this can be at interview.

Research has indicated that in terms of **first impressions**

...

- Up to 55% could be based on Appearance.
- 38% based on the way we use our voice (Volume, Tone, Pace, Pronunciation).
- Only 7% on what is said.

Other research suggests interviewers can make up their minds within the first 2 – 3 minutes! So 'looking and sounding the part' is critical.



Body language tips

Good body language behaviours to display at interview ...

- Firm handshake (if you have sweaty palms, wipe them beforehand) at start and end of interview.
- Good levels of eye contact (particularly at the start of the interview).
- Share your eye contact out if more than one Interviewer (rather than direct contact just to the one who asked the question). It shows inclusion.
- Smiling (not all the time, but particularly at start of interview).
- Sit upright in chair.
- Legs uncrossed, knees slightly apart.
- Raised eye brows at times – avoid furrowed brow look.
- Avoid staring – ‘even paced’ blinking. Some people ‘forget’ to blink as much when answering questions because they are concentrating so much on getting the words out.
- Avoid crossed arms – it is comfortable but can indicate withdrawn/not interested/defensive.
- Use hands to emphasise points – in flowing motion – no finger pointing or sharp movements.
- Open palms to emphasis points – the palms act like a mirror to bounce your messages in.
- Lean forward to emphasise points.
- Avoid fiddling with rings, picking at fingers, twisting strands of hair or general fidgeting.
- Nodding in agreement.

Who's selling to whom?

You do have to sell yourself at interview – at the end of the day, it is the employer who has what you want – the job and salary. However, don't forget that interviewing is a **two way street** – the employer should be making every effort to sell themselves too. Employers who keep you waiting, haven't bothered to read your C.V. before the interview, don't make you feel welcome and comfortable, and who talk far more than you do during the interview, may be the employer you decide NOT to 'buy' from yourself!

After the interview

Always go over the interview in your mind and evaluate your own performance ...

- What did I do well on?
- What could I have improved upon?
- How did I feel my body language came over?
- How would they view what I said in response to questions? Was I putting myself forward in the best possible light?

Always seek feedback if you were unsuccessful and probe for further information. For example ...

Interviewer: "You just weren't ready for this step up"

You: "Okay, I appreciate the feedback. I'd be grateful if you would tell me more about how I can help myself to become better prepared with the next opportunity?"

or

Interviewer: "You were pretty good however there were other candidates who matched up better to what we wanted."

You: "That's fair enough and I understand. What do you suggest I could do to help myself in the future for this sort of role?"

"If one person says that you are a horse, smile at them.

If two people say that you are a horse, give it some thought.

If three people say you are a horse, go out and buy a saddle."

PROVERB

Feedback

As we are always trying to improve our Useful Guides we would appreciate any feedback you can give us on **A Useful Guide to Interview Success**. Please click on the link below to access our online feedback form ...

<http://www.pansophix.com/useful-guide-feedback.html>

If we use your feedback to improve **A Useful Guide to Success** we will email you a copy of the updated version.

Useful Guides

Our range of **Useful Guides** is constantly growing. Please click [here](#) to see the current range.

If you have a few moments why not check out our growing range of mental exercises, tips and tools in online Learning Support Centre.
Please use this link below:

<http://www.pansophix.com/learning-support-centre/index.html>

About the Author

Bryan Edwards is an experienced writer, course designer and commercial trainer. He is a Graduate of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (C.I.P.D.) and has over 20 years experience in commercial, public sector and charitable organisations.

As a Human Resources Manager and Practitioner, Bryan has considerable experience as a competency based recruitment interviewer, and as an Interviewing Skills Trainer. He has completed projects for a large number of blue chip organisations including esure, Mothercare, Novartis Pharmaceuticals, R.A.C., Honda, House of Fraser, Age Concern and Pinewood Studios.

Bryan runs his own training consultancy in the South Midlands and is the author of other Useful Guides including ...

