



## Helping You Find Your Next Role

### Contents

- Resumé Refinement
- Interview Preparation
- Guide Interviews and Personal Brand Building
- Your Brand on LinkedIn

# RESUME REFINEMENT

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*The recruitment process is competitive and where possible you should seek to gain that extra 1%. Here are our top tips on how you can best showcase yourself in your CV.*

## CV TIPS AND ADVICE

**A CV should be no more than six pages. The devil is in the detail, once you've addressed your CV's basic structure, it's your attention to detail that will set you apart. Here are more tips, along with some common pitfalls to watch out for:**

- When writing a CV, avoid long lists of 'responsibilities included' statements. Instead, **focus on your actual achievements**, and begin each with a dynamic action word or phrase like 'designed', 'coached', 'assessed', 'undertook', 'supervised', 'organised', 'managed', 'transformed', etc.
- **Keep your CV, and each section within it, as succinct as possible.** Include the necessary information but do it clearly and concisely using only relevant details. Excessive detail and long blocks of text that do not feature the benefits to the organisation will not do you any favours. Use bullet points to make information easily digestible, however make sure the outcomes and achievements are clearly articulated.
- **Avoid using any unusual fonts** that might be difficult to read or that might not display correctly on someone else's screen: Arial, Times New Roman or Calibri are the safest options.
- Address any obvious gaps in your work history by writing a brief explanation, where appropriate (perhaps you were travelling overseas, had a child or went back to university).
- Many recruitment agencies (and some companies) use special software to scan applications for certain words and phrases, which are called 'keywords'. To maximise your CV's chances of being found, it's a good idea to **make sure your CV contains keywords from the job description**, or from your role and industry, to ensure it passes the first round of checks. Common keyword examples include 'project management', 'business development' and 'leadership', amongst many others. Look closely at relevant job listings to see which words are repeated, and weave them into your CV and cover letters.
- **Get the fundamentals right:** just one or two spelling or grammatical errors in your CV could mean that your application is rejected by a potential employer.
- Privacy is a real issue in today's high-tech world. Be aware of employer/client confidentiality and never reveal information in your CV that can jeopardise a client's privacy or put them at risk.
- Include a brief **introductory paragraph or executive summary**. Consider your unique selling points and what you would most like to be identified with. Use it to establish an ideal first impression.

If in doubt about the content of your CV and whether it reflects your career achievements, ask a peer, a previous manager or colleague if they would mind reading it.

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# Interview Preparation Guide

Professional and executive interviews carry a level of expectation that demand detailed preparation. Interviews can take many forms, ranging from conversations lasting a few minutes to several formal meetings. Intelligent preparation is the key to success in an interview process.

## The STAR method

### (Situation-Task-Action-Result)

This is the most common interview technique and can be used to frame your answers in a logical way. Many people struggle to give concise answers but this structure makes it easier for interviewers to assess your understanding of an issue. Using this technique, you answer questions as follows:

#### Situation

Describe a situation you were in. For example, a subordinate was struggling with performance.

#### Task

Tell them what you decided to do. For example, I arranged a meeting with my subordinate to discuss the issues impeding performance

#### Action

Describe what you actually did. For example, I devised a performance uplift plan in collaboration with the subordinate

#### Result

Tell them what happened as a result of your actions. For example, his/her performance improved dramatically. Wherever possible, relate your examples back to the specifications of the role in question.

## Competency-based assessments (CBAs)

CBAs are a standard assessment tool used in interviews. CBAs focus on identifying examples of how you have exhibited particular behavioural competencies. The interviewer is looking for examples of past **behaviour that demonstrate the competencies** necessary for success in the role. To prepare for such questions, revisit your CV and group relevant achievements by competency. Then use this information to create a succinct answer that you can use in your interview.

## Provide specifics and justify your relevance

A general question does not necessarily mean that a general response is required. Questions are often intentionally broad to give you the freedom to share a specific achievement or example. So while you can start your answer with a general statement to illustrate your broad understanding of a topic, **quickly follow it with a clear and succinct example to demonstrate your expertise.**

## Be clear about your role in achieving an outcome

It is appropriate to acknowledge other team members when relaying a scenario, however, ensure you make your contribution in effecting change or providing a resolution clear. **Identify and explain exactly how you took initiative or instigated action.**

## Avoid negativity

Complex and extenuating circumstances may surround your decision to leave an organisation, but be careful how you express them in your interview. Your potential employers are naturally interested in your legacy and your potential impact on their organisation.

