

CANDIDATE RESOURCE PACK

ABOUT STONOR SEARCH & SELECTION

Stonor Search and Selection Ltd are a specialist agency in the Sales and Marketing Industry.

Excellence in people doesn't just mean having a database of candidates, it is about:

- Identifying the right people for the right jobs, first time.
- Establishing a meaningful point of difference between ourselves and our competitors.
- Building a relationship with candidates that ensures we fully understand their true potential and the skills that they can bring you.
- Creating an effective partnership that takes advantage of your unique offering and the career potential of your company, and combines it with our twenty-five years experience, expertise and knowledge.
- Providing access to a comprehensive and definitive array of recruitment skills.
- Treating people with respect.
- Being financially aware and delivering results.
- Innovation, boldness and daring to be different.

Below is listed a sample of the services we provide:

Real people with industry experience are available 8:00am and 6:00pm in the office. We understand our candidate's career experience and aspirations and are available at times that suit them.

Highly candidate focused ethos with commissioned Consultants.

As we know our clients well and take the time to know our candidates, we feel this enables us to deliver unbiased and professional consultative advice that is unrivalled in our industry.

Unlike website job boards our candidates have control over the process; CV details only go to the clients our candidates want them to go to. Our clients range from brand leaders to unique one-off opportunities across the marketing mix including sales allowing us to offer a varied choice to take advantage of the transferable skills our candidates possess. We have a track record of success in recruitment giving our candidates peace of mind in our proven ability and integrity.

ADVICE ON YOUR CURRICULUM VITAE

CV Do's

- Communicate your strengths, your achievements, your initiative and your personality; in short your credibility and suitability.
- Your CV should be no more than two pages long. Think quality, not quantity. On average, readers absorb 60% of the first page, 40% of the second, and the third is generally a waste - this has been proven time and time again.
- Aim to make an impact on the reader.
- Put the greatest emphasis on your most recent positions. Summarise older roles. Include dates and months of employment for each.
- Include your competence in foreign languages (basic, good, fluent), but be honest. So, if you only have 'O-Level French', then you have 'basic French'.
- Be positive - don't be too modest and don't lie about your experience. Positive thinking is vital to secure that next position.
- Tailor your CV to each job application. Tailor the CV to the company/department and position whenever possible. Although this may be time-consuming, it could just help you clinch that job! You could include a 'position sought' section in your CV for this purpose.
- Do include details about your Hobbies and Interests but try and make them achievement orientated e.g. ran a marathon and raised £1,000 for charity.
- One last thing, if you think you look good then do put a photo at the top of your CV!

ADVICE ON YOUR CURRICULUM VITAE

CV Don'ts

- A badly prepared CV undermines the credibility of its contents.
- If you cannot produce a professional document about yourself, an employer may conclude that you are unlikely to have the competence to fill an important job.
- Don't make false/exaggerated claims: honesty is always the best policy. If the interviewer spots inconsistencies in your CV you won't be successful.
- Don't include your required rate/salary. You cannot win - the figure will often be too high, or sometimes even too low. Negotiate this after you've got the job!

ADVICE ON YOUR CURRICULUM VITAE

CV Content

- Make sure your CV has a clear structure - include career overview, skills overview, qualifications (education/professional) and employment history.
- Employers often make up their mind from reading the initial summary and key skills. Create a compelling summary on the first page and include a list of your key skills and key applications in bold. Note the quantity of experience you have for each key skill, e.g. Business Analysis (5 Years), Database Design (4 Years), etc.
- Bullet points break up a CV well. Employers want to get straight to the salient points so direct them there. Important information should stand out but avoid using just one or two words.
- Each bullet point should give the reader a feel for:
 - When you instigated a particular idea/project. (Self-starter)
 - When you are/were responsible for a particular task. (Primary influence)
 - When you assisted on a particular task. (Secondary influence).
- Give the reader a feel for the type of tasks and responsibilities that you can cope with and how proactive you have been.
- Think about how you can break projects down into specific tasks. Any ad hoc projects must be backed up with examples of issues that were tackled on this basis.
- Highlight achievements to demonstrate your success.

INTERVIEW ADVICE

Before the Interview

- Research
 - Look committed and find out as much as possible about the company.
 - Visit their web site for more information on the company.
 - Read their annual report, which you can get by telephoning them.
- Your CV
 - Review your CV and make sure you have positive answers if the interviewer wants more detail on the information you have supplied.
- Job Description
 - Read the job description carefully.
 - Make sure you meet all the criteria detailed in the job description.
 - Be confident that you are technically qualified to do the job.
 - Have examples from your previous roles to demonstrate your ability to do this job.