- [A Useful Guide to Assertiveness](#)
- [A Useful Guide to Time Management](#)

A note about copyright

We hope that you will enjoy and benefit from this Useful Guide. Please be aware that copyright law protects it. This means that it is completely **forbidden to photocopy or reproduce** any of this pack, without prior written permission from the copyright owner, and offenders will be pursued via a Court of Law.

No part of this pack may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior written permission of the copyright owner. Prior written permission is assumed for those who legitimately purchase this Useful Guide from Pansophix Ltd. Legitimate purchase does **not** entitle you to email, print off or make an electronic copy for others, for their own employment needs.

APPENDICES

Some general job and employment websites

- www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk
- www.jobsite.co.uk
- www.monster.co.uk
- www.totaljobs.com
- www.workthing.com
- www.cv-library.co.uk
- www.jobseekersuk.net
- www.gumtree.com
- www.jobs1.co.uk
- www.jobseekersadvice.com
- www.targetjobs.co.uk
- www.tiptopjob.com

Training websites

- www.pansophix.com
- www.abctrainingsolutions.biz
- www.learndirect.co.uk
- www.homelearningcollege.com
- www.openstudycollege.com
- www.open.ac.uk
- www.businesslink.co.uk

Ideal person worksheet

Job to be applied for:

Skills/Qualities	Essential	Desirable	Rate Your Ability (1 - 5: 1=Poor to 5=Excellent)
Planning and organising Leadership Creativity Problem solving Decision making Commercial acumen Analytical skills Task achievement Adaptability Customer focus Communication skills Influencing skills Listening skills Motivational skills Use of initiative Patience Working with ambiguity Manual dexterity Stress management Written skills Numerical skills Artistic ability Flexibility Team working skills			

How good a Team Leader/Manager are you?

Using the scale 1-5, rate your team leadership qualities / skills by circling the number that applies.

1 = **NEVER** do 5 = **ALWAYS** do

1. Communicates the 'big picture' to team and keeps people informed	1	2	3	4	5
2. Is enthusiastic and positive at work – a 'can do' person	1	2	3	4	5
3. Is emotionally resilient – 'doesn't throw toys out of pram'	1	2	3	4	5
4. Is an honest communicator with the team – never underhand or manipulative	1	2	3	4	5
5. Applies standards fairly across the team – has no favourites	1	2	3	4	5
6. Makes tough decisions that don't necessarily make you popular	1	2	3	4	5
7. Listens to, and empathises with, team members, even if you don't agree with them	1	2	3	4	5
8. Asks team members what they think about the work processes, and how improvements can be made	1	2	3	4	5
9. Can build rapport with team members irrespective of age, gender or background (the 'common touch')	1	2	3	4	5
10. Avoids gossiping and moaning in front of team members	1	2	3	4	5
11. Admits own mistakes to the team, when warranted	1	2	3	4	5
12. Takes the blame and accepts responsibility for any failings or mistakes that their team make	1	2	3	4	5
13. Stands ground in a discussion but not to the point of being 'a stick in the mud' (e.g. with boss / peers)	1	2	3	4	5
14. Rolls up sleeves and gets stuck in when warranted	1	2	3	4	5
15. Is confident - may not know all the answers but has ways of getting to the answers through others	1	2	3	4	5
16. Leads by example	1	2	3	4	5
17. Builds cooperative relationships with peers and bosses	1	2	3	4	5
18. Adjusts style of leadership to suit individuals / situation	1	2	3	4	5

How good a Service Provider are you?

Using the scale 1-5, rate your customer service skills by circling the number that applies.

