

# CONQUERING



# INTERVIEW

Your practical personal guide to smashing  
the hiring process

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VENI VIDI VECI

# Preface

Brandon Laviolette is experienced in human relation for the Local and the International context, having worked within Mauritius and Europe. He is currently working with the leading bank in Mauritius and in the Indian Ocean region.

Brandon has at heart the wellness of people and the environment. While in Europe, he worked in collaboration with an NGO helping refugees. Back in Mauritius, he provided linguistic training to children from difficult neighborhoods.

The scarcity of simple interviewing books on the market inspired his work. *Conquering Your Interview* is a concise and thorough guide to a successful interview. To empower the readers, the key components of an interview are simplified while being relevant to the current environment.

Since 2020, Brandon started to advise people on their career path and providing training to individuals and groups on how to write a résumé, interviewing for jobs and resolving workplace issues. He is also extending his expertise by advising individuals on how to build, maintain and manage their public image using all forms of media and communication.

## Contents

Module: 1	Be OVER Prepared	2
Module: 2	Simple, yet Impactful Curriculum Vitae	3
Module: 3	Adapt to the Job - Cover Letter	9
Module: 4	Train for the D-Day	12
Module: 5	Show Up and Conquer	15
Module: 6	Stay Positive	17

# 1

## BE OVER PREPARED

*“Give me six hours to chop down a tree  
and I will spend the first four sharpening  
the axe.”*

Abraham Lincoln

Preparation is the key. A candidate who shows up to an interview, regardless of the diplomas or the experience he may have, without knowing the basic functioning of the company he wishes to join will not be retained. As a professional, we should visualize the situation from the Hiring Manager’s perspective: Why would I hire someone who did not even bother to research easily available information about my company!

So often, we tend to forget that an interviewing process is a two-way channel. The reason we applied for a job is that we know we are qualified for the vacancy and the company attracts us. In the same way, companies hire you because they are attracted to what you deliver and the plus you can bring to their day-to-day business. The preparation you put in will reflect before and during your interview. It demonstrates how genuinely you care and how serious you are about this professional exchange.

In today’s age, we have unlimited access to information; a simple google search will give you the answer you need. One of the best ways to know about the values and the non-professional & professional activities of a company is to search through their Facebook, Instagram, TikTok or Twitter Profile. Moreover, a LinkedIn profile is a MUST HAVE. Through this platform you can connect with employees working within the company you want to join. This connection can be used as a bridge to know more about the business or even the job you applied for. Never hesitate to ask questions. Rather try and fail, than to think of what it could have been.

## SIMPLE, YET IMPACTFUL CURRICULUM VITAE

*“The ability to simplify means to eliminate the unnecessary so that the necessary may speak.”*

Hans Hofmann

As a job seeker, you need to think like the Hiring Manager. You may ask yourself why you should do that, the answer is simple; the Hiring Manager will go through hundreds and hundreds of Curriculum Vitae within a day and it will be a question of minutes or even seconds for him to select a CV among others.

The goal of your CV is to provide enough information, but not too much, to demonstrate that you fit the job requirement. If the Hiring Manager has every single detail about you from your CV, why will he call you?

A CV should be straight to the point while keeping a little mystery that will spark that “intrigue” to call you back for an interview. The information needs to be as simple as it can be while displaying relevant information related to the job you applied. For you to understand the basic but yet important preparation of your CV, let us take the example of Mr. John Green applying for the vacancy of an Administrative Assistant.

Usually for an Administrative Job, it requires a professional well versed with Microsoft Office Tools, prioritizing skill, good communication and attention to details. These key points need to be on your CV. Keep in mind that the ideal CV should be one page long.

EXAMPLE OF NOT TO DO CV



**JOHN SMITH**  
T e l l e r

## PROFILE

*A highly motivated person with one and a half years of experience in the banking retail sector. Advanced of excel, MS office. Uses acquired skills and knowledge to be an exemplary worker.*

## CONTACT

PHONE:  
5780 000

EMAIL:  
john.smith@smith.com

## HOBBIES

Swimming  
Fitness  
Hiking  
Reading

## EDUCATION

**NASA Educational Center**  
2010 – 2016

### SCHOOL CERTIFICATE (SC) (November 2010) Aggregate: 25

ENGLISH	2
FRENCH	1
MATHEMATICS	1
SPANISH	4
ACCOUNTS	1
ECONIMICS	4
ART AND DESIGN	7
BUSINESS STUDIES	5



### HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE (November 2014)

GENERAL PAPER	A
ECONOMICS	A
MATHEMATICS	A
FRENCH SUB	B

## University of Cape Town

January 2019 – present

Currently studying BSc (Hons) Business Administration with specialization and at the same time collecting information to be able to evaluate and analyze evidence and implement solutions in business environment.

