

Employment

A Guide for your Future



What's YOUR Dream?



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Introduction

Work is a central part of most peoples' lives. Having a job is one of the most important ways people with disabilities can achieve independence and inclusion in society.

Do you want to make things happen? Would you like some support and more information on how to gain and retain employment?

If you are a job seeker, where do you start? Do you have a career plan? Do you know how to present and sell yourself in interview? Do you know how to deal with a disclosure that you have a disability?

If you are currently employed, do you know how to achieve a more accessible workplace? Are you aware of all the support services you can avail of?

This page aims to answer some of these questions in the sections that follow and will help you get things moving. Find out more about writing the perfect CV, how to shine in an interview, how to deal with a disclosure, organisations that can assist you in finding a job and top websites for seeing what jobs are currently available.

What is your motivation?

People are motivated to work for different reasons. Money is a big motivator for lots of people but there are other reasons why people work

1. The opportunity to mix socially
2. To use your skills and develop new ones
3. Making a contribution to the workplace boosts your self-esteem and builds your confidence.

Maximise your opportunities

First things first, in order to maximise your opportunities you have to be realistic about your ambitions. If your eyesight is poor, quality control on a production line would not be for you. If you are shy, corporate hospitality is probably not for you either. Use your existing or potential skills to increase your chances.

The following might help you:

1. Make a list of things you enjoy doing; they don't necessarily have to relate to work. Have you any hobbies or interests that are unique to you? eg foreign language. Are you good at crosswords or number puzzles?
2. Make a list of personal attributes; are you patient, reliable, sociable? What positive qualities do you have as a person?
3. Make a list of things you find difficult. You are not being negative; you are narrowing down your job search!
4. List any qualifications
5. List any work experience
6. Be realistic about the hours you are capable of or want to work

Having identified a few areas of employment that interest you, you may find the need to retrain, get qualified or update that qualification. If you have set your heart on working you may feel this is a backward step particularly if you have just come out of education.

Be positive and focused about the type of job you are looking for, but be realistic. Don't give up if you fail to secure a job with your first job application. It is not personal. Employers have hundreds of applications every day, and therefore it is important that YOUR CV stands out from other applicants. Clear, neat and concise information is paramount.

CV Tips

It is vital that your CV creates a good impression. It is the first thing that potential employers see. Invest time and energy into your CV and reap the employment rewards! See Worksheets at the end of this document for tips and advice.

Interview Tips

An interview is an opportunity by a potential employer to look the candidates over, to get to know something about their personality and abilities. When they have done that they can weigh up whether or not they think that the individual is likely to fit in to their working environment.

Do you know how to present and sell yourself in interview? Learn some great tips at the end of this document.

Dealing with Disclosure

If you are not sure how to disclose to your potential employer that you have a disability, then have a look at these guidelines.

Deciding on the appropriate time to inform an employer of a disability is a difficult decision for many. A range of factors can influence this decision. These include the type of disability, the issue of supports, the reaction of your employer and co-workers to your disclosure, experience of negative reactions to your disclosure in the past or the perception that you will be discriminated against and treated unfairly when searching for, or in, employment.

It is important to recognise that in many instances, the disability may be apparent to the employer and therefore the issue of disclosure is decided by the nature of the disability. In addition, some individuals will need to work with appropriate support personnel (e.g. job coach) to make an informed decision in relation to this.

Some employers need time to become more aware of the issue of disability, adopt positive action programmes and a commitment to the prospects of employing people with disabilities. However, progressive employers have already adopted equal opportunities policies and will approach any accommodation you may need with goodwill. For these employers, there can be no reasonable expectation of accommodating the needs of prospective or existing workers if they know nothing of your disability.

