



INTERVIEW GUIDE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | | | |
|--|----|-----------------------------------|----|
| INTRODUCTION | 1 | APPLICATION AND SELECTION | 14 |
| GETTING STARTED | 2 | TELEPHONE INTERVIEW | 16 |
| HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO WORK? | 3 | INTERVIEW PREPARATION..... | 17 |
| WHAT CAN YOU DO? | 4 | INTERVIEW FORMAT | 17 |
| WHAT BEHAVIOURS DO EMPLOYERS WANT? | 5 | LOGISTICS..... | 17 |
| WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO YOU?..... | 6 | INTERVIEW PREPARATION CONT | 18 |
| LOOKING FOR A JOB | 8 | COMPETENCY BASED INTERVIEWS | 19 |
| PLANNING YOUR JOB SEARCH..... | 9 | THE INTERVIEW | 20 |
| NETWORKING AND RELATIONSHIPS | 10 | EXAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS..... | 21 |
| SOCIAL MEDIA | 11 | WRITTEN TESTS | 22 |
| DIRECT APPLICATIONS | 12 | PRESENTATIONS | 23 |
| RECRUITMENT AGENCIES | 13 | CONCLUSION | 24 |

INTRODUCTION

This guide is intended to assist you in your search for a new job, and along the way it will address some of the practices specific to private sector organisations.

The current economic climate presents a great opportunity for skilled workers to enter the private sector in search of career development or increased job satisfaction.

Finding a new job is not always easy, but hard work and good planning can substantially reduce the time it takes to secure a new role.

This guide will help you to go about seeking employment in the private sector, and understand what private sector employers expect of their applicants.



GETTING STARTED

As a job-seeker, your first priority is getting a job, right?

However, before you start your job search you should try and establish what your goals are in relation to getting a new role.

Ask yourself:

- How would you like to work?
- What can you do?
- What do you like doing?
- How will you decide between multiple job offers?
- What will a prospective employer look for?



HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO WORK?

Your decision to look for a new job may have been prompted by a number of different factors:

- Redundancy
- Uncertainty in current role/employer
- Career progression
- Change in personal circumstances
- New challenge
- New skills
- Increase in salary

Regardless of what is driving your job search, this is an ideal opportunity to consider exactly what you are looking for in your next role:

- Are you looking for a complete career change or something similar to your last role?
- Do you want a permanent job or a contract/temp role?
- Do you want to set up your own business?
- Would you like to return to education and retrain?

Be aware of the pros and cons between each option, and choose the one which best suits you.

Useful sources of information include:

RECRUITMENT AGENCIES:

rsg-plc.com

nextstep.direct.gov.uk

smallbusiness.co.uk

contractoruk.co.uk

pcgroup.org.uk

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Before embarking on your job search, consider what skills do you have to offer your next employer? Knowing why you are an excellent candidate and articulating this effectively form the core of any successful job application. Most people have a wide range of skills gained from education, work experience, at home or in their social life but often do not acknowledge them or recognise their importance.

Identifying your skills

Ask yourself the following questions, both in a professional and personal capacity:

- What are you good at?
- What do you enjoy doing?
- What do other people say you are good at?
- What are your personal strengths and weaknesses?
- What are your achievements?

Your skills encompass your ability; your knowledge; how you approach things; your character; your experience and where your strengths and weaknesses lie.



WHAT BEHAVIOURS DO EMPLOYERS WANT?

- Courage / Bravery
- Decisiveness
- Influencing
- Curiosity
- Drive
- Collaboration
- Personal Credibility
- Commitment

WHAT IS A COMPETENCY?

Competency = Skills + Behaviour

A competency describes the skills and behaviours needed to effectively perform in a role. Many employers will have a set of core competencies that are required in all of their jobs.

Common professional competencies include:

| | | |
|------------------|---|------------------------|
| Team working | Leadership | Delivering Results |
| Self Development | Planning and Organisation | Customer Focus |
| Problem Solving | Business Knowledge/ Commercial Judgement | Adaptability |
| Initiative | Embracing Change | Organisational Ability |

WHAT IS TRANSFERABLE?

Often the job-specific knowledge required to perform a role will differ from employer to employer, but skills, behaviours and competencies are to a certain extent transferrable between different job roles.

Consider what skills, behaviours and competencies you have developed in your previous roles that you could bring to a new position.

WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO YOU?

Once you have decided on the type of role you are looking for and have identified your transferable skills, behaviours and competencies, you need to think in detail about exactly what you want from your next job.

Think about what factors are important to you in a job and what variables will affect your choice when deciding between multiple offers. After writing down your requirements put them in order of priority and separate the essential features from the 'nice to have'.

