



CV

Today's cv tends to be short, brief and with little evidence of skills and competencies. The cv generally makes generic statements and claims with no supporting evidence or examples supplied.

Supposedly the modern cv is designed to create an impact that will result in an interview. However, the majority of cv,s are extremely similar with little to differentiate one from another.

Most HR professionals are aware that statistics advise that upwards of 70% of cv's are inaccurate and contain exaggerations, inaccuracies and sometimes lies. Candidates believe that such actions are warranted under the guise of marketing and creating an impression.

This also causes a further situation during the interview process where there is a discrepancy between the claims made in a cv and the evidence of being able to substantiate these claims during the interview. When such inaccuracies are discovered during the interview and reference checking, psychometric testing or other techniques of assessment the employer feels that there has been a wasted effort.

My point is that there needs to be a greater deal of realism and pragmatism brought to writing a cv.

Honesty, integrity and openness are important values and concepts to start incorporating into a cv.

There is also an impression that one cv will fit all requirements. This is certainly not the case.

Writing a good cv takes time and effort and is the first step in preparing your job search. Time spent at this stage is important and will lay the foundation for a successful job search. In fact, the presentation of the cv for a prospective hiring manager can be seen as the first assessment of the candidate.

Most people find this an extremely difficult exercise as they find it hard to sing their own praises.

Helium believe that the short modern cv can be improved by adding Case Studies to supplement the content required to demonstrate your skills and experiences.

Helium utilise a Seth Nodding technique called permission marketing. This entails placing a reference in your short cv advising that there is a Case Study attached as an addendum about the specific project or attribute such as leadership.

What do you think will happen to the person reading your cv? You are in effect giving the reader a chance to read further supporting evidence about why they should interview you.

In most instances the reader will flick over to read the Case Study.

The Case Study tells a story and explains the issues or problems of the project.

The Case Study provides the answers to the questions :

How, What, Where, When and Why?

It also serves the purpose of demonstrating your ability to summarise information in a concise, informative way, allowing a better understanding of you and how you operate within a defined situation.

By committing the effort to building a library of Case Studies around Key Projects or competencies such as leadership, problem solving etc you can cut and paste the appropriate Case Study into your cv to answer the requirements of the job.

This will make your cv stand out from the other applicants who are applying. It also provides another advantage as you have already prepared your notes for the interview.

Start to spend more time and effort into developing a powerfully cv that clearly demonstrate your skills and competencies .

Does your cv contain a list of platitudes that are representative of your key skills ;

Excellent problem solver

Good team player

Excellent communication and presentation skills

Etc

Can you demonstrate these claims in your cv?

This is why it is important to make sure your cv STANDS OUT from the others. Most CV's are generic in nature, and omit providing the compelling evidence to say PICK ME!

As with every profession, people are evaluated by their performance; our performance in this industry is about quality of hire, Helium is focused on getting the RIGHT PEOPLE the Right JOB, it's about quality not quantity.

- CV

When developing a cv does your cv add value and demonstrate your skills, experience and competencies or is it just a 4 page document using generic terminology. Start thinking about improving the content to add value. Think is there a compelling reason to select you for an interview!!!! If not, then you need to develop a reason.

Most companies conduct behavioural and competency based interviewing techniques. (Refer to article on Helium's website). The format Helium use is the STAR technique:

Situation

Tasks/Responsibilities

Actions – this is the area of value where you describe exactly what you did and achieved, and how you went about doing what was required.

Results

The Actions area is often omitted in modern cv's which is interesting as this is where clients ascertain where is the value that you contributed to the role. (Refer to Helium's CV template)

- What sort of job do you want?
- Target and strategies Approach
- Prepare for the Interview
- Suggested Reading :

Joel Spolosky : Smart & Gets Things Done

<http://www.joelonsoftware.com/articles/GuerrillaInterviewing3.html>

10 Reasons Why Interviews Fail

10. Over-explaining why you lost your last job. It's okay to mention that your last position was eliminated, but then move on to what you can do for this employer. Emphasise what you bring to the new employer, how you can help the hiring manager become more successful by making him look good.

9. Conveying that you're not over it. During interviews, some people act wounded, angry or sad. These are normal emotions after a redundancy but they don't belong in a job interview -- or you may give an impression of being unstable and communicate that you don't grasp the business reasons for redundancy.

Give your self a health check after a redundancy or restructure – make sure you are in a positive frame of mind and are clear on your career direction.

If asked by the interviewer a negative question about say, " What didn't you like about your previous manager or company" Try to answer this as a positive by suggesting things that might have been improved, try and leave out the personal comments.

8. Lacking humor, warmth, or personality. Many anxious job candidates can be one-dimensional during interviews, and are too focused on getting their talking points across. Don't forget to show qualities that can be a real plus in the decision-making process, including humor in good taste, warmth, and understanding. One thing interviewers want to know, of course, is how pleasant you would be to have around the place every day. A smile goes an extremely long way.

7. Not showing enough interest or enthusiasm. After all, companies are looking for people who are excited about working with them and for them. This is critical especially during the first interview because if you fail to convince the interviewer you have the skills, experience and passion for the job, then you will not pass GO and collect \$200.00.

6. Inadequate research about a potential employer. It's essential to be up on the latest news, so be sure to research the company before the interview. Be prepared with well-informed, thoughtful questions about its products or services and its future plans. Many applicants aren't bothering and it shows.

Refer to comment about showing interest above.

Compile a list of questions you want to ask, have it written down prior to interview. When interviewer asks if you have any questions bring out the paper and go through questions. If any have been answered during the interview acknowledge this.

5. Concentrating too much on what you want. Focus more on what the interviewer is saying. Listening carefully is crucial in steering the conversation toward how you would fit in and what you have to offer. Asking questions will give you clues as how best to answer those difficult or leading questions from an interviewer.

Place yourself in the employer's shoes and try to think what they are looking for, then seek to present evidence that you meet the requirements.

The place for negotiating what your expectations are is at the offer stage and not before.

Disclosing what you want early in an interview can be the kiss of death.

4. Trying to be all things to all people. Devote most of your effort to talking about what you know you do well, and don't try to stretch your actual qualifications too far. A good rule of thumb: Don't apply for any job unless you have at least 75% of the stated qualifications. Be realistic and honest about your skills and experience target those roles that will give you the best chance of success.

3. "Winging" the interview. Many hiring managers say that candidates often aren't ready to answer difficult questions. So rehearse. Prepare and practice a 90-second verbal resume, and some answers to possible questions, particularly in the situational and behavioural areas - so that you come across as succinct.

Remember this is about providing evidence and examples that are factual and demonstrate your skills. Generic and high level answers are a fail!!! You need to drill down to the detail, so again place yourself as the interviewer and ask your self what sort of question will be asked next? Have the answer ready.

However, even better is to have taken the person on the journey from start to finish.

2. Failing to set yourself apart from other candidates. You have to make the strongest possible case for why you are the best person for the job. Specifically address what impact you can have for them. Use quantifiable achievements from past positions to back up your performance promise.

1. Failing to ask for the job. You have a much better chance of getting the job if you ask for it. Close the interview by summing up what you can bring to the job, and ask for the opportunity to deliver those results.

Refer to other Blogs on :

Getting a job

How to Identify the Right Job

How to Impress an Employer

Picking a Referee

Negotiating an Offer