Support Services

There are a number of organisations in Ireland that aim to help people with disabilities to access and stay in employment. Grants, through FÁS, are available to employers and employees to assist with any cost that may be incurred by either party in making the place of work accessible to the employee. Check out some of the key organisations below for more information on services available:

www.fas.ie

FÁS enhances the skills and competencies of individuals and enterprises in order for Ireland to further develop as a competitive, inclusive, knowledge-based economy. It strives to do this through the provision of tailored training and employment programmes that suit everyone's needs.

www.ictu.ie

Irish Congress of Trade Unions site offers information on Employers rights including information and resources in relation to discrimination and disability in the workplace. A brief once-off registration is required after which you will have full access to a comprehensive directory of information on employment contracts, pensions, unfair dismissal, redundancy, working time, pay & wages and more.

www.workway.ie

Funded initially by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and then by FÁS, Workway was the first project in Europe to take a partnership approach to tackling the high unemployment rates among people with disabilities.

www.iase.ie

IASE (Irish Association of Supported Employment) is a national voluntary organisation which was established in February 1994 with the aim of promoting and developing supported employment throughout Ireland. In 2009 IASE is the representative voice of over 800 members in Ireland, who in turn are working with over 5,000 people with disabilities.

www.ahead.ie/employment_wamprogramme.php

The central objective of the WAM (Willing Able Mentoring) Programme is to promote mainstream access to the Irish labour market for graduates with disabilities. WAM is essentially a partnership of employers and other key organizations who work together to identify and tackle the barriers and challenges facing graduates with disabilities in gaining employment. WAM secures paid mentored work placements from participating employers. The mentored work placements offer real life work settings to identify the issues facing both employers and graduates in the recruitment and retention of people with disabilities.

www.equal-ci.ie

EQUAL seeks to identify and address fundamental forms of discrimination and inequality in the labour market through the development of new and innovative policies and practices initiated by EQUAL Development Partnerships.

Where to Find a Job

So, you have your CV, you are ready for interview and you know what type of job you are looking for. Then visit these websites and apply, apply, apply apply!!

www.jobs.ie/
www.loadzajobs.ie/
www.irishjobs.ie/
www.recruitireland.com/
www.monster.ie/
www.bestjobs.ie/
www.activelink.ie/

Volunteering

Volunteering for a organisation or a cause that you are passionate about is also a great way of gaining new skills and can act as a stepping stone to Employment. So, if there are no job vacancies available in an organisation that you really would like to work for, do not be afraid to ask about a volunteer position. There are also lots of volunteer centres around the country and you can sign up with your local centre who will let you know about all the opportunities available. See www.volunteer.ie

You got the job!!! – What could possibly go wrong?

You have successfully completed your job application form, negotiated the job interview and seem to have settled into your new job and routine in your perfectly chosen employment.

Although your immediate employer/boss is aware of your medical condition, many of your colleagues will not be.

Try to establish early on in your job, who you can go to if you are feeling unwell or anxious. You do not have to tell everyone in the office, but a person in authority is a good choice e.g. team leader or a mentor.

You can then go to this appointed person if you need help to address any job or personal issues you may have. However, this must be agreed BEFORE you start your job and with their agreement. Make a note of their name and position within the

workplace and ensure you have someone else to cover this role in the event of sickness, holiday etc.

One of the implications of Hydrocephalus can be the inability to function under pressure. This can easily be mis-represented as being 'lazy' and colleagues may not fully understand how you are feeling. Equally people with Hydrocephalus can enjoy having a routine, and their work ethic and reliability to complete a task can be very good. In this case, you may find some colleagues may take advantage of your good nature and try to push their workload on to you. Take personal responsibility for the areas of yourself that you need to work on. Do extra training, don't blame others for your lack of personal insight, be self-aware and ask for help. Asking for help is not a sign of failure but a sign of maturity, self awareness and independence.

Don't be frightened to question areas you are not sure of. People should never mind you asking to repeat their requests, most people are happy to assist 'the new person'. We all take time to adjust to new people, new surroundings and new routines – even more so if you have a hidden disability – Hydrocephalus. It might help you to remember the word SAFE to remind you to:

Smile
Ask
be Friendly
Enjoy

We all have days when we are 'feeling under the weather', with colds, coughs and general tiredness. Ensure that your allocated person or mentor is aware of shunt malfunction related symptoms.

