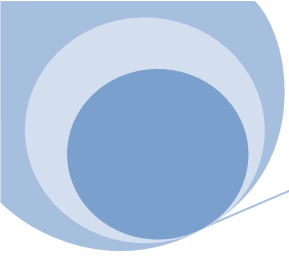


**Belgarum Recruitment Ltd**  
Recruitment that suits you...

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Candidate Information Pack



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## CV writing tips.....

Your CV must be clear, concise and factual. Key features to include are:

### Personal Details

List postal address, phone number, mobile number, e-mail address etc.

If you include an e-mail address, make sure you check it regularly.

If you are a student, give both term and home contact details, making it clear when you will be where.

Include your date of birth as this is often used to confirm your ID.

### Employment History

- Ensure your employment history can be seen on the first page of your CV, starting with the most recent position.
- Detail dates of employment, job title, company and a brief list of duties for each position.
- Be specific. For example, list projects undertaken, techniques used, standards worked to and specific achievements in each role.
- Ensure all information is clear at a glance. Bullet points can help.
- The last five years are the most important. Much less detail is required for your earlier career.

### Education

- List most recent qualifications first.
- Clearly state dates of studentship, place of study and grades achieved.
- If you are a recent graduate, include details of any final year or Honours projects and also A levels with grades if they are good.
- More experienced candidates with further academic qualifications can safely omit school qualifications from their CV.

### Additional Information

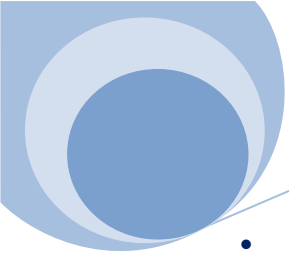
- This section is where you can highlight key skills under headings such as Technical Skills, Computer Literacy, Foreign Languages, Driving Licence, and Training Courses. If you include Personal Interests as a section, give a cross-section of true interests and be aware of what impression they might create of you as a person.

### References

- Give two employment references if possible, including your current employer. For a recent graduate, one reference from a summer job and one from a university tutor would be appropriate.
- Include the job title and contact details of your referees.
- Contact your referees in advance to obtain their permission.

### Tips and Hints

- Proof read your CV thoroughly and ask someone you trust to do it again for you. It is very easy to make a spelling mistake or misquote a date.
- Do not include a photograph with your CV unless specifically requested.
- Be aware of the impression a silly email address might make on a prospective employer. Would you give a job to [laidback@isp.com](mailto:laidback@isp.com)?



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- Keep it concise. Two pages should be enough space for most people, with an addendum for publications or other additional information.
- Use a word processing package such as Microsoft Word and keep the formatting simple to avoid technical problems if you send your CV electronically.

## Interview Tips.....

Once you have made it to interview for a job vacancy, this is usually the final hurdle you will have to cross before the job is yours. Here are a few tips to help the interview run as smoothly as possible and to help you make a professional, confident impression:

**Prepare** – The more preparation you do for an interview the better. You will impress the interviewer if you can drop into conversation things that you know about the company already. You will also feel more confident and relaxed if you already know something about the people you are going to see. As a minimum, check out the company website and/or do a Google search. Study the job description and try to anticipate the questions you might be asked specific to the role.

**Logistics** - Make sure you know where you are going, how long it will take to get there and who you are going to see. Plan to arrive at least 10 minutes before the interview time.

**Smart dress** – Make sure you look presentable for your interview.

**Handshake** – A firm handshake conveys confidence. Practice with a friend until you can give a confident handshake without any embarrassment. This is particularly important for female candidates who may never have shaken hands before. You will find yourself shaking hands with many people in your professional career and it's important to do this with ease.

**Relax** – Be yourself and relax. However do present yourself as professional, an accepted stance is to lean forward slightly with both hands on desk. Interviews are stressful enough without getting too wound up so try to relax and you will find that you can think more clearly and give better answers. If you do start to get nervous just take a slow, deep breath and think calm thoughts. Remember your interviewer may also be nervous and is only human after all.

