

Turner Corner Career Support

A-Z Guidance



Letter A



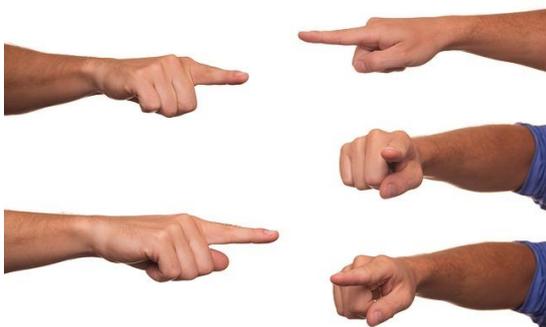
A is for achievements.

Is your CV looking like a job description, full of all your job responsibilities but nothing which tells a future employer the results you've achieved and therefore the value you can add to a future employer?

If you're a call centre manager or a retail assistant, then other call centre managers and retail assistants will have the same duties as you

But what they won't have is **Your Achievements**, as they are Individual to you! Be proud of what you've achieved, don't hide behind it

Letter B

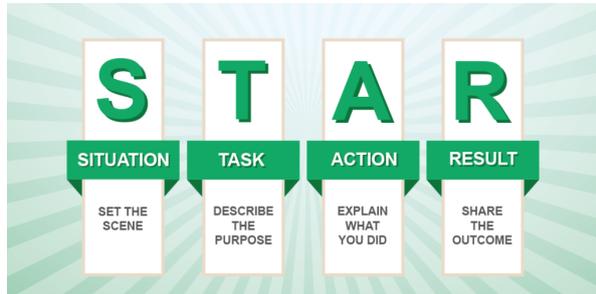


B is for Be Yourself!

When you walk into an interview don't try to be what you think they need - be you! and let your personality shine through. People will have a quick impression of you when they meet you. It's something we all do. They will of course allow for nerves, but ultimately, they want to get to know you and your personality I've seen so many people in interviews clearly putting on a persona and it's very easy to pick up on. Hiring managers want to get to know you, so be proud

of who you are. After all, if you get the job you can't put on an act every day for the next X amount of years

Letter C



C is for clear and concise.

When you're responding to interview questions use the **STAR** structure.

Briefly describe the **situation** you faced – set the scene

Explain the aim/objective of the **task**

Explain the **actions** you took in order to achieve the objective and how you overcame any challenges

Result: How did you measure the effectiveness of the outcome? Explain the impact of your actions on the customer/team/dept/business and what you learned from the experience

Keep to this structure and you will not only provide the information the interviewer is looking for, but you'll avoid 'waffling'

Letter D



D is for describe

Many years ago I was scribing in an interview and my manager asked the interviewee how others would describe him I was shocked by his reply and I've never forgotten it This is what he said 'Well, if you ask my mum she'd say I was a f***ing lazy b****rd. I immediately stopped writing and thought do I actually write that down, as I was gob-smacked that anyone would think that reply was appropriate.

What should you say when asked how others would describe you?

It's really important to prepare for this type of question, as it is often used during interviews. I recommend that you research the company, in particular their Values. You then need to consider which values align with yours, such as integrity, flexibility or, being people-focused, for example.

But of course, it's not just about stating what your values are; you should also be able to explain how you demonstrate these values within the workplace.

It is also important to read the job description fully. What is the company looking for? Will the job require you to work effectively in a team? Are they looking for someone who is a strong communicator or with a creative flare?

You could describe yourself as a people-focused, team player, providing you can support these attributes with a strong example of how you've demonstrated these qualities and what positive impact they have on people who work with you

Telling the interviewer how others have described you via feedback and testimonials, is also a great way of approaching the 'describe yourself' question.

If you don't currently have any recommendations on your LinkedIn profile, what are you waiting for? Request some today, from people you've worked with during your career.

Letter E



E is for Experience

Your Experience section on your LinkedIn profile should always be kept up to date.

If you are currently seeking work, you can put this as your current employment so that employers & recruiters can see you're open to new opportunities.