Your requirements may include:



THE JOB

- Duties
- Responsibility
- Technology
- Projects
- Is it a challenge?
- Line Manager
- Team Size

Additional requirements may include:

THE COMPANY

- Size
- Industry Sector
- Reputation
- Culture

WORK ENVIRONMENT

- Core Working Hours
- Shifts
- Flexi-time
- Car Parking
- Creche
- Canteen
- Uniform
- On site facilities
- Social Clubs

THE PROSPECTS

- Opportunities for training
- Sponsorship / help with professional accreditations
- Opportunities for career progression
- Talent management

JOB SECURITY

- Company Performance
- Company Plans
- Staff Retention
- Talent Management

LOCATION

- Distance
- Journey Time
- Public transport links
- Travel associated with the job
- Relocation
- Cost of travel
- Cost of staying away during the week

COMPENSATION

- Salary
- Benefits
- Pension
- Car / Car Allowance
- Holiday Entitlement
- Bonus
- Healthcare
- Life Assurance
- Shares
- Flexible Benefits
- When is salary reviewed?

LOOKING FOR A JOB

Before embarking on your job search, it is useful to understand how the companies you will be applying to go about recruiting staff. By understanding the recruitment process, you will better understand what the employers are looking for.

All employers want:

- **Good candidates**

- **Value for money**

- **Fast recruitment**

Companies will be considering the following:

1. Who within the company can do this job?

- 30% of positions are filled internally
- Internal recruitment will create other job opportunities with an organisation

2. Who do we know that could do this job and who do my people know?

- Staff referral
- Company talent pool
- Professional contacts

Only after companies have explored these options will they advertise vacancies externally through the following channels:

