



**FRAZER JONES**  
GLOBAL HR RECRUITMENT

# CV & interview guide

For HR & Reward professionals

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# CV advice

Applications for jobs are as high as they have ever been and the CV, more than ever, is absolutely critical in ensuring you secure your perfect role or at least give yourself the chance to interview for it. Whenever writing a CV it is important to remember that it is a selling tool, it is speaking on your behalf and needs to be a strong, achievements focused document which will ensure you stand out from the crowd in a market where a typical role in HR will generate between 60 and 100 CV's and sometimes significantly higher, particularly at the junior end. Many of these tips will be familiar to you, some not so and perhaps others that you might not have thought of but the fact is that working in HR, you will have written many more job descriptions than you will have your own CV and the two should be very different.



## How should I organise my CV?

### Fonts

You should ensure your CV is laid out very clearly with a sans serif font, these are fonts which do not have small projecting features at the end of each letter stroke and an example would be the Arial font which is very popular and looks great on CV's. Sans-serif fonts come out well on most screens and are the font type of choice for nearly all online content. As the days are gone for printing out and posting CV's yours needs to look great on screen. You should use bold letters and underlining for the company name and dates and just bold for the current position on a new line.



### Contact Details

Always include your full contact details. This sounds very basic but you would be surprised how many people do not include these details. You must always include your full name and address as well as email, mobile and perhaps a link to your LinkedIn account and we shall come on to this later.

## Company Info

Ensure you have your current company name and a “to and from” date including the month you joined and left each business to ensure that the full employment history is visible. Make sure you include your job titles! A failure to include the months raises doubts in the mind of the CV reader as to whether you were working for the whole year and the fewer questions a hiring manager has in their mind when reading a CV, the better.

No matter how well known your organisation is, you should always include a short two-liner on what they business do, where they have offices and headcount and turnover figures which puts in to context your business size-wise and shows you have a commercial understanding with the turnover figures being included right at the top.

## Length

For junior CV's you should probably stick to a two-pager but for those with experience, the CV can be 3 pages and sometimes 4. Try and ensure there is no duplication and if there are things you are doing in your current role which you also did in the last, simply remove them from your last position. Do not include logos for companies which take up room and ensure that the body of the text is in font size 10.

## The Content

### Personal Profile

People will have different opinions on this but a very short 2 or 3 lines at the top of the CV will introduce you well as long as it only includes fact rather than opinion. You should not say you are a “bright, energetic and highly effective HR practitioner” – of course you are going to say that. What you might be is a CIPD qualified, Business Studies graduate with experience within both large-blue chips and SME's with a recent focus on talent and leadership development. Again putting this in italics will make it stand out and improve the presentation, separating it from the rest of the CV.

### Academics

You should include all of your school and university education clearly. Make sure you include the name of your University as well as when you studied there

## Measurables

One of the most difficult things to include on a CV are measurables. Many businesses just do not measure their HR output, result or return on investment and if this includes you then unfortunately you will struggle to quantify your successes and potentially lose-out to candidates who can.

If you are in recruitment you should talk about time per hire, cost per hire, number of vacancies filled directly, percentage of hires made directly and you should know these numbers. Generalists should talk around retention figures, cost savings, return on investment from a management development programme and anything that has been measured in the course of a year.

## Commerciality

This is probably the biggest area where HR professionals must excel in order to find that next role and is the single term we hear more than any other. The perfect candidate for any client will have the right personality fit and will also be highly commercial. To convey this in a CV, a good place to start is with numbers – you should include budgets, percentage figures and always bring your work back to the commercial reason behind it.

HR should not be done for HR's sake but as a value-add, commercial, business partnering function, otherwise it is viewed as a cost-centre. HR must save costs, increase performance, ensure people are engaged and motivated and ensure the talent and potential of the people within the business is realised.

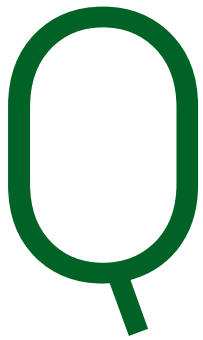
## LinkedIn

No longer is your CV enough. Commercial recruiters will put your name in to LinkedIn and if you do not have a strong, up to date profile with recommendations, someone else will. Ensure this is up to date and put a link on your CV.



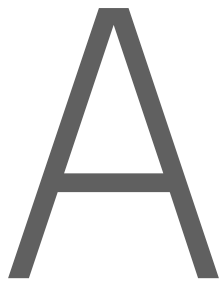
# Interview preparation

You have an interview, so you know that your experience and background on paper have matched the prospective job description. However, a successful interview does not simply mean fitting a job description. It will come through understanding the interview process, trying to plan for every eventuality, being relaxed and being yourself.