This leaves you with the opportunity to make your headline stand out, rather than 'Actively seeking employment'

As for the rest of your Experience section, use this simple format to help show a future employer why they should interview you

Here's the simple format:

What I do - this section is where you explain what you do in your current role or did do if no longer there. But here's the important bit - don't write it like a job description. Explain your achievements so that a future employer understands the value you could add to their company

Section 2 is the HOW section. This is where you explain how you achieved the results outlined in section 1. What skills did you apply? What challenges did you overcome? What did you learn?

Stick to this format for each employment experience. It's simple, it's concise & its unique to YOU. Someone else may do your role but they won't have the same achievements! Your next step?

Check your Experience section now, and make sure it's up to date

Letter F



F is for Fit.

What I mean by that is, is the company the right 'fit' for you?

It's very easy during an interview to focus solely on convincing the interviewer that you're the perfect 'fit' for the job

But many of us have probably find ourselves regretting the decision we've made once we started working for the company

This may be because the company doesn't share our values, or there isn't any investment in employee development, or the job just isn't what we expected

Therefore, when the interviewer asks if you have any questions make sure you use this opportunity wisely.

Ensure you spend time thinking about what you need to know in order to help you make the right choice This should always be a crucial part of your preparation.

Don't just prepare your examples to use during your interview. Prepare the questions you'd like to ask before you get to the interview. What do you need from your next job? Once you know this, your questions will help to provide the answers you need.

Letter G



G is for goals

Before you start your search for the next new challenge, give plenty of thought to your career goals.

What are you looking for in terms of short- and long-term goals?

Make a list of **'Must Have'** and **'Like to Have'**.

Your must have list is non-negotiable. You need them in order to achieve your career goals and ultimately give you fulfilment

The 'like to have' list is simply just that. They are things which would be an added bonus for you, but they are not a deal breaker.

So, if you're thinking of searching for a new job or you've just started, take some time to write down your Career Goals and build your 'Must Have' List. Stick to it.

This is something I spend time on when coaching individuals, as I've known too many people ignore the Must Have list and later regret it.

Don't let that be **YOU**. Once you know what you're striving to achieve and why, make sure you do your research. What career opportunities are there within the company you are interested in? What does it say on their website about staff development and company values? What do employees say? Glassdoor offers information on employee reviews. But do bear in mind every company will have disgruntled employees. Make that list today!

Letter H



H is for Homework

Yes; I did say homework!

What I mean by this is do your homework on the company and the job you've applied for, before you go to your interview

Employers like to know why you want to work for them, and of course why you want the specific job

So, absolutely give thought to how you will answer these types of questions. And of course, don't mention Money!

Doing your research on the company is much easier these days than when I sought my first job, yep I'm that old!

So, there's no excuse for not doing your homework!

What do you know about the company's successes?

What is their mission statement?

This should give you a good idea of the company's main areas of focus. You could also consider how your skills and experience can contribute to the company's mission and objectives

Don't wing it! Success comes to those who do their homework

Letter I



I is for impact

What impact has your knowledge, skills & actions had on your current or last employer?

What impact do you want your LinkedIn profile to have on hiring managers who are looking for their next Trainer, Project Manager, retail assistant etc?

Does your LinkedIn Headline say something like: *Actively seeking work Seeking a new challenge* Or does it state your job role and skills, such as Facilitator, coach Manager etc?

Are these types of headlines making you stand out?

Well, consider how many people have got very similar headlines. Thousands, millions? But what makes You stand out is the impact **You've** had on a business or businesses

What's your biggest achievement? What are you known for? What results have you achieved?

Have a think about your headline. If you could only say 1 thing about yourself in terms of your impact what would it be? Are you a salesperson who is known for smashing your sales targets each quarter? Are you a manager who has led your team to achieve 'Best Performance' status for two consecutive years?

If you do just 1 thing today towards getting noticed, review your LinkedIn Headline & shout about Your Impact

Tip: If you use iPhone app, you'll get 100 extra characters in your headline

Letter J



J is for Job Description

1. Your CV is not a job description. I've seen so many that are just a list of responsibilities and so read like a job description.

A CV is all about **You** and telling employers what value you can add to their business.