1 = **NEVER** do 5 = **ALWAYS** do

- | | | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Is in control. (e.g. knows break times; plans tasks in; materials to hand; Is organised & focused) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. | Is aware of background. (e.g. who's in; new procedures; changes to routines; keeps up to date with industry / organisation developments) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. | Creates a very positive first impression in face-to-face and phone communication. (e.g. tidy and organised work space; looks professional; gives warm smile and eye contact; warm, upbeat voice) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. | Sincerely listens to the customer's needs and feelings and acts on them promptly. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. | Absorbs customer frustration and emotion, without taking it personally, remaining in empathy mode. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. | Takes an interest in the customer and their needs. ('thinks in the customer's shoes') | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. | Uses customer name appropriately in conversations and discussions. Takes care to get spelling, pronunciation and form correct. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. | Is warm, friendly, enthusiastic, sincere towards customers. (even when under pressure) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. | Spots and acts i.e. takes ownership of issues, even if the issue belongs to someone else/uses initiative. (e.g. checks that something has been actioned; offers solutions and suggestions; spots and reports trends that may indicate problems; looks for self development opportunities) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

How good a Service Provider are you?

Using the scale 1-5, rate your customer service skills by circling the number that applies.

1 = **NEVER** do 5 = **ALWAYS** do

- | | | | | | | |
|-----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10. | Under promises and over delivers. (i.e. customer thinks 'thanks – I wasn't expecting that') | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. | Thinks ahead by anticipating problems and managing customer expectations. (e.g. doesn't promise without confidence we can deliver; keeps customer informed of progress) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. | Actions things for customers in a calm and controlled manner. (e.g. keeps own worries to themselves, doesn't 'alarm' customer) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. | Looks for improvements and ways of becoming even better at their job. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. | Asks customers for feedback on quality of department service, and own service, offered. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. | Cheerful goodbye to Customers at end of visit / phone call. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. | Demonstrates team working. (e.g. offers help to colleagues under pressure; flexible with boss and colleagues; readily covers for team members) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. | Has a positive mental attitude. (e.g. balances 'moans' with solutions; is a tonic to work with) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. | Is consistent in demonstrating behaviours/qualities above. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Example CVs

The next pages show different styles of CV. Chose the style that best fits your own information.

Pritti Awar Shah

14 Badsey Lane, Cardiff, Worcs, WR11 3EZ, United Kingdom

• Tel: 01342 87575 • Mobile: 07774 602378 •

Personal Statement

A hard working, diligent worker with attention to detail. Good written and verbal skills who thrives well under pressure.

Key Skills

- Written communication skills
- Assertiveness
- Handling difficult people
- Microsoft Word (Intermediate) / Microsoft Excel (Basic)
- St Johns Ambulance First Aid Certificate

Work Experience

Customer Service Agent - JLB Customer Management Facilities, Aylesbury

(March 2004 - Present)

- I am responsible for handling customer service enquiries for the whole of U.K. for an electronics company. I take around 80 calls a day. In the last 12 months I have been in the top 3 Call Handlers as measured by volume of calls and quality of call handling. I am also the designated on-job trainer for new starters, which takes up around 3 hours per week on average.

Reason for leaving: I am looking to join a larger company where the promotion prospects are improved.

Administration Assistant - Habitat Soft Furnishings, Aylesbury

(Aug 2000 - March 2004)

- Main duties were photocopying invoices, chasing suppliers on late payments, filing and various word processing duties. I provided support for 7 busy managers and am capable of prioritising workload and working under pressure. I successfully reorganised the filing system in the company, transferring 50% of paper records onto computer.

Reason for leaving: Needed more challenges and more money

Education

School:

The Graig Comprehensive School, Aylesbury (1994-2000)

- 7 GCSEs including English (grade B) and Mathematics (Grade C)

Achievements

Duke of Edinburgh Bronze and Silver Award

Raised highest amount of money on Scouts Fun Day in 2007 (£359)

Hobbies & Interests

I enjoy needle crafts and going to the cinema. I also help out at Guides once per week.