## WORK EXPERIENCE

### Contact Center

Back-office Agent

February 2017- July 2019

Started to work as a call center agent, I was quickly promoted to be a back-office agent and plied that job until I joined the MCB family. As a back-office agent, I had to contact clients to find a solution for their technical issues with internet and this developed my critical thinking and allowed me to find solutions for these issues in a short period of time. My job allowed me to

□

acquire skills like usage of excel, MS|office and also to be able to work under pressure.

I was once rewarded as employee of the month and this motivated me to achieve more awards.

### **CAPE GROUP**

**TELLER**

1<sup>ST</sup> July 2019- present

Being a teller has enabled me to acquire many skills. My day-to-day tasks consist of assisting customers with processing transactions, such as deposits, withdrawals, or payments, resolving complaints or account discrepancies, and answering questions, informing customers about bank products and services to promote our brand, maintaining and reconciling cash drawers and reconciling discrepancies, handling customer transactions, and confidential information in a responsible manner. Using T24 to track bank information and generate reports and last but not least following all bank financial security regulations and procedures.



### **SKILLS**

- Cash handling and mathematics
- Customer service
- Computer knowledge
- Organization
- Problem-solving
- Written and verbal communication
- Processing transactions
- Attention to detail
- Maintaining cash drawer allocation
- Teamwork
- Basic accounting
- Honesty and integrity
- Project management
- Technical
- Data entry
- Typing
- Phone support
- Discretion
- Conflict resolution



# A SUITABLE CV



## PROFILE

*A motivated professional with a strong background in customer relation with 4 years' experience.*

*Passionate about Volunteering, Analyzing, Proactive, Meticulous, Curious and Organized.*

## CONTACT

PHONE:  
57087561

## EMAIL:

john.smith@smith.com

## HOBBIES

Swimming  
Fitness  
Hiking  
Reading

# JOHN SMITH

## BANK EMPLOYEE



## WORK EXPERIENCE

### BANK EMPLOYEE – CAPE GROUP | July 2019- present

- Responsible for the day-to-day operations as a teller in the bank while maintaining a good customer relation.

### BACK-OFFICE AGENT – CONTACT CENTER | February 2017- July 2019

- Managing the portfolios of clients with any technical issues with their internet connection and scheduling an intervention from a technical team to assist the concern on site

## EDUCATION

### University of Cape Town | January 2019 – present

BSC (Hons) Business Administration with Specialization

### NASA Educational Center | 2010 – 2016

Higher School Certificate and School Certificate

## SKILLS

- Analytic Skills
- Detailed Oriented
- Interviewing Skills
- Team Player
- Project management
- Communication and Presentation Skills
- Crisis Management

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The illustration CV2 may be used as a Blueprint for your future CVs. Simple, yet informative enough to increase your chance to be retained for an interview.

**To consider when writing your Curriculum Vitae:**

Your curriculum vitae needs to be a comprehensive statement of your educational background and professional experience, if any.

The Formatting of your CV should as far as possible, follow these criteria:

Well-organized and easy to read.
Effective format and be consistent.
Use bolds, italics, underlines, and capitalization to capture attention.
List the relevant items in reverse chronological order in every section.

**The “Must-Have” of your CV?**

1. A professional photo
2. Current Job title
3. Relevant Work Experience
4. Education/Qualifications
5. Skills that match the desired profile
6. 1 or 2 hobbies.

Always Remember, adapt your CV for any different job you applied.

### 3

## ADAPT TO THE JOB – COVER LETTER

*“Adapt or perish, now as ever, is  
nature’s inexorable imperative.”*

H. G. Wells

You will apply not for one but for quite a few jobs until you are guaranteed a work contract. Every single time you apply for a vacancy, it is imperative to rewrite your cover letter. Even though several companies are in the same field or have the same vacancies available, they have their own distinct values, missions and goals.

Your cover letter will reflect the time you invested to look into the company’s history and the job you applied. The cover letter is an invitation for the recruiter to call you back and schedule an interview. Many talented candidates failed to secure an interview due to the scarcity of creativity in their cover letter.

The next page provides an example of a cover letter format you may refer to:

## **COVER LETTER**

Your Full Name

Your Address

Your Phone Number

Your Email Address

Date

Name of the Recruiter

Title

The Company Name

Address

**Subject: Application for the post of "Job Title ".**

Dear Sir or madam,

with a strong expertise in the...Briefly specify the field of your previous experience and the time you spent there (job, internship or employment - These are the first lines of your letter: you must hook the reader so that he is tempted to read the rest) ... I am sending you my application for the vacant post of "Job Title".

My qualifications and professional experiences acquired over the years have...Provide details of your skills that you have already mentioned briefly in your CV but be cautious; Give details for about two to three skills that directly relates to the job you applied. Skills that will be interesting for the recruiter.

Joining the XXX Company as your next, "Job Title "will be a great privilege as...Summarize the missions of the job vacancy, the reasons that pushed you to apply and the strengths of your application that will allow you to succeed in this particular position.