So, don't just list your role responsibilities, always ensure you focus on your achievements

2. Before sending your CV to apply for a job. Spend time reading the job description. What experience and skills is the employer looking for? The next step is then to review your foundation CV and adapt it to show you have the experience and skills the hiring manager requires. Never, ever have 1 CV which you use to apply for several jobs.

Your CV needs to be tailored to each job vacancy. That doesn't mean creating a new CV every time, but it does mean making a few changes. If the job requires a skill which isn't on your foundation CV despite the fact it's a skill you have, then it should be no surprise if you're not called for an interview.

No more generic, 1 CV fits all, approach. Tailor your CV to meet the job description requirements and success will follow!

Letter K



K is for Know Yourself

Know what you need from your next job. What gives you joy & fulfilment? What you absolutely don't want from your next job?

When I'm coaching individuals who are seeking a new challenge, I help them to recognise what's important to them. Why? Because so many people, including myself have taken jobs that weren't right and therefore instead of bringing joy, it quickly fills you with frustration & disappointment

Create your list

1. List the jobs you've had in the past. Write down the aspects of the jobs you enjoyed, And why? Perhaps you loved being able to problem solve or working in a team. Flexibility of working hrs may have been a big positive and still is. Don't rush this. Give yourself time to consider each job, break down tasks, working environment, relationships, culture etc.

2. What work/life balance do you need? The job description may appeal but if it means working longer hours or weekends, which will adversely affect your home life, is this right for you?

Start with these questions, I'm sure you'll soon think of more

Letter is L



L stands for length

This simply refers to the length of your CV

If it's any more than 2 pages, then I'd recommend that you condense it

On average there are 250 CVs received for each job vacancy. No recruitment or HR Manager has got time to read more than 2 pages

As a general rule - You don't need to provide a full explanation for jobs longer than 10 years ago. Just list them as Company, Job Title and Period employed After reading this - do you have some work to do?

Believe me it will be worth it. Your CV may be sitting on someone's desk gathering dust because 4 pages of detailed text just wasn't appealing.

Don't let that be yours

A future employer wants to know what value you've added to recent employers, not a role you did 15 years ago!

Letter M

Nervous



M is for Managing Nerves

Most people get nervous before an interview, but if they are not effectively managed, they can take over and have an adverse effect on how confidently you answer the interviewee's questions.

You don't want those 'Blank Mind' moments or over talking!

Did you know our subconscious drives most of our daily behaviours and actions?

But our subconscious cannot tell the different between reality and imaginary.

Make this fact work for you by practising visualisation techniques.

It's a well-recognised technique for sports men and women

At least a week before your interview find times during the day where you can have a quiet 10 mins. During this time visualise yourself at the interview, speaking confidently. If you know what you're going to wear, that's even better.

Picture your confident body language. See yourself entering the room, smiling and shaking hands, right through to the end of the interview. The more detail, the more effective it is.

With practise it becomes easier to do. The key to this is: You must repeat the visualisation over & over & over again, including the day of the interview.

Your subconscious is now more likely to drive the behaviour that it's been taught and which it believes is now reality!

Letter N



N for Notes

One of the most common questions I've been asked by clients & colleagues is: Is it ok to take notes with me to an interview?

My answer: **YES, If it helps**

An interview isn't a memory test & a good interviewer will want to get the best out of the interviewee. I always took brief notes to every interview, particularly of questions I wanted to ask.

Letter P



P is for practise.

If you are not confident about your interview skills, make sure you practise and practise some more. before the actual interview

I know some people who view each interview as practise and have the mindset that they will get better at each one, until eventually achieve success

But does that make sense to you?

It certainly doesn't make sense to me. Carry out your practise runs with a good friend. colleague or family member. You can make as many mistakes as you need to, but at least you will get a chance to learn from them, before the Big Day

When you practise, make sure you ask someone you respect, you value their opinion and who you know will be honest with you Believe me, practising your skills will build your confidence and take you much closer towards achieving success

Letter Q



Q for Questions

How many times have you been asked at the end of an interview if you have any questions, and you've answered no because you haven't prepared any, or the ones you were going to ask have been covered when the interviewer provided details of the role?

