



## CURRICULUM VITAE - STRUCTURE, CONTENT AND FORMAT

### Senior Level Interview Guidance:

- Approach:** The first company meeting will probably last around 60-90 minutes and cover a range of issues. Remember to illustrate and emphasise relevant experience, rather than deliver a chronological dialogue of your life. If invited to talk through your career, remember to talk 'most recent first', where the most relevant work **and management** experience is likely to be **contained**.
- First impression:** It counts, so make it a good one. Plan how you propose to make the first and last impressions the ones you seek to make. (Good eye contact, firm handshake etc – positive and high impact).
- Context:** Always give context – how big was your company, financial turnover, staff, key services/products? We find a PowerPoint organisation chart can be very useful at this point to explain a complex organisation or matrix-based set of operating units, for example.
- Evidence:** You have a short time to explain what is often complex information – make it simple and interesting. Feel free to use organograms, project plans, schedules of activity, etc to illustrate and bring to life any area that you were responsible for or where you achieved. Have them ready **to use** if appropriate.
- Business:** This is a high level business role - be prepared with facts and figures of what you have delivered and achieved. Strive to quantify significant business impacts in areas where you have achieved.
- Bigger picture:** Be well read as to what is currently happening in the industry, not only for the client but also for other associated areas of the business sector. Ensure that you are familiar with and have read recent copies of their trade press.
- Tenor of meeting:** Enjoy it, be upbeat and be prepared to discuss what you learnt and hurdles you overcame. Aim for an interactive discussion and keep positive.
- Research:** My Our experience is that successful candidates for senior jobs have done extensive research on the company and relevant critical issues. Ensure that your knowledge of the client is current. Be well informed on recent and salient key issues relevant to for them.
- Rationale:** Identify clearly 3 good reasons as to why the role/company is attractive to you. (New challenge, live nearby do not qualify...!) This is a frequent reason for decline in key roles.
- Timekeeping:** We suggest that you plan to arrive 20-30 minutes early to collect your thoughts.
- Spare CVs:** Always take 2 spare CV's in case you are introduced to a key person 'on the hoof'.



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### Common mistakes in the senior level interview arena

#### Lateness

42% of senior level candidates were late for interview last year. Plan to be early and take time to prepare your thoughts for this important meeting.

#### Lack of research

Many candidates often fail to read around the company, the industry or the sector. This should be regarded as mandatory preparation for interview, as should a cursory investigation of the competition in the marketplace.

#### Failing to listen to the question

The desire to just narrate one's CV should be suppressed. It's crucial to listen to the question and where appropriate reference roles from your CV. Ensure you are answering the question **as asked**.

#### Clarity and Expression

Avoid long-winded, rambling answers. Ensure you can clearly and concisely describe what your current (or previous) company does, where you fit in, what your role involves and what you have delivered and achieved.

#### Poor Self Presentation

Dress – keep it smart, dark and conservative. The bow-tie/feather boa can wait! There is no such thing as an informal meeting when you are being considered for a senior level opportunity.

In the £50k+ salary bracket you should avoid scuffed shoes, short-sleeved shirts, Mickey Mouse ties, flouncy summer frocks and cheap suits. DRESS WELL = FEEL GOOD.

Remember, it's possible to tone it down a little when you're there, eg, by taking off your jacket. You can never 'dress-up' if you find that the environment is smarter or on a higher plane than you had anticipated.



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### Too Tense or Trying Too Hard:

People hire individuals they respect, understand and want to work with. They want to know what you are like, what you have done, how you approach tasks and importantly how you plan to approach their role.

If you are well qualified and feel that the fit is good, then enjoy the meeting.

### Sloppiness

Shiny suits, untidy hair, scuffed shoes, poor dialogue and slang – they are all noticed. Don't under any circumstances call anybody 'mate', not the MD, the cleaner, the PA or your mate.

### And from our experience

- Do hold the mug by its handle, and don't ask for a 'chockie bickie'.
- Don't say the roadworks were 'bl\*\*dy dreadful', and neither was your last manager!
- Do wear socks but don't wear Fiji love bands
- Don't park in the FD's car space or skid sideways into the car-park.
- Don't undertake a 15 minute presentation on the Internal Combustion Engine when you were asked for 15 minutes on your 100 day plan as the newly appointed Commercial Director...

As you can perhaps foretell, we have seen all the above and although they clearly do not technically impact on your competencies, skills and abilities, sometimes they can prevent you from securing the role of a lifetime...



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### In Summary

- **Research thoroughly - the job, company and sector.**
- **Be there in good time (20-30 minutes early to collect your thoughts).**
- **Enjoy the meeting and make clear.**
  - What your company did/does
  - What your division did/how your department fitted to above
  - What your role spanned
  - What you achieved
  - How you quantified and measured what you did
  - What are the key elements that attract you to this role – Don't say you're looking for a fresh challenge. How many times....
- **Take a responsibility for covering in the agenda what needs to be covered.**
- **Have intelligent and well-constructed questions prepared.**
- **Know and be able to clearly articulate what attracts you to the company and the role.**
- **Ask what will be the next stage of the process.**
- **Assuming you would like to progress, make this clear as part of the closing stages of the discussion.**
- **Enjoy – be yourself, be upbeat.**

### On a personal note

I hope that you are not patronised by the above. It is said in the light of some 20 years of executive recruitment experience and intended to help strong performers to prepare and deliver well in the senior level job search.

Tony Clay,  
Clay McGuire