References

Available on request

Janet Anne Jameson

01389 456908 jan456@aod.co.uk

24 Cedar Square, Hampden Road Glasgow GW45 8RW

Profile

An experienced retail professional with over 15 years in department stores and specialist retailers. In depth product knowledge in men's fashions, children's and electrical. Skilled supervisor of staff for 5 years with good I.T. and visual merchandising skills. A team player with a keen sense of humour, and flexibility with working hours.

Experience

Fraser's Department Store Glasgow **Senior Sales Assistant**

March 2003 – present

- ◆ Sell electrical appliances and deliver exceptional customer service
- ◆ Co-ordination of all departmental deliveries to customer's home addresses, managing up to 80 separate deliveries per week
- ◆ Deputising for the Department manager when away from the shop floor and supervising 6 full time and 3 part time staff
- ◆ Project Leader for visual merchandising project for electrical department. Achieved a 22% uplift in sales

Dollands Fashions Paisley

Sales Assistant

1999 – February 2003

- ◆ Sell men's and children's fashions and deliver exceptional customer service
- ◆ Sole responsibility for all visual merchandising of new stock in menswear
- ◆ Cleaning floors and fixtures once a week, with deep clean once a month
- ◆ Received 5 customer compliment letters and £120 gift vouchers as a reward from Shop Owner

Softly Children's Nursery Paisley

Play Assistant

1993 – 1999

- ◆ Organised and executed structured play sessions for 2-4 year olds
- ◆ Complete play records for 5 children under my care
- ◆ Sole responsibility to produce sandwich lunch every day for 15 children in Nursery

Skills and achievements

- ◆ Frasers Electrical Product Knowledge Certificates (Introductory and Advanced)
- ◆ Store Employee of the Month for 4 separate months
- ◆ Runner Up Company Employee of Year 2005
- ◆ Graduate of Guild of Soft Furnishers
- ◆ MS Word skills

Education

1988 – 1993 St Benedict's Roman Catholic School Paisley

GCSE

Mathematics (B)	English (B)
German (A)	Science (D)
Design and Technology (C)	Information Technology (C)
History (C)	

- ◆ School Prefect
- ◆ Helped produce the weekly newsletter

Other Training

- ◆ Full Driving Licence
- ◆ NVQ in Childcare
- ◆ Qualified First Aider (Certificate expires 2010)
- ◆ Successful completion of British Shops and Stores Association Summer School for Retail Managers (2007)

Interests

Reading local factual history publications and making soft toys

References

Available on request

Curriculum vitae

Profile

James Alexander O'Neill

24 Treasdale Avenue

Leeds

WY5 7RJ

Tel: 01906 345897

James.oneill@tiscali.co.uk

Experienced and versatile Information Technology professional, accustomed to working on own initiative in a variety of disciplines including training, installation and support. Excellent communication skills with a positive and cheerful approach, even under pressure.

Experience

Acme I.T. Support Ltd

P.C. Support Analyst / Trainer

2001 – Present Leeds

Working in a small team at the head office location, responsible for a range of support and training activities on Novell P.C. networks across the country.

Designed and delivered all in-house training on company standard software applications. Delivered over 40 training courses encompassing 200 employees in 2008.

Specific responsibilities include the configuration and subsequent support of PCs on a Novell network and the support of the following software:

MS Word

Lotus 1-2-3

Software Bridge

Norton Utilities

Qwark

Harvard Graphics

Bytes Financial Investments

I.T. Analyst

1999 – 2001 Bradford

Appointed as Administrator in the I.T. function but rapidly promoted to Support Analyst due to qualifications, aptitude and motivation for a technical support role.

Responsibilities included the purchase, installation and support of company standard hardware and software. Operating system environment was DOS on the PC platforms and UNIX system for core applications.

Undertook all in-house training in company standard applications and also incorporated training consultancy assignments, including project management of £300,000 implementation of new intranet platform.