*Vomiting
Headache
Dizziness
Fever
Swelling, redness on shunt tract*

Carry an SBHI Shunt Alert Card – a small information card stating the type of shunt you have and the symptoms of malfunction.

We all feel comfortable with our routines. In most jobs, there will be some tasks you carry out at the same time on a daily basis. However, changes can sometimes interrupt the daily routine; for example, staff members may change, due to illness or

holidays. Your boss may be promoted, you may be asked to move to another office temporarily, your supervisor or mentor may be away on a training course for the day. Different people may have different ideas and expectations and they may ask you to do things which you are not comfortable with. Using the SAFE motto (Smile, Ask, be Friendly and Enjoy) ask them to repeat anything you are unsure of and, if necessary, refer them to your team leader or nominated person for that day.

Positive Things

We have covered a lot of things that could go wrong, but the good things about work, far outweigh these. Starting work is a first step to independence, your own money, your own responsibilities and the ability to ask your own questions.

However, none of these are any use if you are not happy in your workplace.

Think about how you communicate with people, work is a great place to make new friends and increase your social circle

Training Days – if you are not happy about certain areas of your job, ask about additional training. We never stop learning and extra knowledge and training is a great tool to use in future employment. Keep healthy and safe within the work environment. Be aware of Health and Safety issues at work. You should have been advised of the procedure in the event of a fire, familiarise yourself with this in the unlikely event it should be needed.

Most of all – have fun. This is just the beginning of a new independent life.

The CV Checklist

General Points

- No need to write CV or Curriculum Vitae at the top, use the space for your name, address and phone number including mobile & email if appropriate
- Be selective, emphasise positives, an employer will give this document 30 seconds attention
- Only include information that can be fully supported
- Keep it short on two pages but preferably one page of good quality A4 paper
- Make it attractive and easy to read, well spaced out with bold, and if you want, underlined headings
- Correct misspellings, typographical errors and poor grammar
- Eliminate abbreviations and jargon

Structure

NAME

Anywhere, Anytown, Anyplace,

Phone No

Personal Profile

- Provide a positive pen picture
- Keep it brief, 3 sentences do the job in general
- Emphasise your characteristics - see attached prompt sheets

Next

- It's important to show current action first, so your next title could either be Employment or Training

Employment History/ Career Path

- Start with most recent job and work backwards, include part time, voluntary and self employed work
- Give job title, company and location with dates (generally years only)
- List main duties and key skills
- Keep it brief, most recent work has maximum information and then complement with background skills and experience from previous employment, don't waste space repeating what's already been said
- Account for all years whenever possible (easier said than done)
- When employment history is lengthy summarise early years experience (e.g. 1978 - 1985 variety of jobs involving.....)

Education & Training

- Supply dates, locations and achievements/awards from most recent training first and work your way backwards
- Also provide details of job-relevant training courses 'Fork Lift Truck Licence', 'First Aid', 'Health & Safety', 'Food Hygiene' etc.
- If you have only been through secondary education and not gained qualifications then put down years started and finished senior school, also include where you attended. Underneath add 'received standard education' maybe 'had particular interest in woodwork'; especially if you went on to become a Joiner

Additional Information

- I hold a full, clean driving licence and am a vehicle owner used to reading maps and planning routes; my time management skills are excellent. Add date of birth (optional) but essential if going for work that involves driving
- I have given my time and energy to many voluntary organisations that include working as an Administrator for Cancer Aid Listening Line and the British Red Cross. An active fundraiser, I enjoy generating money by using my initiative to promote action, especially within my community and its surroundings
- Include membership of clubs and societies; achievements if appropriate
- I am a practical person prepared to be flexible in all aspects of my employment, available to work shifts, weekends and overtime, if required

Hobbies & Interests

- Try to include three different activities: A member of my local gym, I work out on a weekly basis and use the swimming pool, as time allows. My family and I enjoy socialising together, visiting the cinema, theatre and bowling alley. To relax, I read books on any subject that catches my eye, from biographies to thrillers and romantic novels.
- I personally add humour to my hobbies and interests, however; only because I can carry it off and feel comfortable with the way the information is presented. Examples include; 'I ride and repair motorbikes, the two go hand in hand' and 'My dog takes me for long walks, which keeps us both fit'.
- A hobby or interest may well be brought up at interview as an opportunity for you to talk about something you enjoy doing, keep it real!!