3. Advertise on own website

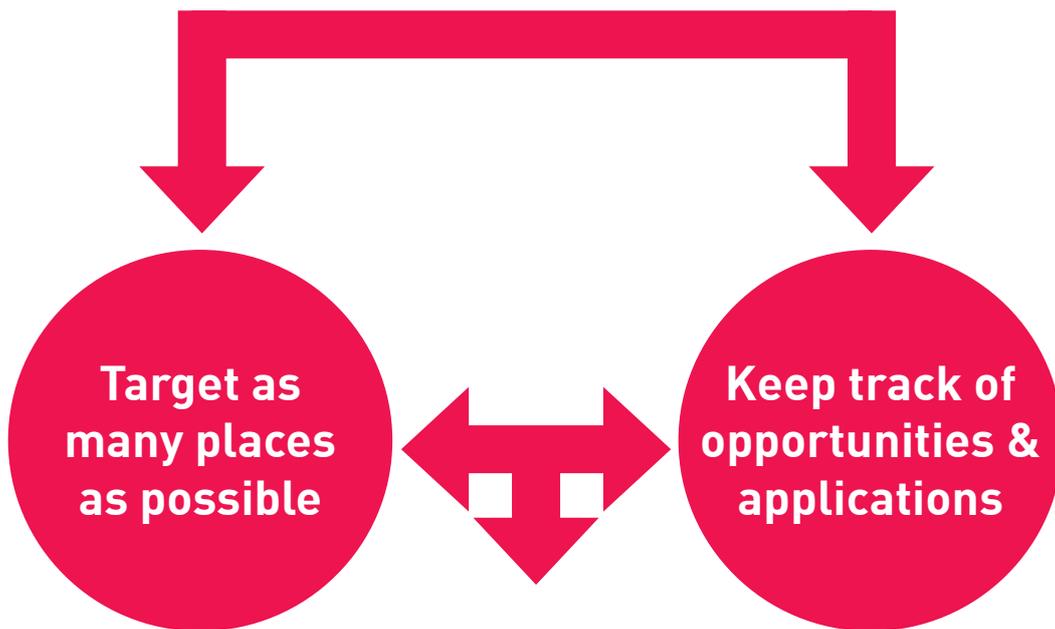
4. Internet and newspaper advertising

5. Recruitment agencies

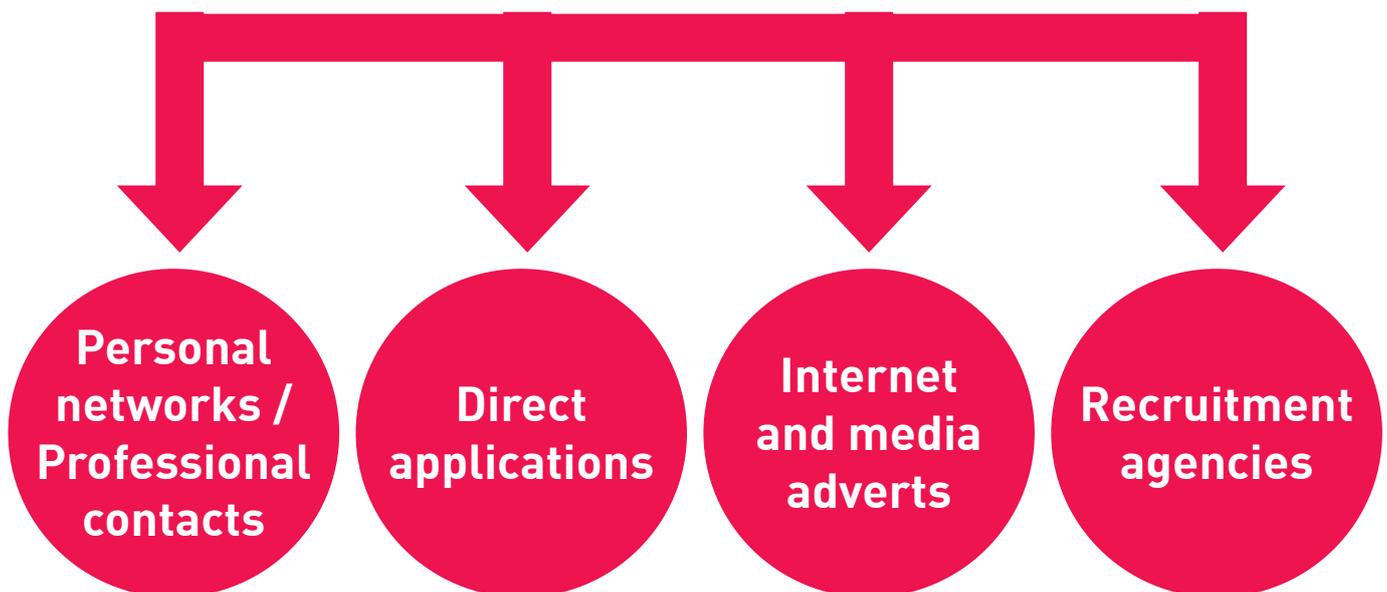
PLANNING YOUR JOB SEARCH

Looking for a new job can be overwhelming so it is important to plan your approach and keep track of any applications you make to ensure you are exploring all the avenues.