Education

1997 - 1999

Bristol City College

Bristol

Higher National Diploma in Computer Studies

PASS with Merit

Studied PASCAL, COBOL, Structured Systems Analysis and Design Methodology (SSADM), Database using MIMER command language, Accounting, Mathematics and Organisation Behaviour. Dissertation on 'The Development of Electronic Point of Sale (EPOS) Systems'

1990 - 1997

St Godrics College

Bristol

2 A Levels – Mathematics (grade B) and Computer Studies (grade A)

9 GCSEs inc. Maths and English

Training

Full Driving Licence

Diploma in Web Design

Interests

Building web sites (2 for charitable organisations), archery and tennis

References**Professional Referee:**

Ms Jane Gargin

Head of I.T.

Acme I.T. Support Ltd

The Willows

St James Road

Leeds LS4 3TR

Personal Referee:

Mr George Sorento

24 The Stack

Benedictine Way

Bradford BS4 7SJ

C.V. for Bryan Edwards

SUMMARY PROFILE

A C.I.P.D. qualified Trainer with over 20 years experience of training and personnel, as a practitioner and manager. Extensive experience in the design, delivery and evaluation of training interventions, including competency development and personal development plans. A highly motivated, positive Trainer and Training Designer.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS AND SKILLS

- Practical and organised
- Thorough with attention to detail
- Design and delivery of development solutions
- Relaxed, facilitative and business focused delivery approach
- Communication and influencing skills at all levels



SOME EXAMPLES OF ACHIEVEMENTS AND EXPERIENCE

- Delivery of leadership, influencing, coaching and performance management workshops for Customer Service Team Leaders at The Stationery Office (formerly HMSO Books), Inchcape Contact Centre and Arthur Sanderson.
- Design of 5-day induction programme for the R.A.C.'s Customer Management Centre Design and delivery of 9 first line management training workshops for 170 Showroom Managers and Head Office Team Leaders at Tiny Computers, working closely with senior line/H.R. management to agree objectives, content and evaluation methods
- Delivery of over 60 Customer Service / Telephone Techniques workshops for organisations including Pinewood Studios, YMCA, Age Concern, Holiday Inn Express, West London Mental Health Trust and Bradford Primary Care Trust
- Design and delivery of a 6-day induction programme for Contact Centre staff of Inchcape car dealerships with follow-up energizer sessions
- Delivery of four 1-day Customer Service / Soft Sales training workshops for Contact Centre of The Stationery Office (formerly H.M.S.O. Books) followed by a half day energizer session
- Design of 12 management development workshops for Constellation Europe
- Design of 5-module Customer Service programmes for Lex Autocentres and Nuffield Hospitals
- Design and implementation of technical competencies/job skills training material (90-page Personal Achievement Record manuals) for 350 buying office staff, encompassing 8 job titles and £13,000 budget
- Management of leading retailer's Head Office training plan, encompassing a suite of 25 courses, of which I delivered on 8 managerial and interpersonal skill courses
- Development of Personal Development Plan materials and self study packs for 400 company managers at House of Fraser

PREVIOUS WORK EXPERIENCE

2001 – Present	Director – ABC Training Solutions Ltd Trainer and Training Designer working for a variety of commercial, public and charitable organisations
1999 – 2001	Training Manager / Senior Trainer at Tiny Computers
1989 – 1999	Training Manager at House of Fraser (both stores and head office based)
1987– 1989	Staff Trainer at Safeways plc
1981 – 1986	School Teacher at Howard of Effingham School, Leatherhead

REFERENCES

Upon Request

EDUCATION, QUALIFICATIONS and AFFILIATIONS

- Diploma in Personnel Management (Graduate Member of Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development)
- Post Graduate Certificate in Education
- BSc Joint Honours Maths/Physics
- 6 O levels and 3 A levels

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Interests include gardening, photography and also a fund-raiser for the British Heart Foundation, Birmingham Children's Hospital and the Edward's Trust.

