Tips for CVs and Interview

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Please note:
All information enclosed here and within the CV workshop/Drop in is based on my own experience and learnings, I am not an expert, I am a passionate Graphic Designer with many years experience of crafting bespoke CVs for proposal documents, wanting to apply different perspectives to help job seekers stand out in a competitive market.



What to include in your CV/applications?

- **You!**
  First and foremost, remember to showcase yourself. If you find it hard to shout about your skills and accomplishments, imagine you are your friend, and THEY are writing for you.
- **What's most important**
  It's tempting to put qualifications, job history etc. up-front but CVs that look different will stand out! The thing that can give you the edge will be your personality and fit within the team or company you are applying to.
  Your passion and desire to succeed.
- **Appeal to values, show how you align with them**
  If you show a willingness to learn and are a good fit with the team, you may outshine those that may have more experience or better academic qualifications – remember if they like you, you can train within the role!
- **Repeat their needs back to them...**
  Are they asking for a "hard working, trustworthy, motivated person"?
  Tell them! "I am a hardworking and motivated team member..." with EVIDENCE.
  Later in your experience section, pull out them elements – WHEN were you trustworthy? Did you handle cash? Organise rotas?



What is important for structure?

- **Page 1 – Overview of you, now.**

  Your details – name, email, number

  Your personal statement – Why do you want this job?
  What are you looking for to progress? Learn?

  Current job role – list responsibilities, tasks and skills acquired, especially if its the same job.

  Qualifications, driving license, training courses.

  References – *available on request* is useful to put if you are employed but don't want to tell your current employer yet.

- **Page 2 – Your history**

  Previous jobs – detailed in CV template.

- **Page 3 – If you need overflow for jobs but try and keep to 2 pages for ease of reader.**



What not to include!

- **Personal information**

  Other than name and contact details (email and phone number). It is unlawful to discriminate on age, disability, gender, marriage/civil partnership status, race, religion of belief, sex, pregnancy/maternity and sexual orientation. So shouldn't be asked.

- **Your postal address or photo of yourself**

  I would advise against including this information as it could lead to bias.

- **Outdated information**

  If you had a paper round 20 years ago, this might not be relevant.
  If experience is a long time ago but was valuable, add it as an "other" note.
  Think about the importance – most important up front and centre.



Note:

These are personal preference and what you feel comfortable with, chosen with the aim to mitigate bias and discrimination.

Personally I do have a photo of myself on my CV, as I like to show off my hair! (Joking on the reason, but feel it sets the tone for me personally and stops clients being shocked when they first meet me.)

Tips for interview prep: Your knowledge

- **Learn as much as you can about the company**

  What they do, their history, a bit of research on socials (linkedin) of employees and your interviewer – can help you feel more comfortable with them and even drop in common interests or skills.

- **Prep for questions for you that you may be asked;**

  How do you cope under pressure?
  Opportunity for you to show how you dealt with something real world, try and apply to the job you are applying for.

  Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
  Eagerness to learn, loyalty and progression – staff retention is at an all time low, companies want to keep good people.

  Tell me about a time you dealt with a difficult customer/co-worker?
  Show how you can deal with difficulty and that you know when to escalate to seniors when needed.

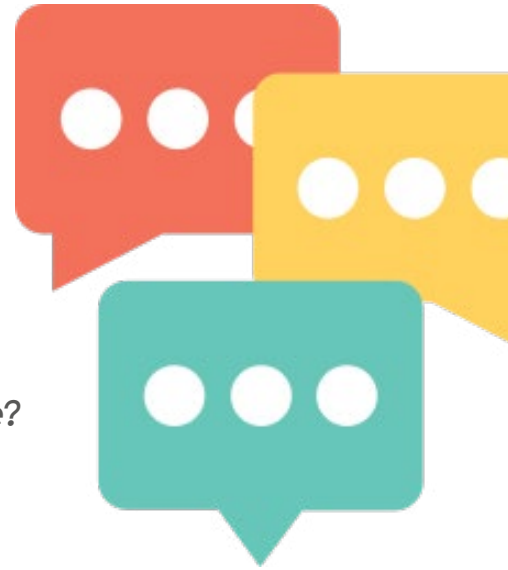
  What do you enjoy in your spare time?
  Link with what you know about the company, ethos and what you know about the company.

  What did you enjoy about your current/past job?
  Link with this job, common ground.

  Why do you want to work here?
  Progression, do you love the role?

  How do you work as part of a team?
  Give examples of a particularly tough project, one that went really well, how did you contribute?

  How do you work alone/self directed? –
  Can you be trusted to work alone and progress in a timely way? Give an example.



Tips for interview prep: Ask them

- **Questions to ask THEM – shows interest and can show good people skills, and a way to find common ground – also can weed out places that you might actually not be a good fit for you!**

  What do you like most about working here?
  Gain some insight into the culture

  What are the team/co-workers like I would be working with?
  Shows eagerness and excitement

  How did you come to be in this role?
  Ice breaker with potential manager – interest in someone can help them warm to you.

  Can you tell me about ***xxxxxx recent event, news article xxxxx***
  how have the company responded?
  Shows interest in the company and that you have done your research.
  Avoid negative stories if you feel it would not come across well.