Put together a comprehensive job hunting strategy

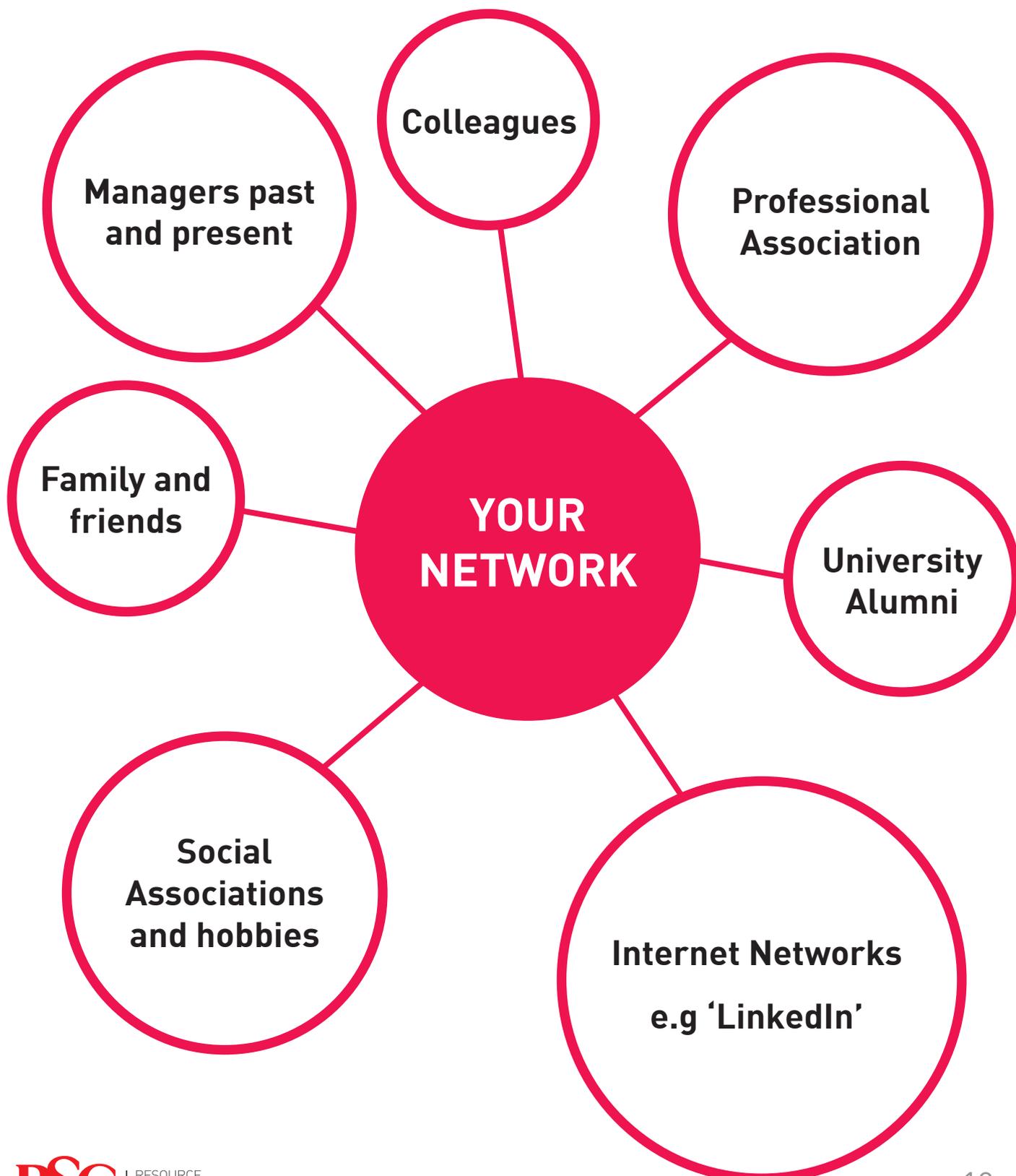


Job opportunities can be found in a number of different places / outlets



NETWORKING AND RELATIONSHIPS

The people you know on both a professional and personal level are your most important assets in your job search. Make the most of these networks; let them know you are looking for work and ask whether they know of any contacts or opportunities that could be of interest to you.



SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is fast becoming a key tool in the jobseeker's arsenal. Whether you love it or hate it, the rise in the numbers of people using social media platforms for professional networking means that it is a good place to find job opportunities.

LINKEDIN - WHAT IS IT?

- LinkedIn is a business-orientated social network, used mainly for professional networking.
- More than 100 million people use LinkedIn in over 700 countries.
- It acts as a personal online CV.
- More than 2 million businesses have a LinkedIn company page.
- It helps you to build a network of professionals in your chosen industry areas.
- It allows you to research companies and key contacts.

It is worth investing time in exploring this new technology and professional network, if you have not already.

Although LinkedIn does have a job board and roles are often advertised, it is worth getting in touch with your contacts to let them know you are looking for work and advertising your availability through your status.

DIRECT APPLICATIONS

Many job opportunities are available by contacting employers directly. Do not be put off if you do not see an advert - most companies are interested in receiving relevant CVs and many make positions available on the strength of your credentials.

WHO TO APPLY TO

- Employers in my area
- Employers in my profession
- Target companies who illustrate the following:
 - Success
 - New contracts
 - Projects
 - Growth
- Direct Adverts (online and print)

WHERE TO LOOK

- Google
- News Media
- Industry Press
- Referral / Word of Mouth
- Job Boards (everywhere)
- Advertising/Sponsorship e.g RSG › Bristol City FC

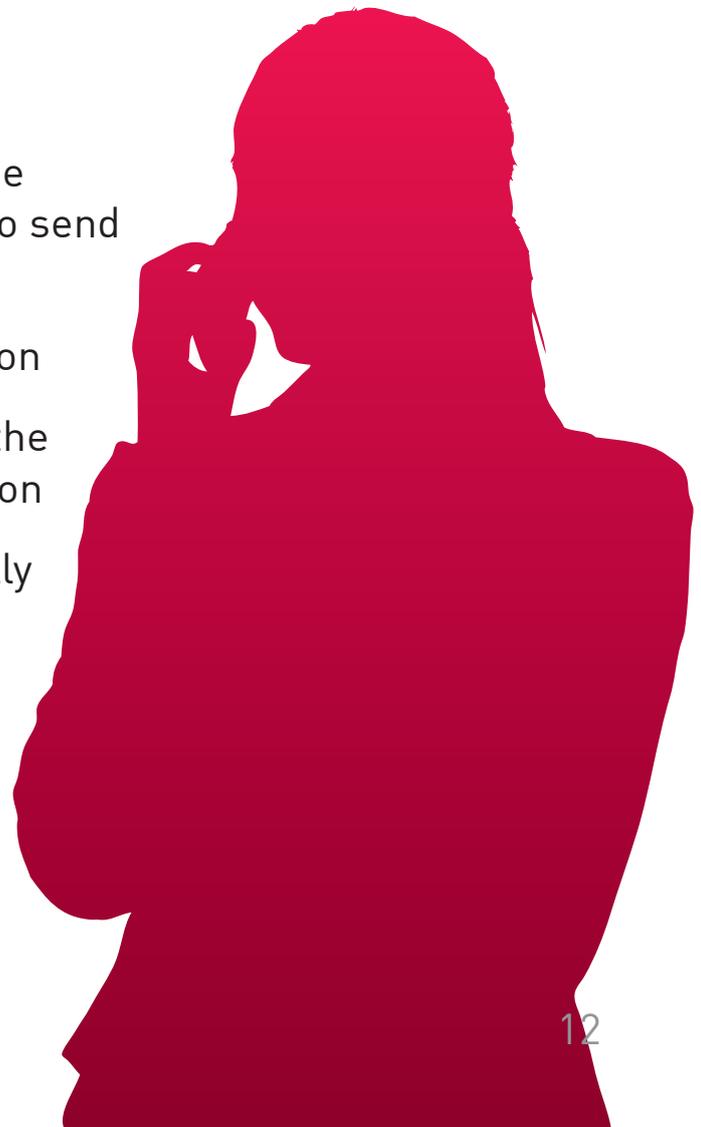
YOUR PROCESS

Call - Ring the organisation to qualify the opportunity and confirm who you need to send your application to

Apply - Address to the appropriate person

Follow up - Call or email to make sure the organisation has received your application

Request Feedback - Do not automatically expect to hear back from people. Be proactive and get in touch



RECRUITMENT AGENCIES

There are a great number of recruitment agencies across the UK, many of which have different strengths and areas of specialism.