References

- There is no need to indicate referees but state they are 'Available on request'

YOU HAVE JUST READ 2 PAGES OF CONDENSED INFORMATION. I HOPE, LIKE A CV, THIS DOCUMENT IS EASY TO INTERPRET AND PRACTICAL TO USE.

Personal Profile Phrases

Reliability / opening phrases

Self-motivated, hardworking and practically minded with a long and stable work history.

Practical and adaptable with a hands-on approach.

I am a reliable worker with excellent attendance and time-keeping records.

Methodical and accurate with an eye for detail.

Reliable and flexible with the ability to work on my own initiative.

Reliable and hardworking, I have good attendance and timekeeping records.

Hard working and practical with a friendly nature, I work well as a member of a team and enjoy helping others.

Trustworthy and caring with good communication skills.

I can adapt to most situations and develop an empathy with people even during difficult times in their lives.

Self-motivated and enthusiastic, I enjoy working in a challenging environment using my initiative to generate ideas and follow them through.

With excellent time management skills, I am reliable, loyal and always invest my energy to any given task.

Hardworking and highly committed.

I am versatile and self-motivated with a strong will to succeed.

With a mature attitude and a friendly manner, I get on well with people and have a good sense of humour.

Honest, hardworking and reliable, I take pride in a job well done.

Communication skills

Reliable and flexible with good interpersonal and communication skills.

With good communication skills, I am able to prioritise workloads and enjoy using my initiative, either within a team or on my own.

Self-motivated with excellent communication and customer service skills, I work well on my own or within a team, which I enjoy.

With good communication skills and a sense of humour, I enjoy working as part of a team to meet deadlines and achieve targets whilst under pressure.

Compassionate and caring with excellent communication and listening skills, I can use all my life experience and skills to develop an empathy with people at difficult times in their lives.

With excellent communication skills and a pleasant personality, I work well as part of a team and can motivate others to achieve deadlines

With good interpersonal and communication skills, I can deal professionally with a diverse range of people and motivate colleagues effectively.

Enthusiastic and tolerant with good communication skills.

I have good communication skills, both written and verbal.

Excellent communication and interpersonal skills along with supervisory, customer service and support skills.

With a mature attitude and a friendly manner, I get on well with people and have a good sense of humour.

Deadlines / Targets

I am an efficient team member and can work to deadlines whilst maintaining my sense of humour.

I work well as a member of a team or on my own to meet strict deadlines whilst maintaining quality.

I am capable of working alone and unsupervised to high standards in order to meet targets and deadlines.

Able to prioritise my workload and keep to deadlines.

I work effectively and practically under pressure, when necessary.

Hard working and conscientious, I can work as part of a team or alone to meet deadlines whilst under pressure.

Independent and diverse, I can and have worked on my own to deadlines, under pressure as required.

With excellent communication skills and a pleasant personality, I work well as part of a team and can motivate others to achieve deadlines.

I can prioritise my workload and meet strict deadlines whilst maintaining my sense of humour.

Capable of initiating ideas, prioritising workloads, meeting deadlines and working unsupervised, I can maintain contract obligations and targets.

I work well under pressure to meet deadlines as a member of a team.

Flexible in my approach, I can work to strict deadlines, prioritise my workload and enjoy a challenge.

I am able to work to targets and like to exceed contract obligations within a team or on my own.

Proactive and target driven, I work well under pressure and am able to meet deadlines.

Able to prioritise workloads and achieve required targets.

I work well under pressure and can keep to tight deadlines.