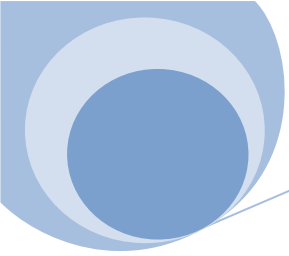
**Smile** – Not only does this make you look more interested in what the interviewer has to say but it will also help you to feel calm.

**Eye contact** – Maintain natural eye contact with the interviewer(s) as this gives out the correct message about your social skills and your interest in what they are saying.

**Enthusiasm** – Don't underestimate the power of enthusiasm. Attitude is everything and enthusiasm is infectious. Employers want employees who really want to work for them so make sure to convey evidence of this.

**Direct answers** – Give concise answers, not necessarily one-word answers, but avoid waffling or going off on a tangent. If you have not understood the question or lost concentration for a moment, ask for it to be repeated or expanded upon. A confident person would not hesitate to do this.

**Confidence** – Have confidence in yourself and your abilities. Remember that you would not have been asked to come for interview if they didn't think you could do the job. This is your opportunity to let the interviewer know that you can.



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**Questions** – Try to have at least one question for the interviewer at the end, such as, “If I am successful in getting this job, when would you be looking for me to start?” or “How long do you think it would be after starting that I would actually be doing the job hands on?” You may like to ask a more direct question of the interviewer, such as, “What do you enjoy about working here?” or, “What made you decide to join the company?” Matters such as holidays and pay will normally have been discussed earlier but, if not, avoid these topics until the second interview. We can always clarify details for you at a later date.

## Competency based interviews.....

### **What is a Competency Based Interview?**

Competency based (or behavioral) interviews are based on the premise that past behaviour is the best predictor of future behaviour. Interviewers seek to obtain information about candidates' past behaviour in certain situations. Competency based interviews are structured, with questions that relate directly to the essential criteria/competencies required for the post.

Research into recruitment and selection methodology suggests that structured, competency based interviews can be one of the most reliable and accurate forms of assessment. A good recruitment and selection interview should assess candidates against each essential criteria or competency, asking questions about:

- Past behaviours and performance
- Learning from past behaviours
- Future adaptability to new post
- Knowledge and understanding of issues in relation to the post

### **What does the interview focus on?**

Most interviews will focus on those competencies that are most important for the particular job.

You may also be required to meet other, specific essential criteria. This could be an in-depth knowledge of a particular area or experience of working in a similar role previously.

### **What should I expect in the Interview?**

Competency based interview questions are slightly different to the style you may be used to. They will tend to focus on past situations and your behaviour in those situations.

Questions are likely to start with:

*"Please give me an example when. . ." or "Please describe an occasion" etc*

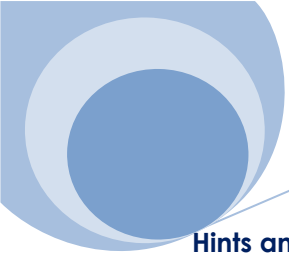
### **What will the Interviewers be looking for?**

The interviewers will be looking for specific examples about exactly what you did in such situations, not what the team's role as a whole was, or what you would do in a hypothetical situation.

You can choose to use relevant examples from your current job, a previous role, or a situation outside of work altogether.

You will be asked to discuss the example in some detail.

It is likely that the interviewers will then follow with some probing questions, possibly clarifying a particular area. They will be interested in the outcome of the situation, whether there was anything you learned from the experience, etc.



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## Hints and tips

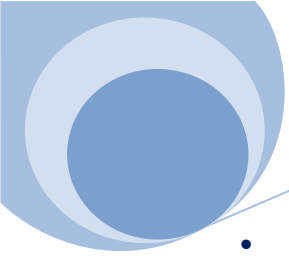
- Look again at the essential requirements of the role - the interviewers will ask questions related to those requirements.
- Try to anticipate what questions may be asked.
- As the interview will be focused on past specific examples, it would be advisable to think about possible examples that you could use.
- Consider your role in the situation.
- Were there any potential barriers or pitfalls?
- How did you overcome them?
- Is there anything you would have done differently?
- Is there anything that you have learned?
- You may not be asked these particular questions during interview, but they will prepare you for possible questions and encourage you to think about these areas.
- Consider your present job and how your role fits within the team.
- Consider the job you are applying for and think about the issues and responsibilities related to that job.