Always have enough questions prepared so that you have at least one for back-up if the others have already been answered

If you don't prepare smart questions, you run the risk of the interviewer assuming you aren't interested

Example Questions:

1. Can you tell me more about the day-to-day responsibilities of this job?
2. What would you consider are the immediate key priorities in this post?
3. How do you see this job changing/expanding in the future?
4. What does success look like in this role and how will it be measured?
5. What's your favourite part of the company?
6. How would you describe the culture of the organisation?
7. What are the opportunities for development and training?
8. Where do you think the company is headed in the next 5 years?
9. What are the biggest opportunities/challenges facing the company?
10. What happens next/when will you be making a decision?

There's really no excuse for not having questions to ask

Letter R



R is for results

What I'm about to say applies for your CV and Interview

It's very important when responding to interview questions to ensure you don't just talk about what you did and how you did it in order to demonstrate a competency, but you must tell the interviewer the results you achieved.

However, in my experience of interviewing, it is often the part which is missed out

This applies to your CV when you are writing your achievements

Saying something vague like by doing X the team's performance increased or Customer Satisfaction Results improved, isn't going to secure an interview or a job

What does increased or improved specifically mean? By how much and how do you know?

How did you monitor and measure success?

For example: Did Customer Satisfaction Scores go from 75% to 80% between January and July 2018 because of your actions? Your results should always be specific and measured in some way.

There's no place for vagueness in a CV or Interview

Go and check your CV now, if you're looking for a job. What do your achievements say?

Are they vague statements or Specific Results?

Letter S



S stands for summary.

What is your LinkedIn summary saying about you?

Is it telling a future employer what you offer, what you specialise in & the value you have brought to other companies you've worked for?

Is your summary complete and are you making full use of 2000 characters?

If you want the right employers to be attracted to your profile its worth spending time on it

There are many ways of structuring your summary, but here's one approach that I recommend

The What: Tell a future employer about your specialisms and outline your achievements i.e. what specific results have you achieved; which you are proud of?

The How: This is where you explain how you achieved the What - outline your key (transferrable) skills and provide examples of when you applied them.

Include Keywords so the right people can find you

The Why: This is the part which makes you YOU!

Many people who do the same job as you may have similar achievements and skills but the reason why you love doing what you do is very much individual to You. This is your opportunity to talk about your values, your purpose, what motivates and excites you and of course why an employer should want you. And write your summary in the 1st person!

Letter T



T for Transferable Skills

Many people seeking work are looking for a different type of role within a similar industry or a complete career change. In these cases, it makes sense to focus on your transferable skills when writing your CV.

Do your research, look for descriptions of the type of job you're looking for in order to understand the key skills which will be required.

Then think about the work you've carried out during your career and provide examples to show the skills that you've developed which can be easily transferred into a new role.

Don't just list your skills, make sure your CV provides examples of how you've applied the skills.

Your headline for your skills section should be: Transferable Skills

Letter is U



U for Unacceptable

My Unacceptable list:

1. Don't talk badly about your current or last employer, especially not your boss. You may have a bad relationship with your boss, but a potential future employer does not want to hear negatives or blame
2. When asked if you have any questions, don't start with questions about salary and bonuses. You don't want a future employer to think it's all about the money for you
3. Don't be late! An obvious one but you wouldn't believe how many people I've seen arrive late, during my career. If you're not sure how long it will take to drive there, check it out by driving there before the day of the interview, at the same time of day as your interview so you can judge the amount of traffic and timings as it would be on the day. But of course, add on extra time for any delays
4. Don't leave your mobile phone switched on. It will knock your confidence if it rings and it will annoy the interviewer
5. Don't fidget, such as playing with your hair or a pen you've taken in to write down additional information the interviewer provides.

Also make sure that you're comfortable in what you're wearing.

Letter V

V is for Values

Have you ever taken a job and very quickly realised you'd made a big mistake?

Have you ever taken a job because you were enticed by a great salary?