## Whats the best way to prepare for an interview?

This is essential. Even though you might appear to be the best candidate on paper, a lack of preparation before the interview can let you down. Most interviews will only last one hour, and you may not get a second chance.



**The following guidelines can be seen as the minimum amount of preparation:**

1. Make sure that you know the exact time and location of the interview and allow plenty of time to get there (a 10 minute margin for error is good).
2. Do you know precisely who will be interviewing you and their job title? Try and ascertain the format of the interview beforehand and what the overall interview process will consist of as well as checking the profile of the relevant interviewer via the firm's website. Find out as much as you can regarding the interviewer(s). Google them.
3. Research the organisation in as much depth as you can. Depending on the role it might be appropriate to concentrate on their products/services, competitors, recent business growth and plans for the future.

In most cases, your recruitment consultant should be able to assist. However, you can do your own research through:

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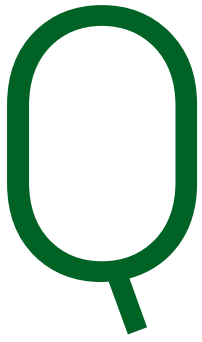
- The organisation's website – these are fast becoming the best source of material. Look at press releases to make sure that you are aware of recent events such as acquisitions/disposals and appointments within the company. There may also be a recruitment section and financial information for investors.
- Trade publications are another useful source. Keep an eye on the press for information and bear in mind that many publications now have their own websites with archive material, such as feature articles on your area of specialisation or on the organisation itself.
- Speaking to anybody you know who works within the organisation to gain an inside track.
- Without appearing contrived do try and mention any research you have done during the interview.

4. Think about the questions that you are likely to be asked at interview, since some of these can be quite predictable. At the end of this page are some examples of interview questions. If you can think of the answers to the 'worst' five potential questions, this will help ease any apprehension considerably.

5. First impressions are vital. So make sure that you are dressed smartly in a business suit (even if casual/ 'dress down' is allowed). Don't forget to polish your shoes! Shave/comb hair.

6. Know your own CV – it is amazing how many people fail at interview because they haven't read their CV recently. It is important to be able to discuss any aspect of your CV such as why you studied a particular course at university, or the part that you played in a particular project/deal (also make sure that you can discuss any overall business aims). Make sure you remember any relevant dates or qualifications.

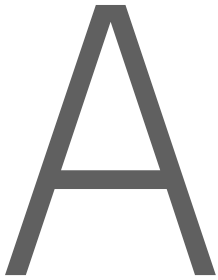
7. Ultimately the interview is a two way street. As well ensuring that you 'sell' yourself to best effect, you should also be considering questions for the interviewer on aspects of the role, such as prospects for career development and the corporate culture.



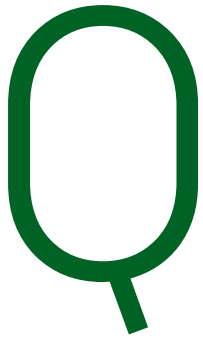
## How should I conduct myself at interview?

Remember that it is not just your experience and skill set that is being examined at an interview but also whether you will fit into the organisation's culture. As well as trying to be yourself it is important to remember these do's and don'ts:

- A **firm handshake** and an engaging smile are vital.
- **Maintain eye contact throughout.** Looking around the room and avoiding the interviewers' eyes gives a bad impression.
- **Be to the point and answer the question succinctly.** Be aware of rambling in your answers. Stop talking when you have answered the question.
- **Do not fidget** and be aware of your physical communication throughout the interview and at the same time monitor your interviewer's body language. This may give you a clue as to how you are doing e.g. if the interviewer is looking bored or restless perhaps you are digressing too much!
- **Do not overly criticise your current employer** (despite the fact that you are looking to leave).
- **Do not reply to a question with monosyllabic 'yes/no' answers.**
- **Be positive and enthusiastic about the role** for which you are being interviewed. Any reservations you may have should wait until you have received the offer and/or discussed it with your recruitment consultant.
- **Do not mention salary in the first interview** unless expressly asked. Try and leave salary discussions until later interviews.
- **Always ask questions** if you have the opportunity to do so.
- **Do not say anything that cannot be supported** by examples.
- **Be natural.** If you obtain an offer by acting then you'll have to 'act' for the duration of your employment.
- **Respect the interviewer**, even if they are a relatively junior HR specialist. Do not be overconfident, because first interviews will often have the power to say no.
- They will often be judging not only your technical ability, but also whether they would feel comfortable putting you in front of clients, so **be professional, friendly and succinct.**





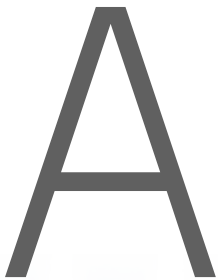


## How should I close the interview?

It is important to leave the interviewer with a positive impression – thank them for the opportunity to meet with them and for their time. If you are still interested in the position make sure that they know. If they ask if you are interested – don't say 'I'll think about and get back to you'. Be positive and say yes.