# Interviews and Personal Brand

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The terms 'value proposition' and 'personal brand' have gained considerable traction in the hiring community in recent years. *'What makes you, you?'* is a question that is not as simplistic as it first seems. It goes to the heart of what many organisations are integrally concerned with - a good cultural fit.

So, identify what constitutes your personal brand to give yourself the best possible chance of advancing. Have a strong sense of your own style, your response to conflict or your approach when faced with a tough task.

This will reveal traits and qualities that form your unique brand. Everyone's style might be different however, what is important is to leave a lasting impression for the right reasons.

Here are a few ways to maintain your brand:

## **Basics:**

Plan your trip and arrive at the building 10 minutes before the interview time but don't report to reception until 5 minutes before. It may seem counterintuitive but arriving too early can be frustrating for the client as they are probably running to a tight schedule

## **Know your market:**

Finding a new role can be the perfect opportunity to brush up on your knowledge of your market. Don't only research the company you're interviewing with, do some broader reading about market trends. If you know who will be interviewing you, take a look at their LinkedIn profile to find out about their background - you may even have some mutual connections.

## **Be engaged:**

Keep eye contact with who you're speaking to. Nod your head and tilt your body towards them when you're speaking. These small cues go a long way towards making them feel like you care, which helps you to build rapport and trust: the foundation on which you can later do business.

## **Be well groomed:**

The Oxford Dictionary definition of well-groomed is, 'Clean, tidy, and smart'. Appearing smart and well groomed helps you come across as well organised, attentive and you really want to be there.

## **Confidence and energy speak volumes:**

It's only natural to be nervous when looking for a new role, however positivity and passion is infectious and can make you stand out from the crowd. Think about the people you gravitate towards - what is it about them that you like?

## **Follow up:**

You've got their business card / email / LinkedIn information, now's the time to use it! Within a couple of days send a quick note letting them know what a pleasure it was to meet them. If you've promised to do or provide something for them, make sure you've stuck to your word and produced the goods.

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# Building Your Brand on LinkedIn

Everyone has a personal brand. A great personal brand can make the difference between attracting and losing opportunities. If you're not actively communicating your values, achievements, and personality in a way that prospects can easily see, you're losing the chance of gaining the attention of recruiters. Consider this — before recruiters call or message you back, they're going to look you up. Likely, they'll land on your LinkedIn profile. If you look like every other candidate out there... well, you're out of luck.

The next six steps outline the key areas you should invest in to boost your personal brand on LinkedIn. Devoting time to building your personal brand will increase your response and referral rates and help you in your job search.

## 1. Choose a profile picture that stands out

When people visit your LinkedIn profile, the first thing they look at is your picture. In fact, just having a picture makes your profile 14x more likely to be viewed by others. Make sure your headshot looks professional, as well as approachable and friendly and use a recent picture which represents your personal brand.

## 2. Write a descriptive headline

Your headline (the text right under your name) is your mission statement. Use this space to encapsulate the impact you have at your company and think of it as your opportunity to share the difference and impact you strive to make as a professional. This needs to be short and catchy and make an impression.

## 3. Show genuine passion

Use your summary to showcase your passion and paint a picture of who you are and what you aspire to in your career. List your goals, passions, accomplishments, and your mission. In other words, tell people why they should connect with you and why you're special.

## 4. Show your network that you rock

The best recommendations come from connections who have had positive experiences working with you and can write an authentic review.

## 5. Create and share content

Engage your network with useful content. Your LinkedIn profile isn't just a CV — it allows you to have a two-way dialogue with your network. A great way to start this conversation is by **sharing content** that you create or that you find interesting, as well as sharing advice with your network. You can build your own follower base and follow other LinkedIn members. **Create content.** LinkedIn's publishing platform allows you to publish long - form blog posts on your profile and is a great way to start voicing your opinion and sharing advice with your network. You can build your own follower base and follow other LinkedIn members.

Show the market that you're successful at what you do and that they'll be in good hands working with you. Build your credibility by displaying positive feedback from previous companies and colleagues on your profile.

## 6. Personalise your messaging

Did you know that personalised messages and InMails receive 37% higher response rates and increase the likelihood of a hire? If you want to be seen as an impressive candidate who has done your research, you have to take some time to write a personal message.