INTERVIEW ADVICE - THE DO'S

- Presentation
- Look your smartest and show your most professional side during the interview. A company is more likely to hire someone who is well presented and who will therefore best represent their company.
- Arrive on time.
- Obtain clear directions for the location of the interview and where to park if travelling by car and plan your journey, allowing plenty of time to arrive. If you are unavoidably delayed, notify the company immediately giving the reason and your estimated time of arrival.
- Make a friend of the receptionist. A clever interviewer will ask their opinion afterwards.
- During the interview introduce yourself courteously and express yourself clearly.
- Show tact, manners, courtesy, and maturity at every opportunity.
- Be confident and maintain poise. The ability to handle your nerves during the interview will come across as confidence in your ability to handle the job. Be prepared to show how your experience would benefit the company.
- Ask questions concerning the company or products and the position for which you are being interviewed for. An interviewer will be impressed by an eager and inquisitive mind. You will also be able to demonstrate that you can contribute to the company or industry if you show an interest in its products and/or services. Only ask questions if you genuinely want to know the answer, it is easy to tell if someone is just asking a question for the sake of it.
- Take time to think and construct your answers to questions to avoid rushing into a vague and senseless reply.
- Demonstrate that you are sufficiently motivated to get the job done well and that you will fit in with the company's organisational structure and the team in which you will work.
- Anticipate questions you're likely to be asked and have answers prepared in advance. Uncertainty and disorganisation show the interviewer that you are unprepared and unclear what your goals are. Be assertive without being aggressive and thank the interviewer.

INTERVIEW ADVICE - THE DONT'S

- Be late for the interview. Tardiness is a sign of irresponsibility or disorganisation and the employer could take it as what to expect in the future.
- Slouch in a chair in reception. Ideally you should remain standing up until the interviewer arrives.
- Arrive unprepared for the interview.
- Say unfavourable things about previous employers.
- Make excuses for failings.
- Give vague responses to questions.
- Show lack of career planning - no goals or purpose could convey the impression you're merely shopping around or only want the job for a short time.
- Show too much concern about rapid advancement.
- Over emphasise money. Your interviewing goal is to sell yourself to the interviewer and to get an offer of employment. Salary discussion is secondary.
- Refuse to travel and/or relocate. Always be open for discussion concerning travel and relocation. The employer may be talking about future plans, not present.
- Show any reservations you may have about the role/company. You can always turn down second interviews and job offers after you have had time to appraise your concerns in the cold light of day.
- Demonstrate low moral standards. (i.e. swearing in the meeting)
- Express strong prejudices or any personal intolerance.
- Leave your mobile phone on during the interview.

INTERVIEW ADVICE - BODY LANGUAGE

Body Language Do's

- Ensure a firm handshake. A firm handshake shows confidence in yourself and your abilities.
- Walk slowly, deliberately, and tall upon entering the room. Maintain a high level of eye contact throughout.
- Remember not to be seen to be staring. Look away occasionally, looking confidently and calmly to the right or left; never look down.
- Listen, be alert and enthusiastic - it's often a deciding factor in employing candidates. An indifferent attitude is instantly recognised as "I don't care if I get this job."
- Smile, nod, and give non-verbal feedback to the interviewer.
- Do not hurry any movement.
- Relax with every breath.

Body Language Don'ts

- Have a poor/limp handshake.
- Display laziness.
- Be aggressive or act in a superior, conceited or overbearing way.
- Have a poor voice, diction or grammar.
- Look distracted, look down or avoid eye contact.
- Talk too much. Answer questions as asked, without being abrupt; expound only to the point that the interviewer has a clear understanding of what you mean. Lose concentration or attention.

THE INTERVIEW - YOUR QUESTIONS

The interview is a two-way process. You need to interview the company to find out if the company and the position are right for you. Prepare the questions that you want answered and ask them. If you ask open questions, e.g. those beginning 'What?', 'How?', 'Where?', 'Who?' or 'Will?' it will encourage your interviewer to talk and provide you with additional information.

Consider some of the following:

- What will my responsibilities be?
- How has the position become vacant?
- How will you assess my performance?
- How does the role fit into the structure of the department?
- How does the department fit into the organisation as a whole?
- Who will I report to and are there persons reporting to me?
- Where does my line manager fit into the structure?
- What encouragement is given to undertake further training?
- Who are your customers?
- Where is the company going? Expansion plans?
- Where is the specific location of the position?
- Will the position entail travelling?
- How soon will you decide on the appointment?
- Remember to close the interview with questions like the following;
 - a. Are there any reasons why you wouldn't want to see me again?
 - b. When is it best for me to come back Thursday, Friday?

Before you leave remember to give the Interviewer something to remember you by and sell yourself as a benefit to the Company, one way to do this is to make reference to your skill set in conjunction with what you already know about the Job Description.

THE INTERVIEW - THEIR QUESTIONS

(and sample answers)

When you're asked open-ended questions, always try and make your answers **positive**.

Q: Tell me about yourself.

(The interviewer is really saying "I want to hear you talk").

A: This is a loosener but is a common question so your response can be standardised. Write a script, rehearse it so it sounds impromptu. Spend a maximum of four minutes to describe your qualifications, career history and your range of skills. Emphasise those skills that are relevant to the job on offer.

Q: What have been your achievements to date?

(The interviewer is saying, "Are you an achiever?").

A: Again this is a common question so be prepared. Select an achievement that is experience related and fairly recent. Identify skills you used in the achievement and quantify the benefit.

Q: Are you happy with your career to date?

(The interview is really asking about your self esteem and self-confidence, your career aspirations and whether you are a happy, positive person).