They can act on your behalf to put you forward for relevant jobs with those clients who are on their books. Recruitment consultants are often very well-connected people with lots of industry knowledge, and can be very useful as an extra pair of eyes when you are looking for work.

However, it is worth remembering that recruitment consultants are targeted by the number of people they successfully place into jobs and that they are as keen to make a living as the rest of us.

If you understand their motives and consider the following points, you are more likely to have a better experience.

CHOOSE WISELY AND CONSIDER AN AGENCY'S:

1. Location

3. Speciality

2. Reputation

4. Client Portfolio

You can benefit from liaising with a consultant who:

- Provides a personal service
- Understands you and your requirements
- Offers advice and expertise
- Keeps in touch
- Helps you to further your career

In return you should be easy to work with:

- Contactable
- Open and honest
- Organised
- Respond quickly
- Listen to advice

APPLICATION AND SELECTION

Once you have identified relevant job opportunities, you need to ensure that you have the correct tools to make your application a success.

Often companies receive numerous applications for positions, and in the current economic climate you need to do everything you can to make your application stand out from the crowd.

YOUR CV

A powerful CV helps you to:

- Understand your professional skills
- Clarify your goals and career ambitions
- Market your skills and suitability for a job

A Good CV:

- Opens doors and helps you secure job opportunities
- Helps employers guide interview questions to your strengths
- Continues to sell you after your interview

Your CV Must:

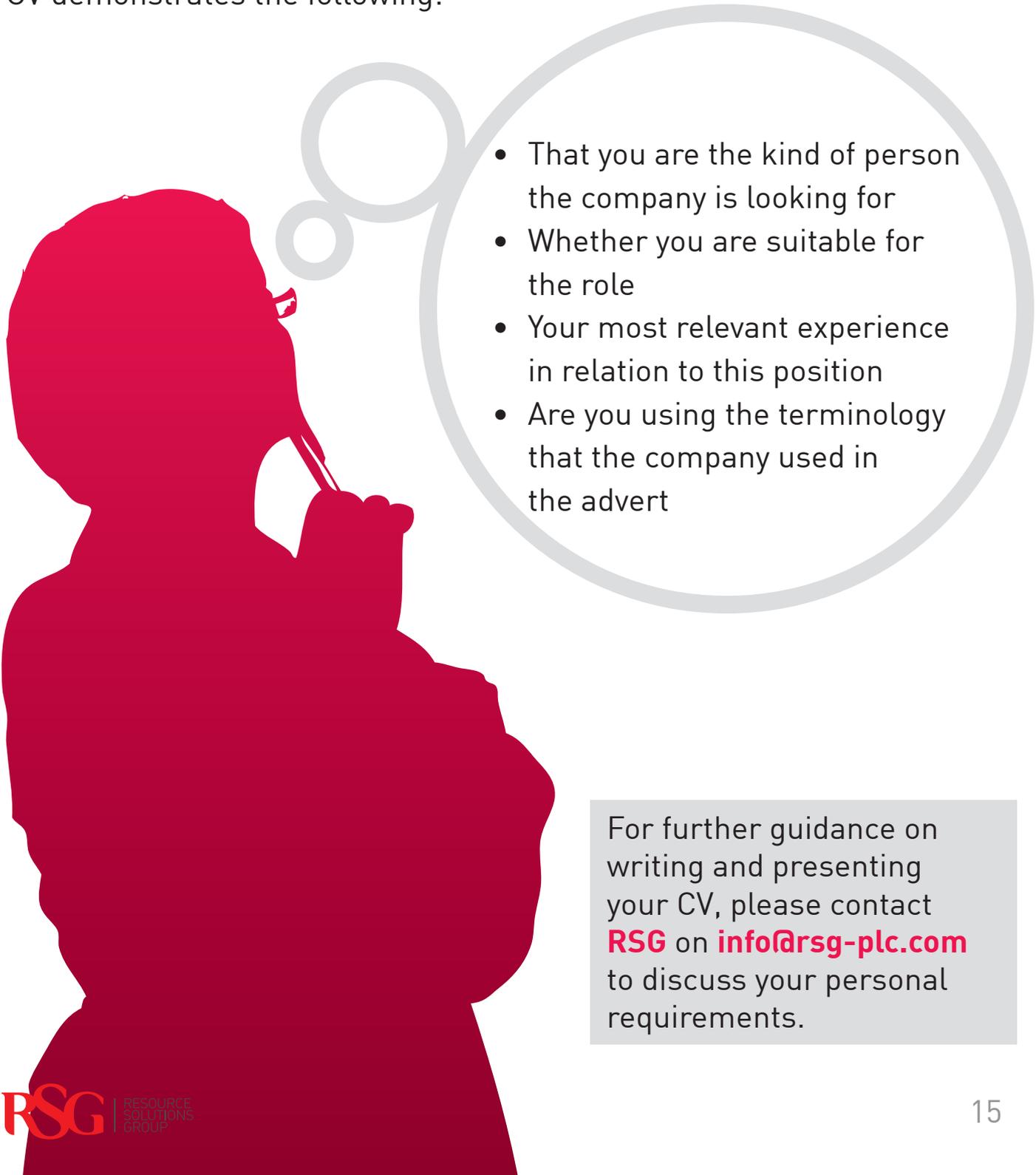
- Be honest
- Be well-written and presented
- Be accurate
- Be relevant
- Be chronological
- Include an effective profile
- Include references