CONTACT DETAILS

12 Badsey Lane, Evesham, Worcs, WR11 3EZ. **Mob:** 07747 602215. **Email:** bryanedw@aol.com

COURSES OFFERED

Customer Care / Service
Telephone Techniques
Contact Centre Call Handling
Assertiveness at Work
Supervisory Skills

Train The Trainer
Performance Management
Handling Disciplinary Situations
Handling Appraisal Interviewing
Recruitment Interviewing

Leadership Development
Presentation Skills
Time Management
Sales Skills
Coaching Skills

George David Preece

17 May Close, Farnborough, Sheffield, TN7 6RD

Tel: 01347 490876 Mob: 09076 789955 Email: georged.preece@ticali.co.uk

A hard-working, committed and loyal individual who responds positively to being challenged, yet has the ability to remain extremely calm under pressure. Developed sound business/commercial acumen and excellent interpersonal and communication skills. A good team player and enjoys helping/supporting colleagues. Extremely professional and well presented, always adopting the highest possible standards of code and conduct.

Key Skills

- **Planning & Organising** – Balancing short term priorities against longer term objectives, effectively managing time and relevant resource to meet deadlines. Developing, implementing and reviewing plans that are aligned with the overall business strategy.
- **Relationship Building** – Using interpersonal and communication skills to build effective relationships with colleagues and customers at all levels.
- **Customer Focus** – Understanding customer requirements and developing solutions which exceed expectations. Putting the customer at the forefront of everything, providing first class quality and speed of service at all times.
- **Problem Solving** – Analysing issues and offering suggestions and solutions whilst supporting and encouraging others to resolve problems for themselves.
- **Team Working** – Recognising and utilising the different strengths of individual team members. Supporting colleagues to achieve successful outcomes.
- **Computer Literacy** – Experienced user of MS Word, MS Excel and MS PowerPoint, with the ability to quickly learn and effectively use other software applications.

Employment

Grant Surveys Ltd

June 2008 - present

Projects and Operations Manager

Key Achievements

- Successfully managed the Acme Services Management Development Portal - a training course booking system used by over 2000 UK-based personnel. This included maintaining regular contact with the client, setting up new courses/events, administering course pre-work, communicating with and resolving a variety of queries from system users and client personnel (including distributing course joining information), and liaising with course suppliers/external training venues. Achieved just over 85% occupancy on courses (client target was 70%).
- Provided operational support for over 300 online 360-degree feedback reviews for clients such as Acme Services, Change International, ABDA and Matthews & Johnson. This included agreeing and designing the content of the review, setting up the review in the system, overseeing successful completion of the review and preparing/distributing feedback reports.
- Integrated an online coach matching solution into the Acme Services Management Development Portal. This involved agreeing a spec with the client, liaising with the Technical Director regarding design, testing and refining the solution, and designing a launch plan for roll out to the business.
- Managed the development and delivery of a new online performance management system for Sixth Water, Hampton Electricity & Raft LLP encompassing some 4500 potential participants.
- Produced a variety of guidance documents to assist both system users and administrators.

Intraining Development Solutions Ltd

April 1999 – April 2008

Operations Co-ordinator (*February 2006 – April 2008*)

Key Achievements

- Wrote proposals which secured business with a range of blue chip clients including TMG plc, Cranbrooke Europe, Mums plc, Shore Amplification, Zoom Bikes and WH George Books.
- Implemented a set of stretching standards to ensure the business was meeting/exceeding client requirements/expectations, and that all trainers adopted a consistent approach to the design, preparation, delivery and evaluation of training activities.
- Analysed information from training activities to make recommendations to clients and identify future business opportunities.
- Maintained an understanding of client's trading performance, strategic objectives, key personnel and major challenges/opportunities.
- Introduced monthly business review meetings to kept whole team up-to-date with the progress of all projects/training activities.
- Built effective relationships with training activity sponsors by maintaining regular communication and ensuring all team members strived to exceed expectations in the quality and speed of response.
- Gathered data for training projects by conducting research/investigation using a variety of methods, inc. telephone interviews, face-to-face meetings, focus group sessions, 'walkabout', books, publications, the internet, etc.
- Developed a sound working knowledge of various development methods/techniques and a range of recognised training models, frameworks and theories, e.g. Learning Styles, G.R.O.W., Push/Pull, etc.