A: The answer must be 'yes' but if you have hit a career plateau or you feel you are moving too slowly, then you must qualify the answer.

Q: Tell me the most difficult situation you have had to face and how you tackled it?

(The interviewer is really trying to find out your definition of 'difficult' and whether you can show a logical approach to problem solving using your initiative).

A: This can be a trap! To avoid it, select a difficult work situation that was not caused by you and which can be quickly explained in a few sentences. Explain how you defined the problem, what the options were, why you selected the one you did and what the outcome was. Always end on a positive note.

Q: What do you like about your present job?

(The interviewer is really trying to find out whether you will enjoy the things the job has to offer).

THE INTERVIEW - THEIR QUESTIONS (and sample answers)

A: This is a straightforward question. All you have to make sure is that your 'likes' correspond to the skills etc. required for the job on offer. Be positive, describe your job as interesting and diverse but do not overdo it, after all, you are leaving!

Q: What do you dislike about your current role?

(The interviewer is trying to find out whether the job on offer has responsibilities you will dislike or which will make you unsuitable).

A: Be careful with this one! Do not be too specific as you may draw attention to weaknesses, which will leave you open to further problems. One approach is to choose a characteristic of your present company such as its size - its slow decision making etc. Give your answer with the air of someone who takes problems and frustrations in your stride as part of the job!

Q: What are your strengths?

(The interviewer wants a straightforward answer as to what you are good at and how it is going to add value).

A: This is one question that you are going to get so there is no excuse for being unprepared. Concentrate on discussing your main strengths. List three or four explanations of how they could benefit the employer. Strengths to consider include technical proficiency; ability to learn quickly; determination to succeed; positive attitude; your ability to relate to people and achieve a common goal. You may be asked to give examples of the above so be prepared.

Q: What are your greatest weaknesses?

(The interviewer is asking about your self-perception and self-awareness).

A: This is another standard question for which you can be well prepared. Don't say you have none -this will ensure further problems. You have two options - use a professional weakness such as a lack of experience (not ability) on your part in one area that is not vital for the job. The second option is to describe a personal or professional weakness that could also be considered a strength and the steps that you have taken to combat it. An example would be, "I know my team think I'm too demanding at times - I tend to drive them pretty hard but I'm getting much better at using the carrot and not the stick." Do not select a personal weakness such as "I'm not a morning person - I'm much better as the day goes on."

THE INTERVIEW - THEIR QUESTIONS (and sample answers)

Q: What kind of decision do you find most difficult?

(The interviewer is really saying, "I need someone who is strong and decisive but who has a human side.").

A: Your answer must not display weakness. Try to focus on decisions that have to be made without sufficient information. This will show your positive side. For example, "I like to make decisions based on sufficient information and having alternatives. When you have to make quick decisions you have to rely on 'gut feeling' and experience."

Q: Why do you want to leave your current employer?

(The interviewer is trying to understand and evaluate your motives for moving).

A: This should be straightforward. State how you are looking for more challenge, responsibility, experience and a change of environment. NEVER be negative in your reasons for leaving and it will rarely be appropriate to state salary as the primary motivator.

THE INTERVIEW

Consider some of the following:-

- How does your job fit into your department and company? (Gives an idea of level of responsibility).
- What do you enjoy about the industry?
- How do you respond to working under pressure? (Meaning - can you?). Give examples.
- What kinds of people do you like working with?
- How have you coped when your work has been criticised? (Give an example including the outcome).
- What is the worst situation you have faced outside work? (Give an example including the outcome).
- How have you coped when you have felt anger at work? (Give an example and show how you were still able to perform a good job).
- What kind of people do you find difficult to work with? (Take care! You won't know everything about the staff at the company at which you're being interviewed).
- How have you coped when you have had to face a conflict of interest at work? (Testing interpersonal skills, team and leadership opportunities).
- Tell me about the last time you disagreed with your boss.
- Where have you been unable to get on with others? (Give an example).
- What are your preferred working conditions, working alone or in a group and why?
- How do you think you are going to fit in here especially as this organisation is very different to your current employer? (You may not be able to answer until you have established what he/she perceives as the differences).
- What are you looking for in a company?
- How do you measure your own performance?
- What kind of pressures have you encountered at work?
- Are you a self-starter? Give me examples to demonstrate this.
- What is the biggest problem you have faced recently and how you resolved it?
- What changes in the workplace have caused you difficulty and why?
- How do you feel about working long hours and/or weekends?
- What example can you give me of when you have been out of your depth?
- What have you failed to achieve to date?
- What can you bring to this organisation?

THE INTERVIEW

- What area of your skills do you want to improve? (Try to relate this to the role on offer).
- Which part of this role is least attractive to you?
- Why do you think you would like this role?
- Where would you like to be in five years?
- How would your colleagues describe you?
- What would your referees say about you?
- Why should I give this position to you instead of the other people on the shortlist? (Strengths).
- What reservations should I have about you as an employee? (Weaknesses).
- What do you do in your spare time? (Hopefully something worthwhile and preferably not shopping or socialising with friends)
- What five adjectives would you use that best describe you? (Both in and out of the workplace).