It is a good idea to have a generic CV which contains all of your job history information, key skills and experience. You can send this general CV out to recruitment agencies and job-boards for people to keep on their databases. Make sure you include as many key words in this CV as possible, so that your CV can be found on search engines for your key skills.

TARGETED CVS

In some situations it is worth targeting your CV to include information that is specific to the job you are applying for. If your CV does not reflect the skills that are specified in the job description, it is unlikely that you will be called to interview and more difficult for you to demonstrate how your skills are transferrable.

Refer back to the Job Description or advert and consider whether your CV demonstrates the following:

- 
- That you are the kind of person the company is looking for
 - Whether you are suitable for the role
 - Your most relevant experience in relation to this position
 - Are you using the terminology that the company used in the advert

For further guidance on writing and presenting your CV, please contact **RSG** on info@rsg-plc.com to discuss your personal requirements.

TELEPHONE INTERVIEW

Many companies conduct telephone interviews to quickly identify the best potential candidates for a role.

Your goal is to make a good impression at the telephone interview stage in order to progress to the face-to-face interview.

PREPARATION:

- Treat the telephone interview with the same importance as a face-to-face scenario
- Arrange a time and date when you can give the conversation your full attention
- Plan where you will take the call – ensure it is a quiet room
- Make sure if you are using a mobile phone that the battery is full and that the signal is OK

FIND OUT:

- The purpose of the telephone interview – is it an overview of the role, a review of your CV or a technical test?
- Who is interviewing you and what their role is within the company?
- Research the role and the company

ASK INTELLIGENT QUESTIONS:

- What will be my key responsibilities?
- What projects will I be involved with?
- What are the biggest challenges for the team this year?

Remember to gather information AND keep up your end of the conversation. Give appropriate verbal signals to show that you are actively listening, and check to see if they require any more information before ending the conversation.

INTERVIEW PREPARATION

If your telephone interview goes well, you should progress to the face to face interview stage. Before the face-to-face interview there are a number of things you need to find out.

LOGISTICS

Confirm the date and time of the interview and familiarise yourself with the interview location.



Plan in advance how you will get there and leave in good time.



Allow extra time if using public transport and for finding a parking space if you are driving your own vehicle there.



Make sure you take a contact number, either for the person you are seeing, or the building you will be visiting, so that if you have a problem attending, you can inform someone.



INTERVIEW FORMAT

Establish what the format of the interview will be, (i.e. Q&A, panel interview, group interview), and if you have to prepare anything like a presentation or portfolio. Also try and find out how many stages there will be and if you are likely to have to go back more than once.

INTERVIEW PREPARATION CONT

COMPANY RESEARCH

A good candidate always prepares for an interview by researching the company. Make sure you look up the following points:



JOB DESCRIPTION

Read back through the job description that appeared in your advert or that you were sent prior to the interview. Ensure that you understand what the job will be doing and what the employer is looking for. Consider why you might be suitable.

Analyse the required qualifications, skills, experience and competencies. Think of practical examples to demonstrate your suitability.