Immediately afterwards, note down your thoughts on the interview and any questions that you might have, while they are still fresh in your mind.

Call your recruitment consultant as soon as you can with honest feedback. The sooner you do this, the sooner your recruitment consultant can speak to the organisation to find out what they are thinking.



At all times stay in touch with your recruitment consultant who should relay positive or negative feedback. They will prepare you for the next meeting and give you help and advice at all stages. Remember that recruitment consultants will be highly experienced in the complete recruitment life cycle from interview through to offer, acceptance / rejection and resignation. Use all their knowledge and experience to help you make the most of the recruitment process.

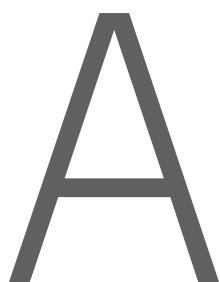




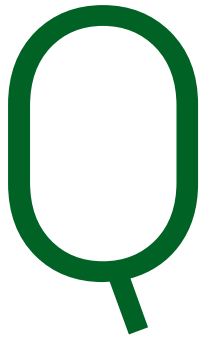


## What questions can I expect to be asked?

These are all deliberately 'open' questions, in other words you cannot answer them with a 'yes' or 'no'.



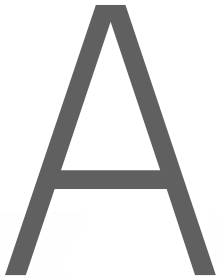
- Why do you want to leave XXX organisation?
- Why are you interested in joining YYY organisation?
- What will you miss most in your current position?
- What types of people do you work well with/not work well with?
- What would you say have been your greatest successes in your current position?
- What would you have done differently in your current position?
- Give us examples of how your management style has been effective?
- What have you learnt over the course of the last 5 years?
- What have you done that shows initiative in your current position?
- How would your team describe you?
- What are your career goals?
- How are you at prioritising?
- Give examples of your delegation skills?
- What are your hobbies?
- What is the most difficult thing you have ever done at work?
- Will you be available to travel during the week?
- What would your colleagues say about you?
- What do you think your current firm will do when you resign?
- What are your long-term aims?



## What questions should I ask my interviewer?

These are examples of some great questions to ask at an interview.

- Why has the position become available?
- What is the culture of your organisation?
- What is the policy of your company on training and development?
- What are the future plans of the company?
- Who do you regard as your main competitors?
- What type of employee is historically successful in your company?
- How do you appraise the performance of your employees?
- What would I expect to be involved in during my first 3/6/12 months?
- What are the long term prospects for the successful applicant?
- Is there a possibility of working overseas?
- Ask about the interviewer's background. People always like to talk about themselves and this gives you the chance to gather your thoughts.





*We established Frazer Jones in 1996 to operate exclusively within the global Human Resources market.*

*Since its inception, Frazer Jones has developed into a market leader providing a broad range of HR recruitment solutions across a wide range of industries and sectors. With offices in Europe, The Middle East, and AsiaPac, our teams support local, regional and international clients.*

*Frazer Jones encompass the complete HR spectrum including: Generalist HR, management development, learning & training, resourcing & recruitment, compensation/ remuneration & benefits, employee relations, industrial relations, organisation design, change management, HR policy, e-HR, expatriate administration and HRIS.*

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#### **London**

95 Queen Victoria Street  
London EC4V 4HN  
T: +44 (0)20 7415 2815

#### **Singapore**

Level 21 Prudential Tower  
30 Cecil Street  
Singapore 049712  
T: +65 6420 0500

#### **Dubai**

Suite 614, Liberty House DIFC  
PO Box 506739  
T: +9714 448 7775

#### **Melbourne**

Level 2, Rialto North Tower  
525 Collins Street  
Melbourne, VIC 3000  
T: +61 (0)3 8610 8450

#### **Hong Kong**

1918 Hutchinson House  
10 Harcourt Road, Central, Hong Kong  
T: +852 2973 6333

#### **Sydney**

Level 12, 25 Bligh Street  
Sydney  
NSW 2000  
T: +61 (0)2 9236 9000

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