Tips for interview prep: Mindset



Some of the below might seem silly at first but I really feel a nurtured mindset can help in what can be a stressful situation. I understand, its scary and nerve racking! Hopefully some of the below tips that I have found useful may help. GOOD LUCK :)

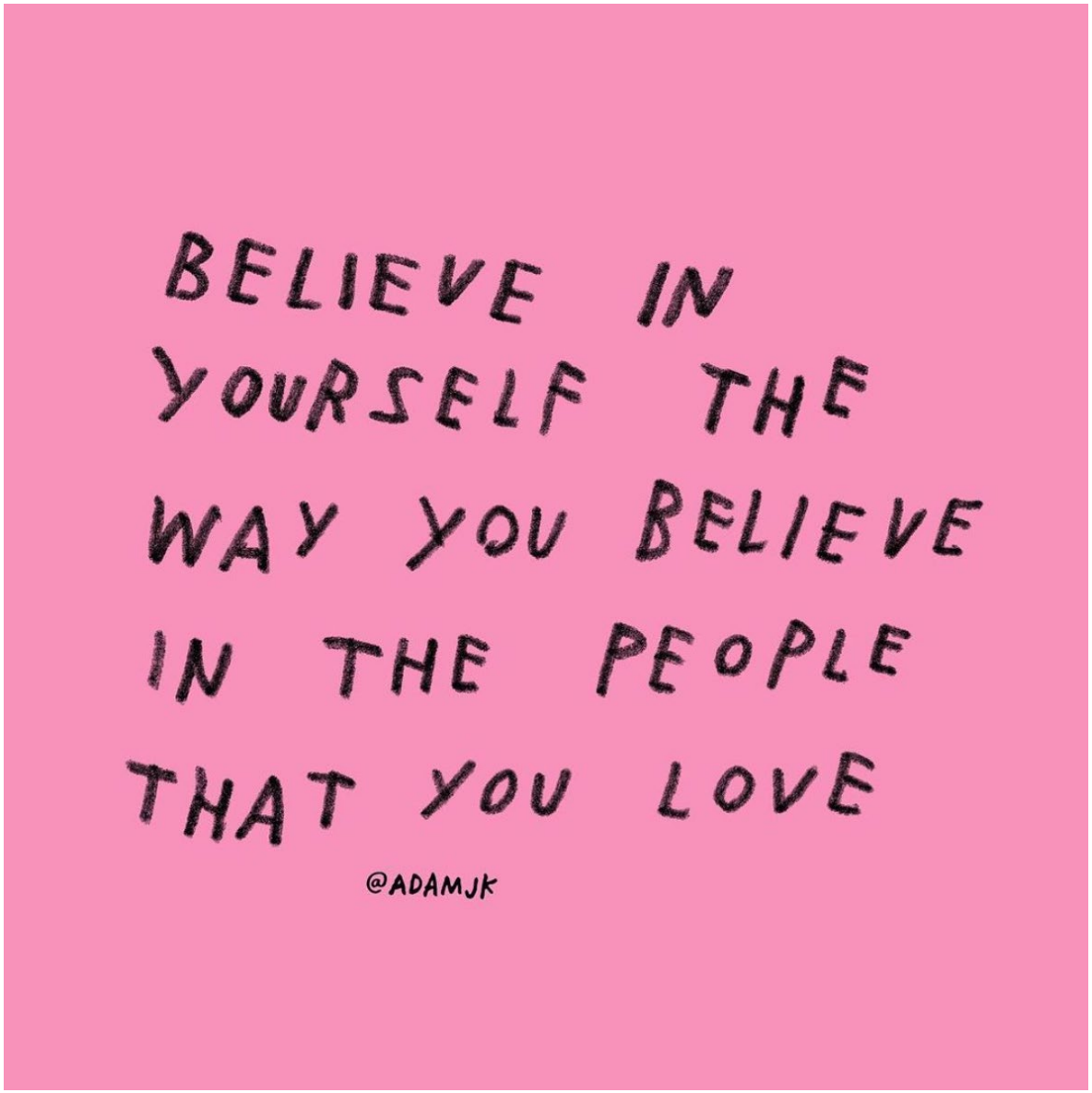
Night before/morning of prep
Lay out your outfit, gather any prints/forms you need (good to take a x2 fresh copies of your CV if you can for the interviewers), an early night if possible too! A good breakfast before if you can helps avoid distracting tummy rumbles!

Breathing
Everyone is different with breathing exercises but even if its a few big deep breaths before you are called into see your interviewers with some internal words of encouragement, or one before you begin your answer to help you think on your response it can help you focus on the present and not let worry hamper your amazingness!

Power poses
This is the weirdest tip but probably my favourite – it does need an update in language – "Adopting expansive postures causes people to feel more powerful." Psychologist/author Amy Cuddy explains it here. (Google Amy Cuddy Power Poses – CW: Mention of outdated gender/biology language, hormonal balance related to stress response and discussion on the effects of our own body language on us. Skip to 12:20–15:26 for relevant section on interviews)

Affirmations
As silly as this one sounds – out loud affirmations can help dramatically affect performance – I can do this, I will be great at this, I am calm and confident. – Resource on psychologytoday

Rehearse
Practice for clarity and confidence – Call a friend, someone you trust to be your mock audience. Even if it is to a mirror, out loud practice responding to questions you may be asked, talking about yourself, your skills and evidence backing up what is in your CV. Be aware that over practice can be confusing so limit it to dry run, 1st rehearsal and final rehearsal.


BELIEVE IN
YOURSELF THE
WAY YOU BELIEVE
IN THE PEOPLE
THAT YOU LOVE
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... love what we do.