I can answer yes to both

Knowing our Values and having confidence that a future employer shares those values, is an important consideration

Perhaps you value continuous personal development. Then it's worth doing your research about the development opportunities with the company. Do they provide continuous training programmes which equip employees with the knowledge and skills to achieve great performance? Some companies will advertise their in-house training programmes on their website. Or you could ask this question at your interview

You may value empowerment and the opportunity to make decisions. One way of knowing if this is the case, is by finding out if there is a coaching culture within the company, rather than a 'TELL' approach.

You may value innovation. Is this an organisation which encourages innovation and change. You may want to ask the interviewer, what innovative changes the company has gone through over the last 12-18 months

Write a list of your top 5 values today and then consider how you can find out if your next employer shares those values

Do your research!

Letter W



W is for We

Now you may be expecting me to talk about 'We' in a positive way

After all, when we think of 'We', we think about teamwork, which is great isn't it?

Yes, it is. Except at your interview

A typical competency question that interviewers will ask, is for you to provide an example of working as a team in order to achieve a team goal, or a similar type of question.

The most common mistake I've seen in interviews is the interviewee, upon hearing the words, Teamwork or Working in a team, responds with the overuse of 'We' i.e. explaining how the team achieved tasks in order to achieve the team results.

I've also heard interviewees spend more time talking about what their colleagues did, than talking about themselves

When you are asked about teamworking, the interviewer wants to know the part **You** played in achieving the team goal. What was your role? How did you support the team? How did you resolve any team conflict? Or How did you bring the team together?

Therefore, although it's a 'Team' question, it should still be about You; not others. Don't fall into the Teamwork Trap

Change that 'We' to 'I'

Letter Y



Y is quite simply 'YOU'

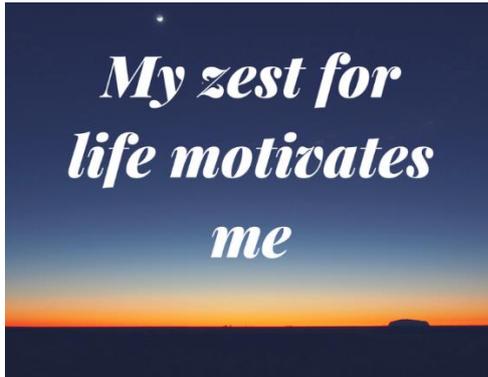
Many of the A-Z Posts have provided tips on how to create a great CV/LinkedIn profile and how to prepare for and conduct yourself in an interview

But one of the most important questions to ask yourself is: Who are you doing this for?

Are you seeking a particular role to fulfil someone else's expectations of your potential and what they think you should do? Or Are you doing this for YOU?

Everyone else i.e. parents, schoolteachers, friends, work colleagues etc will have an opinion and offer advice and of course they may be very helpful in helping you consider careers you hadn't thought of. But before you make that ultimate decision to send your CV or to agree to accept a job offer - always ask yourself the most important question "**Are you doing this for YOU?**"

Letter Z



Z is for Zest i.e. Great enthusiasm & energy

It's not uncommon to be asked to deliver a presentation as part of the recruitment process. You may have a great knowledge of the topic, but if it's not delivered with zest, it's unlikely to be remembered by your audience.

Here's some tips

Do:

1. Use the adrenaline rushing through your body in a positive way. Tell yourself you're excited, rather than nervous. Your mind-talk has a big impact on how you feel & how you behave.

2. Keep smiling. This is a tip given to me early in my career. I've had lots of people approach me after presentations and ask how I manage to be confident. The truth is I'm usually nervous, but I tell myself I'm excited and I smile. A smile can hide how you're feeling inside, and it shows enthusiasm.

3. 55% of face-to-face communication is through body language & 38% tone. Ensure your facial expressions, hand gestures & tone support the words you use rather than becoming a distraction.

4. A great way of demonstrating energy is through movement. You don't need to stand in 1 spot with your arms glued to your side, but don't do rocking moves either. Make your movement purposeful rather than manic.

5. Practise & record yourself as it's a great way to learn.

I hope you have found my A-Z Career tips useful.

I also offer a career consultation service. If you would like to find out more about this, please get in touch.

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