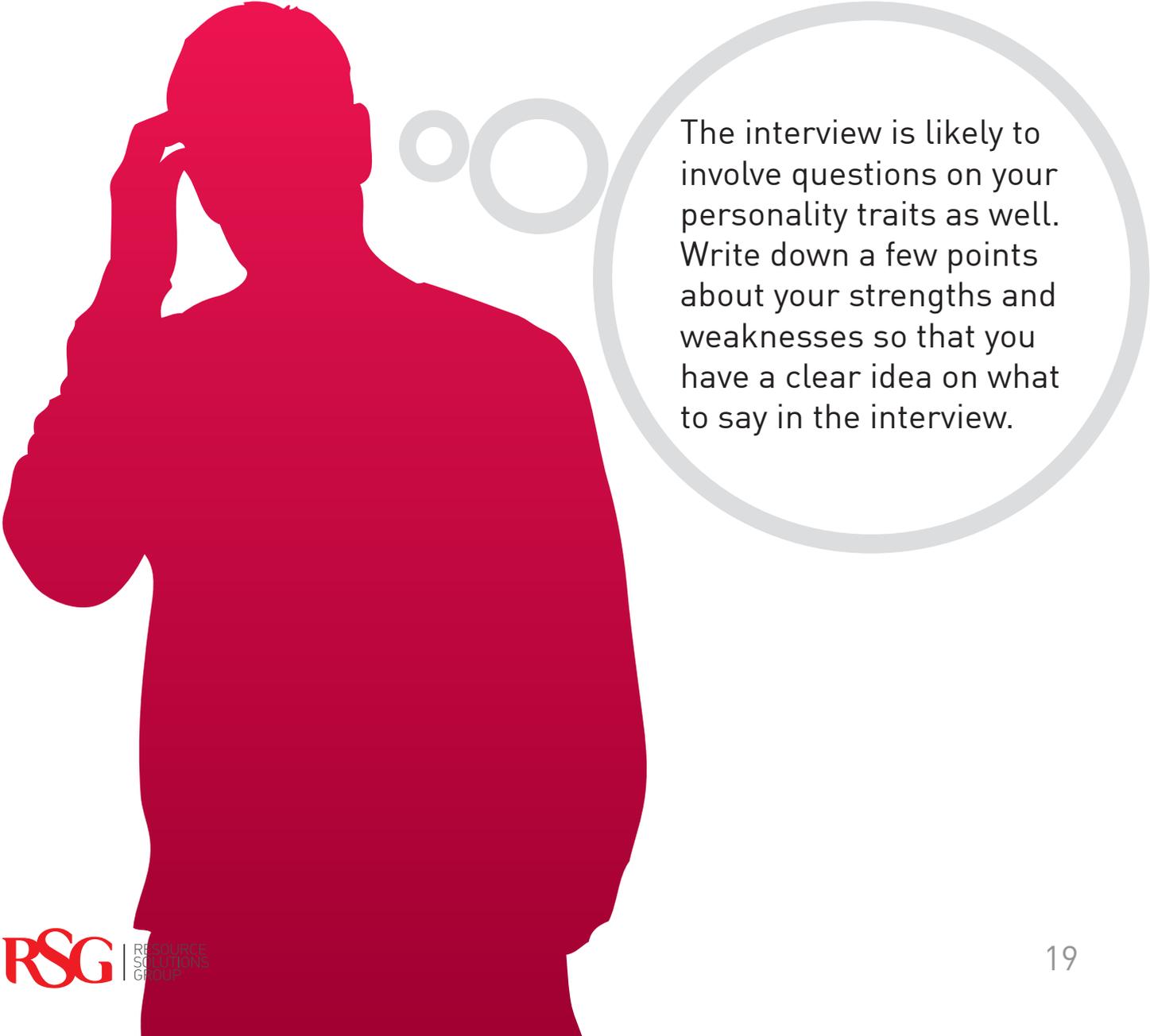
COMPETENCY BASED INTERVIEWS

The most common type of interview is competency based. During this you will be asked to talk about your experience and to demonstrate that you have the required skills and competencies for the position.

EXAMPLES

Often employers will ask you to give examples of how you have demonstrated a key competency. Think about your main achievements and how you would go about vocalising these.

- Give me an example of when you have solved a problem at work?
- Tell me when you have worked as part of a team?
- Describe a situation where you showed leadership skills?

A red silhouette of a person's head and shoulders, facing right, with their hand to their forehead in a thinking pose. To the right of the silhouette is a large, light gray thought bubble. Inside the bubble, there is text. Two smaller, light gray circles are positioned to the left of the main bubble, suggesting a sequence of thoughts.

The interview is likely to involve questions on your personality traits as well. Write down a few points about your strengths and weaknesses so that you have a clear idea on what to say in the interview.

THE INTERVIEW

Face-to-face interview scenarios may seem daunting, but they do not need to be. Read through the following tips and be prepared for what might happen.

APPEARANCE

Assume that you should dress smartly unless you are told otherwise. Remove any unnecessary jewellery and/or piercings and wear appropriate footwear. Do not chew gum!

During:

- Relax, arrive early and take a few minutes to gather your thoughts
- Greet your interviewer with a smile and a handshake, thank them for seeing you
- Make eye contact
- Be polite and formal
- Be positive and enthusiastic
- Listen carefully to the questions you are asked and make your answer relevant
- Speak with clarity and confidence
- Give detail, but try and keep your answers to the point

ASK QUESTIONS

Remember that an interview is a two way conversation; it is an ideal opportunity for you to ask questions and gauge whether this is the right role for you.

Example questions to ask during an interview include:

- What responsibilities come with the position?
- What are the biggest challenges in this role?
- What support, guidance or training is available?
- How often is performance reviewed?
- What prospects are there for career progression with the position?
- What would you say is the best thing about working for your company?

EXAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Remember that the interviewer will be asking you questions to try and gauge your suitability for the job. Listed below are a number of common interview questions. Have a brief read through them and think about how you would respond:

- What motivates you?
- Give me an example of a time when you handled a major crisis or problem?
- Do you work better alone or as part of a team?
- What do you think makes a good team?
- Can you give an example of when you have been set a challenging goal and explain how you achieved it?
- Have you ever had to work to an extremely tight deadline?
- What do you enjoy most about your current job?
- What do you enjoy least about your current job?
- When have you delivered an excellent level of customer service – what did you do?
- What do you know about us (ie our company)?
- What do you understand this position to entail?
- Why are you looking for work?
- Why is this position of interest to you?
- How would your colleagues describe you?
- What has been your biggest achievement in the last 12 months?

WRITTEN TESTS

You may be informed that there will be an element of formal testing as part of your interview, this could include the following:

APTITUDE TESTS

These can cover: Verbal and Numerical Ability; Problem Solving or Syntax Checking. On occasion you will be sent examples or practice tests, ensure that you prepare for them as you would any exam. On other occasions you will just be given the information on the day. In both situations ensure that you read all of the instructions in detail before you begin.

TECHNICAL TESTS

Most commonly used for technical positions. You may be required to complete a written or online test on packages, databases or programming languages that are relevant to the position. To prepare for this it would be an idea to scan through any textbooks or training notes that you may have to refresh your memory of the common functionality of the products.

PERSONALITY PROFILING / PSYCHOMETRIC TESTING

There are many different types of Psychometric Tests including DISC, Kolbe and Myers Briggs. The important thing to remember is that it is impossible to fail a psychometric test, there are no right or wrong answers. The best policy is always to be honest and avoid the temptation to guess what sort of answers the company is looking for. It is often the combination of different parts of your personality that matter rather than one single trait.

PRESENTATIONS

You may be required to give a presentation as part of your interview and employers will usually be looking for two things:

- Your ability to understand the topic and put together a coherent presentation.
- Your general presentation skills.

When preparing for a presentation, make sure that you:

- Fully understand the topic
- Find out how long the presentation needs to be
- Find out what format the presentation needs to be
- Find out what equipment is available to you
- Allow plenty of time for preparation
- Rehearse your presentation – the more times you rehearse the better your presentation is likely to be.

Time yourself and try to find someone who you can rehearse in front of

- Have a beginning, a middle and an end of your presentation. Begin by introducing what you will cover, then move into the content and finish by summarising the salient points
- Leave time at the end for any questions
- Leave handouts for your audience
- If you are planning a Powerpoint presentation, take a hard copy with you in case the technology fails.

CONCLUSION

Finding a new role can feel like a full time job in itself.

From this booklet you should now understand what is required for your CV and how best to promote your skills and experience to future potential employers.

UPON A JOB OFFER

Some organisations may offer you the job at the interview and may even put pressure on you to accept there and then!

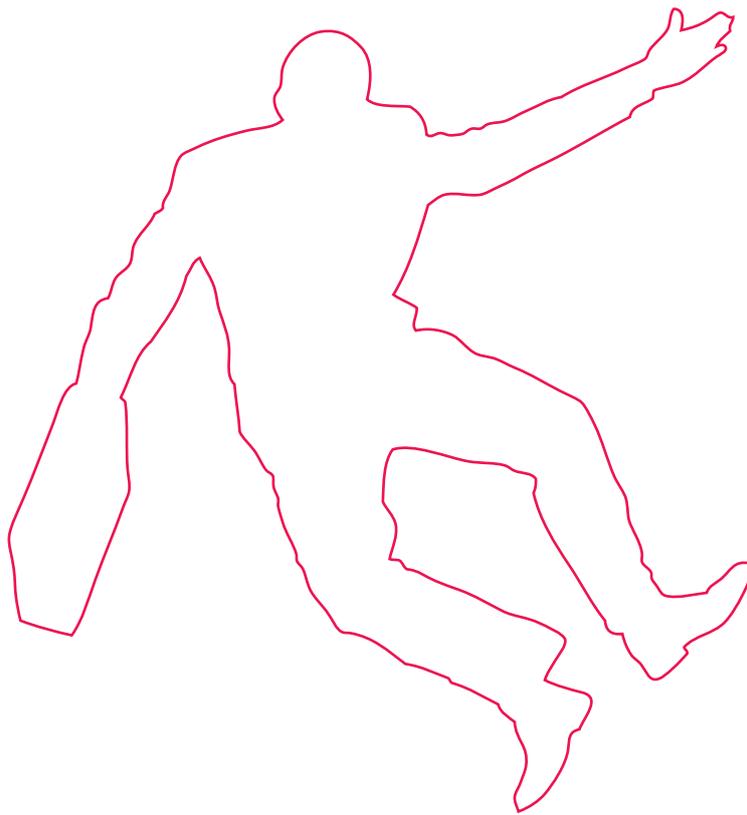
However it is important for you to weigh up all the information before accepting any job!



CONSIDER:

- The benefits package - Salary
- Pension - Relocation Expenses

Remember - just because you have been offered a job, you do not have to accept! Choose wisely and find the right job for you.



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