With good administrative and organisational skills, I can work on my own initiative, prioritising workloads for myself and others in order to meet deadlines.

Organisational skills/ Prioritising workloads

Self-motivated with excellent administrative and organisational skills.

I am able to prioritise my own workloads using my initiative and always paying close attention to detail.

I enjoy working in a challenging environment using my initiative to generate ideas and follow them through.

I am extremely versatile and capable of using my initiative to prioritise my workloads and manage budgets within guidelines.

With good communication skills, I am able to prioritise workloads and enjoy using my initiative, either within a team or on my own.

With good organisational and leadership skills, I can plan and prioritise workloads whilst working as part of a team, maintaining my sense of humour at all times.

Organised and conscientious with the ability to adapt to new ideas and situations, I am innovative in my approach and accustomed to working under pressure.

Efficient and effective under pressure, I can prioritise my own and colleagues workloads when appropriate.

I enjoy initiating ideas and following them through, generally with excellent results either whilst working in a team or on my own.

Organised and hard working, I can prioritise my time and work under pressure to produce excellent results.

I have an organised attitude to my work, am capable of prioritising my workload effectively and working on my own initiative.

With good administrative and organisational skills, I can work on my own initiative, prioritising workloads for myself and others in order to meet deadlines.

Practical / hands-on

With lots of practical "hands on" skills, I enjoy using my common sense and initiative to ensure a quality service is provided and I take pride in my work, which I complete to the best of my ability.

Practical and creative, I have good hands-on skills and can work to instructions with little supervision.

Specialist

A time-served machine operator with CNC experience.

I can work accurately to precise measurements to achieve a high standard of work.

Creative and articulate with a hands-on approach.

Highly creative and articulate with a hands-on approach, I can take a design project from concept, through development to finished product whilst keeping to deadlines, often under pressure but always maintaining my sense of humour.

A motivated sales representative with excellent communication skills, I am target led and enjoy exceeding contractual settings. Previous employment has always demanded the capacity to 'hit the ground running', becoming rapidly familiar with product knowledge and keeping abreast of developments within each new field. An organised administrator, I am consequently efficient and effective, always providing professional client and colleague service.

A keen, enthusiastic and creative artist/designer, I am adept at working in many styles and with many mediums.

Technically adept with good computer skills.

Highly motivated and creative, I am efficient and effective under pressure and can initiate ideas to improve working practices.

A motivated, experienced social care worker, I am patient, practical and reliable. With excellent communication skills, I am adaptable, able to assess each client's situation and resolve problems with the minimum disruption. I can follow instructions, keep accurate client records and liaise with colleagues when necessary.

Creative, imaginative and enthusiastic, I am a multi-talented, hands-on artist capable of working with a variety of media.

With a background in customer service, sales and promotions, I am keen to establish myself in an environment where I can fully utilise and develop my life skills.

Commercially aware and performance driven, I am a proactive manager with excellent communication and technical skills.

Team work

I am an efficient team member and can work to deadlines whilst maintaining my sense of humour.

With good communication skills, I am able to prioritise workloads and enjoy using my initiative, either within a team or on my own.

Hard working and practical with a friendly nature, I work well as a member of a team and enjoy helping others.

With excellent communication skills and a pleasant personality, I work well as part of a team and can motivate others to achieve deadlines.

Hard working and conscientious, I can work as part of a team or alone to meet deadlines whilst under pressure.

Self-motivated with excellent communication and customer service skills, I work well on my own or within a team, which I enjoy.

I am able to follow instructions in a team which I find stimulates further ideas and inspiration.

With good communication skills and a sense of humour, I enjoy working as part of a team to meet deadlines and achieve targets whilst under pressure.

With a flexible and adaptable nature, I work well as a member of a team and enjoy new challenges.

I enjoy initiating ideas and following them through, generally with excellent results either whilst working in a team or on my own.

With the ability to pass on my skills and knowledge to others, I work well both as a member or leader of a team.

