**CV, Cover Letter and Interview Questions**

What is a CV?

* CV stands for Curriculum Vitae which translated means ‘Story of your life’
* A selling tool to showcase your skills, experience and abilities to employers – remember you are a product!
* A CV can influence employment decision and set an agenda for an interview

Golden rules for what to add onto your CV:

1. If it increases fit to the job/company – include it
2. If it decreases fit to the job/company – exclude it
3. If it is neutral information – only include if there’s room!

Things to consider:

* Career objectives section works. Gives you the chance to increase the fit to the company/job
* Don’t use underline for subheadings, studies show that most employers prefer bold text as it looks neater
* Avoid including a photograph
* 1 spelling mistake can reduce chance of recruitment by up to 50%
* Use a basic font such as Arial or Times new roman at size 11-14
* Avoid back to back where possible
* Use paperclips over staples

The top 8 skills employers look for:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Attention to detail | Communication skills |
| Dynamism/Energy | Strong leader |
| Motivation | Team player |
| Initiative  | Able to handle pressure |

When using examples use the STAR technique to ensure quality of information:

**S** – situation

**T** – task

**A** – action

**R** – result

Example:

**S**ituation – upset amongst team working on project

**T**ask - settle dispute between colleagues

**A**ction – speak to both parties about their grievances and then bring together

**R**esult – able to work towards a positive result

There are a variety of ways you can describe yourself and your strengths. Try using the following:

Skilled at… A skilful… Competent in…

Extremely good at… Familiar with… Excellent at…

Able to… Very good at… Talented at…

Qualified to…

Employers are looking for various qualities and characteristics in a potential employee. Use the following list of words to help you when describing yourself, whether in an application or at interview:

Able Accurate Adaptable

Alert Ambitious Analytical

Articulate Assertive Astute

Bright Capable Calm

Confident ` Committed Common sense

Competent Computer literate Consistent

Cooperative Cope under pressure Creative

Decisive Dedicated Dependable

Desire to succeed Determined Diplomatic

Diverse Drive Dynamic

Educated Effective Efficient

Energetic Enjoy a challenge Enthusiastic Fast learner Fast worker Flexible

Focussed Friendly Gifted

Good communicator Hardworking Helpful

Highly motivated Honest Imaginative

Impressive Interpersonal skills Independent

Innovative Initiative Intelligent

Keen Knowledgeable Leadership skills

Loyal Mature Methodical

Objective Organised Patient

Persistent Polite Positive

Practical Proactive Punctual

Rational Reliable Resourceful

Responsible Supportive Tactful

Team player Tenacious Thorough

Trustworthy Versatile Willing

**Hobbies and interests – if you are struggling to think about what to include, see below for some ideas:**

Animals, farms, zoos Archery Art / Painting / Drawing

Astrology Basketball Bicycling

Bird watching Board Games / Card games Boating / Water-skiing

Bowling Camping / Hiking / Picnics Cars / Mechanics or racing

Chess Climbing / walking Computers

Cooking / Baking Crafts Cricket

Dancing / Gymnastics Dog walking Duke of Edinburgh Award

Films / cinema Fishing Football

Gardening Golf Gym / keep fit

Horse-riding Jogging / Track Models

Motorcycles Music / concerts Photography

Playing a musical instrument Pool / Pinball / Video games Puzzles / Sudoku

Reading Rugby Running

Roller-blading Science / Electronics Sewing / Needlework

Skateboarding Space / Aviation Swimming / Diving

Tennis / Ping-pong Theatre / musicals Travel

Walking Website design Woodworking

Wrestling Yoga

Name:

Address:

Tel:

Mob:

Email:

PROFILE:

3-4 sentences

SKILLS:

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•

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WORK EXPERIENCE AND VOLUNTARY

Dates Company and Job title

Duties

EDUCATION AND QUALIFICATIONS:

Dates Cannock Chase High School, Hednesford Road, Cannock

I am working towards the following qualifications:

OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS:

HOBBIES AND INTERESTS:

REFERENCES:

**Cover**

**Letters**

This one page letter will accompany your CV when you apply for a position.

**Structure:**

Introduction

* State what position you are applying for
* State where you saw the advert

How you are suitable

* How did you become interested in the industry
* Reference any similar or relevant work experience
* Express a willingness to learn if you do not hit all required experiences

Why you have chosen to apply to this company

* Why is this company interesting to you?
* Show you have researched the company
* Why do you want to be part of their team?