## Interview Questions.....

As part of your preparation prior to an interview, it is a very useful exercise to consider carefully the type of questions that you might be asked. You are likely to be asked questions of both a technical and personal nature, relating to your strengths, weaknesses and behavioural style and what value these would bring to the role you are being interviewed for. Allow yourself some time to think about this and note the points you would particularly like to mention.

When answering an interview question, it is good practice to back up any claims with an illustrative example, which you can think about in advance. For example, "One of my strengths is that I am good at presentations. I regularly give presentations to colleagues and to customers and am very comfortable doing this." You may then be asked a follow-up question that will allow you to elaborate on this and talk about how you prepare for presentations, the pitfalls to avoid, and a particularly successful presentation you have given. You will find below a list of questions that you may be asked at interview. Try to think about how you would answer them and what kind of follow-up question might result:

- Tell me about yourself.
- Talk me through a typical day in your current position.
- What are your key responsibilities at the moment?
- What are your strengths?
- What would you say were your greatest technical strengths?
- What are your weaknesses?
- What are your major achievements?
- Where do you want to be in 5 years time?
- What 3 things are most important to you in your next job?
- Give me an example of when you have had to organise something.
- Give me an example of when you have had to plan your time effectively.
- Give me an example of when you have worked as part of a team.
- If you could change your current job in any way how would you do it?
- Why did you leave your last job/ why are you looking to leave your current job?
- Describe when you have experienced a difficult situation and how you resolved it.
- Describe a time that you have had to bring somebody around to your way of thinking.
- What do you know about our organisation?
- What do you think this job entails?
- How did your last job influence your career?



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- Why do you want to work here?
- What can you bring to this job?
- Why should I give you this job?
- Are there any questions that you have for us?

## Presentation – What shall I wear?

The most commonly asked question we are asked as recruitment consultants prior to an applicant's forthcoming interview is, "What shall I wear?" This may surprise some, but it's a clear indicator that many people realise they may be judged on more than just their interview performance. In an interview, you want your first impression to be a positive one in all respects and the appropriateness of your dress and presentation will almost certainly be taken into consideration, especially if you don't get it right.

Presenting a professional, polished image is essential and, to err on the safe side, that means dressing in what might be described as a "business smart" style: a relatively conservative, tailored look. This is particularly true if your desired job is managerial or involves any contact with the public or with customers. But even if you are applying for a position based in office or behind the scenes, you will be expected to be dressed appropriately for an interview. By all means express your individual personality but keep it within safe boundaries.

Follow these guidelines:

- A suit is the norm for both sexes when it comes to interview attire but smart trousers or a smart skirt/dress and co-ordinated jacket are also acceptable.
- Men should wear a tie.
- Your general appearance and image should be well groomed, professional and uncontroversial.
- Hair, hands, clothing and shoes should be clean and tidy looking and jewellery, make-up and cologne should be understated.
- Tattoos should not be on display.
- Earrings for men are still not acceptable to everyone, so play it safe and take them out. The same applies to visible piercings anywhere other than in the ears.

For the avoidance of doubt, the following are a definite no-go for interviews:

- Anything too skimpy or revealing
- Anything too casual, sporty or grungy
- Shiny/sparkly/evening fabrics.
- Beard stubble

Presentation is not just about appearance; it is also about behaving politely and showing respect for your interviewer. That means no chewing gum, no smoking, no swearing, no telling jokes, no gazing out the window, no interrupting or talking over your interviewer. If you are a smoker, make an effort not to smell of smoke. Avoid over-familiarity. Do not sit down until invited to do so. Men should not remove their jacket unless invited.

Use your common sense. Now is not the time to make an anti-establishment statement with your behaviour or appearance. Once you have the job, you may never have to wear that suit or tie again (until your next interview) but in the meantime, it is better to err on the side of formality.

Remember interviews are a way of satisfying the needs of both employer and candidate. Thoroughly preparing for the interview will ensure you give yourself the best possible opportunity to be given the role.