With the ability to relate well to people of all ages and backgrounds, I make a good team member and leader.

Enthusiastic and tolerant with good communication skills, I can motivate my fellow team members and can also act as a mediator to resolve difficult situation.

I am an effective team member with strong leadership qualities.

Training

I would be eager to undertake any training to update my skills.

I would welcome any available training to enhance my current skills.

Self-motivated and independent, I am flexible and adaptable to changing situations and quick to learn new skills.

With lots of common sense, I like using my initiative and would welcome any training that may be available as I am keen to gain new skills.

I am quick to learn and would welcome any additional training to expand my current skills.

Highly motivated and flexible, I am willing to undertake any necessary training to expand my skills.

I learn new skills quickly and can adapt to new situations and working environments with ease.

I enjoy the learning process and would be eager to undertake any necessary training.

I am a willing learner with a renewed interest in educating myself.

I enjoy learning new skills to complement my extensive working experience.

Work alone

I am able to prioritise my own workloads using my initiative and always paying close attention to detail.

I am capable of working alone and unsupervised to high standards in order to meet targets and deadlines.

With good communication skills, I am able to prioritise workloads and enjoy using my initiative, either within a team or on my own.

I can plan my workload and work alone without supervision.

Independent and diverse, I can and have worked on my own to deadlines, under pressure as required.

I can work well on my own initiative and with minimal supervision to produce a high quality product

Additional Information

I hold a full, clean driving licence.

I hold a full, clean driving licence for car and motorcycle.

I hold a full, clean driving licence and am used to reading maps and planning routes.

I am a non-smoker in good / excellent health.

I am physically fit and enjoy good health.

I have been a blood donor for xx years and have achieved my xxxx badge / award.

I am a long term blood and plasma donor having donated xx pints of blood over several years.

I hold a current licence for reach / counterbalance fork lift trucks.

I hold a current First Aid certificate.

I hold a St John's Ambulance First Aid and Nursing Certificate.

I hold a current Health and Safety Certificate.

I hold a current Food Hygiene certificate.

I offer my time to voluntary organisations when required.

I am single with no family ties and am therefore free to travel / relocate.

These phrases should only be used if they are applicable to you. Don't lie or over exaggerate your person profile. You may be asked to give examples of how you demonstrate these skills during your interview.

Application Form Filling

Here are some handy hints on filling in **SUPPORTING INFORMATION** sections on application forms.

The longer you spend collating the information the more likely you are to score enough points to get to interview. Look at the information you have been given, particularly the Job Description and Person Specification – ‘**Essential and Desirable skills**’ sections.

You need to feed back skills and experience you have gained in life, not just within employment.

Essential Skills Example:

- A minimum of 12 months experience dealing with clients / members of the public both face-to-face and on the telephone
- Good standard of education
- Ability to work under pressure and cope with stressful / difficult situations

Feed this information back in the **SUPPORTING INFORMATION** section.

‘It was with growing interest that I read your advertised vacancy and supporting information for the position of

I worked for.....on a 12 month agreed contract. As part of an active team we had weekly and monthly targets to achieve. Much of my role involved using the telephone, speaking to clients and customers, retrieving and inputting information into the internal computer system, problem solving and referring clients on to other departments for further action. I received ‘in-house’ training in all aspects of the work, which I enjoyed. Additionally, I feel I have a good standard of education and I am always keen to learn new skills.

Having attended several counselling courses over the past couple of years I feel able to manage stressful and difficult situations and, more importantly, resolve issues in a manner that is beneficial to the company and client. I am able to prioritise my workload and achieve deadlines whilst ensuring effective customer service and care.’

So, we have looked at the requirements and how you can oblige their criteria, using skills and experience to add strength to abilities within the SUPPORTING INFORMATION section. It is worth spending the time to ‘get it right’ for a job you really want. Once you set a standard it’s easy to use the information over and over again for similar vacancies, just by changing the words slightly to suit each part of the job description.



Speculative Letter

Your full address

.....
.....
.....