Signing off

* Sound enthusiastic and keen
* Ensure a word of thanks is included
* Mention availability

J. Bloggs

The Manor

Megatown

Acity

AB12 Z23

j.bloggs@hotmail.com

20th July 2016

Mr M Smith

HR Manager

Tasty Foods

Any Place

Thistown

AB12 2XX

Dear Mr Smith

RE Store Manager – Starting September 2016

I am writing to apply for the position of Store Manager that I saw advertised on [www.indeed.co.uk](http://www.indeed.co.uk)

I am currently completing my final year at Cannock Chase High School Sixth Form studying A-levels in Psychology, History and English Literature. I will be available to start work on 1st August.

Working with a multidisciplinary team of Buyers, Merchandisers and Customer Service Assistants on my work experience placement , I have been able to develop a strong knowledge of the role of the Store Manager and how crucial this role is in ensuring the company is profitable and efficient. Although I have to experience working in a supermarket specifically I am a fast learner and many skills I already possess make me suitable for this role.

Tasty Foods market share has grown from 3% to 5% in the previous financial year and is no doubt due in part to the outstanding marketing campaign. Targeting multiple market segments and highlighting discounted household products have led to grown despite the economic downturn.

Tasty Foods is an exciting place to work and I am confident that my enthusiasm twinned with my knowledge of the business industry will make me a suitable candidate. I am available for interview next month with the exception of 8th-15h August.

I hope to hear from you soon to discuss my application further.

Yours sincerely,

J. Bloggs

**Interview questions**

**Responses to Interview questions**

**Question: What are your strengths?**

**GOOD:** ‘I feel that I have very good communication skills. As a keen team member of a local football team, it is crucial that we communicate constantly when on the pitch to ensure that everyone can work together to win the game. I have been praised by the team captain for the way that I

**Question: What skills would you like to improve?**

**GOOD:** ‘I would like to improve my knowledge of the latest cutting and colouring techniques being used within the fashion industry and how these could be adapted to suit high street fashion trends.’

**Other typical ‘Employer’ questions that you might see could include:**

* Why do you feel you are a suitable candidate for this role?
* Why are you interested in completing an apprenticeship?
* Where do you see yourself in 5 years’ time?
* What experience of dealing with customers do you have?
* What qualities do you think are important in this job role?
* What do you think makes the difference between a good customer experience and an excellent one?

Prior to interview:

* Research the organisation and job that you are applying for
* Prepare at least 2 or 3 questions that show an interest in the job and organisation
* Work out how to get to the interview and how long the journey will take – allow enough time to arrive at least 15 minutes early
* Prepare answers to some typical interview questions e.g. ‘why do you want this job?’
* Prepare examples of when you have used skills relevant to the job

Appearance:

* Take a bath or shower prior to interview
* Wear clean and ironed clothing
* Wear appropriate clothing and footwear formal shoes, not trainers e.g. see back page
* Wear matching socks
* Polish/clean your shoes
* Make sure your hands and fingernails are clean
* Wear conservative makeup, accessories and ·jewellery (including nail varnish)
* Brush your teeth
* Wear subtle perfume/aftershave
* Remove facial piercings (one set of small earrings is fine)
* Remove chewing gum prior to interview

Body Language:

* Shake hands firmly
* Smile
* Sit when you are offered a seat
* Use good posture, sit up straight
* Be attentive, nod or take notes
* Make eye contact but avoid staring
* Avoid negative behaviour (yawning, crossing your arms, checking your watch, looking at your feet etc.)
* Be composed (no fidgeting, playing with hair, tapping your feet)

Responsiveness:

* Bring a copy of your CV, the application form and the job advert with you
* Bring a pad and pen to take notes if necessary
* Switch off your phone or set to silent (turn off vibrate as this can still be heard)
* Be on time (even better – be early)
* Use interviewer’s title and surname (address as Mr/Ms)
* Refer to the job advert/job description when answering questions
* Show enthusiasm
* Speak clearly, using proper grammar
* Avoid slang, swear words and suggestive language
* Answer questions clearly and concisely
* Focus on your strengths
* Avoid interrupting the interviewer

Attitude:

* Be respectful
* Be positive and enthusiastic
* Be attentive
* Be knowledgeable about the company
* Use the interviewer’s name
* Be professional and mature

Closing the interview:

* Ask any questions about the organisation/job that you prepared prior to the interview
* Stand and shake hands
* Thank the interviewer for his/her time
* Emphasise your interest in the job
* Ask when a decision will be made

Applications diary

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Company name and job reference | Contact details | Application date |
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