Business Development Co-ordinator (*August 2003 - February 2006*)

Key Achievements

- Managed business cash flow and produced monthly financial reports for the Managing Director and Company Secretary (using Sage accountancy software and Excel spreadsheets) - sales/purchase ledger activities, bank reconciliation, credit control, etc.
- Evaluated brand image/positioning, and worked with design agency to produce a range of professional marketing materials.
- Reviewed the business' service offer and, as a result, introduced I.L.M. (Institute of Leadership and Management) accredited training.
- Formulated a working relationship with the Sheffield Chamber of Commerce, in pursuit of public sector contracts.
- Managed sales and marketing activity, including the production and distribution of communications to promote products and services.
- Produced specification for new company web site, selected suitable design company, managed production of content by various members of the team. Site went online 3 weeks earlier than budgeted.
- Managed the relocation of office in Wolverhampton to new premises in Birmingham, including dealing with agent, setting up IT/ telecommunications/security installations, purchase of fittings/equipment. Project completed 2% within the cost budget allocated.
- Represented the business at meetings with prospective clients, and assisted in the production of proposal for new business.
- Attended up to 20 networking meetings and events per year to develop relationships with local businesses/organisations.
- Produced specification for a new CRM system, selected suitable solution, managed implementation and training of team.

Office Assistant (April 1999 – August 2003)

Duties

- Responding to customer/supplier queries and requests via phone, fax, letter or e-mail.
- Typing, formatting and producing documents, letters and a variety of materials for training activities.
- Maintaining and updating databases – CRM system and Resource Library (books and videos).
- Maintaining the office environment, including responsibility for office supplies, logging service calls, managing visitors.
- Producing psychometric testing reports using software packages.
- Maintaining up-to-date calendar of work activities, compiling daily and weekly work plans prioritised according to business needs.
- Producing and distributing a 6-page quarterly newsletter.

Premier Catering Services Ltd

August 1994 – April 1999

Deputy/Acting Catering Manager, London (October 1997 – April 1999)

Responsibilities

- Efficient delivery of breakfast and lunch service in staff restaurant, including pre-service briefings/tastings.
- Successfully managed a team of 6 Food Service Assistants, including interviewing/selection, conducting team meetings, training (company and statutory), staff appraisals, disciplinary procedures, staff rosters.
- Dealing with customers, ensuring a high level of satisfaction with their dining experience. Improved customer satisfaction ratings by 21%
- Completing daily cash analysis and banking, including relevant documentation such as weekly sales analysis sheets.
- Developing the business and generating revenue through effective menu planning, merchandising and promotions, special days.
- Provided absence cover at other sites within the Barclays Bank group contract.

Premier Management Trainee, Williams Holdings (October 1996 - October 1997)

- A 12-month Management Development Programme based around a number of written and practical assignments. Spent time in various departments, and also acted as Weekend Duty Manager.

Education

West Wittering College, Walford (1994-96)

BTEC National Diploma in Hotel, Catering and Institutional Operations.

Venus School, Dunstable (1989 – 1994)

9 GCSE's including Maths and English.

Qualifications & Training

- | | |
|--------|---|
| 1997 | R.I.P.H.H. (Royal Institute of Public Health & Hygiene) Exam. Passed with Credit. |
| 1996 | The Roseby Management Trainee Development Programme. |
| 1996 | Food Standards and Company Disciplines (Kenley International Training Centre). |
| 1995/6 | The Roseby Examination in Food Hygiene, Health and Safety. |