Phone Number
Date

Employers name,
Address

.....
.....
.....

Dear

I would like to apply for the position of '.....', which I saw advertised in the

As requested, I have enclosed a copy of my CV for your information. As you will see, I have previously worked for, where excellent communication and keyboard skills were essential to ensure an effective service was provided. I am able to prioritise my workload to meet deadlines whilst in a team and on my own. I am reliable, versatile, loyal and hardworking, personal skills I feel are important to your company. I would welcome any further training that may be available, as stated in your job description.

I am available for interview at your convenience and look forward to hearing from you regarding my enquiry.

Yours sincerely,

Signature

Name in Print

All About Interviews

For those involved in conducting interviews over several days, or possibly even weeks, boredom can set in early and relief can seem a great distance away.

The majority of people who attend interviews do not listen to the questions, do not consider why they are there in the first place and do not give answers to inspire.

What is an interview?

An interview is an opportunity by a potential employer to look the candidates over, to get to know something about their personality and abilities. When they have done that they can weigh up whether or not they think that the individual is likely to fit in to their working environment.

Decisions about whether you are the right person for the job can be reached through careful consideration of all the facts, or without much consideration other than whether or not you seem 'all right'.

How do you create the right impression?

Personal presentation is as important as the way you talk with, and listen to, your interviewers. If you are well prepared for an interview you will have given consideration to both of these points. If you feel well prepared your confidence will increase and this will come across at the interview.

Preparing for interview

A public speaking coach, with a long track record of helping the presidents of big businesses, was once asked what she thought was the art of good communication. She replied that in her opinion the art of communication was 'knowing what you want to say because you understand what you are talking about, then saying it in a way that others will understand'. Her view was that nerves and stress, scratching and wriggling would soon be a thing of the past if you knew what you were talking about in the first place. She concluded by saying that 'a few nerves can be a good thing, because they show a very human feeling that everyone listening will be able to relate to through their own experiences'.

Preparing for an interview follows exactly the same principle. Giving consideration to the likely areas of questioning, and then preparing what it is you want to say in response to such questions, is the most valuable preparation that you can do.

You can begin the process by looking at your CV, covering letter or application form to check back on what you said previously.

Now, make a list of all the likely topic areas that the interviewer or panel might want to cover and begin to consider specific questions.

Think about the answers that you give, how you put the information together, whether or not your answer raises other questions and, if so, how best you can deal with them. By the time you have finished, you will know your subject thoroughly. You would be amazed how many people do not know much about their most often talked about subject themselves.

Presentation

No one minds if the clothes you are wearing have seen better days, so long as you are clean and tidy and dressed appropriately for the occasion. Interviews are formal occasions and, in nearly every case, you will be expected to dress up, not down.

No matter what the job that you are being interviewed for, you should always make the effort to be well turned out. Interviewers regard this as a measure of how seriously you are taking your application. To make the effort is to show your level of motivation. That is always much appreciated.

The interview begins

It is said that an interviewer will make up their mind about a candidate as soon as they enter the room. It is probably more accurate to say that if you make the right impression when you enter the room, they will give you a fair hearing. If you make a bad impression or no impression at all, they will probably not make an effort beyond the basics.

First impressions count for a lot, so enter the room in an organised manner. A useful tip is to slow your walking pace down slightly.

Asking questions

It is a good idea to have given some thought to what you would like to ask the interviewer. Prepare some questions beforehand. If it helps, make notes and if you get truly stuck you can always ask to refer to them. It shows an organised approach to work.

If you have nothing to ask, simply thank the interviewer and tell them that you have enjoyed the interview.

Getting feedback

One of the great tragedies about going for interviews is that if you are not successful, that is the end of that. Very few people will ask for feedback on why they were not successful. Sometimes it might be because someone else came along who had slightly more experience which, although not particularly important, was an added bonus. It might not have been anything you did. You will find it useful to get feedback on your interview on :

- How well you offered what they were looking for
- How you handled the questions

This is the only way that you will be able to learn from your mistakes.