Please do not hesitate to contact me on the "Insert your phone number or your email "if you need any additional information.

With Regards,

**Surname First Name**

The format displayed is a guideline provided to ease your comprehension of a cover letter expected format. The only limit to re-adapting this cover letter is your imagination.

## 4

### TRAIN FOR THE D-DAY

*“Success is where preparation and opportunity meet.”*

Bobby Unser

Usain bolt said “I trained 4 years to run 9 seconds...”. This is a profound statement to reflect on. 4 years of dedication, 4 years of sacrifice, 4 years of discipline for 9 seconds of glory. If you want something in life, you have the upmost responsibility to give your all, regardless of what others may think or say. When you secured a job interview, it is not the end of the journey but rather the start of a once in a life opportunity to cease the moment.

Back in 2014, I was fresh out of secondary school and at the time, I decided to get a job and carry on with my studies in parallel. I sent my CVs to various companies and after a month, I secured an interview with the country’s electricity provider, a government-owned business. I was so overwhelmed with pride; first interview with a government-owned business and a high pay at hand? What else could I ask for? I was so confident that I did not research the company’s history, or did I bother to prepare some possible scenarios for the interview.

The day of the interview arrived, I showed up earlier to the company, dressed in the most professional way that can be. Moments later, a woman guided me to a meeting room with a panel of five to six persons in there. At that very moment, I started to panic. The oldest person, which seemed to be in charge, started the preliminaries by asking me to present myself and give details about my professional and academic path. I replied in the most unlikely way by asking him if I should respond in French or English language. Upon saying these words, the panelists stared at me dead in the eye and started taking notes. At this very moment, I knew I had failed, and the interview went as bad as you can imagine. On that day, I swore that I will never go for an

interview without a prior preparation.

### **What is the lesson you should retain from my interview failure?**

As good as you think you are and as well dressed as you may be, it will not make a difference if you failed to handle your interview properly. When you trained for possible scenarios, it will be easier to manage your stress and anticipate how to answer the questions of the recruiters.

### **Tips for a successful interview:**

1) Research on the company's values, missions, goals and any events related to them published in the news.

2) Write an interview script with an Introduction, a Body and a Conclusion:

a) Introduction

Your name, age and your professional and academic experiences.

b) Body

Presentation of your skills with relation to the ones required for the job.

c) Conclusion

A brief summary of the introduction and the body saying why you fit the job. End with an open statement such as "*This interview has given me the opportunity to learn interesting information about your company*".

This is an invitation for the recruiter to ask you back what you learned about the company and if you did your research, you have a shot to impress them.

3) Prepare possible questions and answers related to the job you applied.

4) Carry out interview simulations with a friend or relative.

5) Finally yet importantly, do breathing exercise to manage your stress and remember

you are excited not stressed about the interview.



## 5

### SHOW UP AND CONQUER

*“I am not a product of my  
circumstances. I am product of my  
decisions.”*

Stephen Covey

The day has arrived; your interview is scheduled in a couple of hours either online or in an office, you rehearse one last time and you decide what to wear. I always advise my clients to do a visualization of them walking in the office and the interviewing process. As simple as it may be, the visualization process helps build confidence and reduce anxiety. This also creates a memory of a successful meeting. During the interview, you will have a sense of “*déjà vu*”.

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed the way the world operates and more companies are turning to virtual meetings but the vaccination campaign is bringing back the old-fashioned face-to-face meeting. The table on the next page will guide you through both meeting types and give you three (3) basic key component you need to master.



		FACE-TO-FACE	ONLINE
1)	Grooming:	The clothing style varies depending on the job you are applying for and the field of expertise. For example, a business attire will suit for a vacancy within a financial Institution and a casual smart attire for an IT position or social media assistant vacancy.	
2)	Tone of Voice:	<p>Keep a constant tone level, articulate each word properly and monitor your speaking rate.</p> <p>During an online interview if you are using earphones, removed one so that you can hear how your voice is and monitor it accordingly.</p>	
3)	Body language:	<p>Keep a firm posture and your hands beside you while standing. When entering the room and exchanging a handshake or saying hello keep an eye contact and wait for the recruiter to tell you to sit before you do.</p>	<p>Keep a slight smile and use some hand gestures while talking but not too much as it.</p> <p>Before the interview start, ensure that you fit the video frame and run a sound test.</p>

## 6

### STAY POSITIVE

*“Success is not final, failure is not fatal,  
it is the courage to continue that  
counts.”*

Winston Churchill

Failure is part of the recipe for success. Any great person in history has failed much more than history has recorded. Why give up on the first try? I always tell my clients that one close door is a sign of a new door to be opened. If you were well prepared and still did not get the job, you cannot have any regrets, as deep inside you know you gave 100% of yourself. Winners and losers, both have failed but the difference between them is that the winner goes back again at it, after a failure.

You can take some time to reflect on it, even cry about it but do not make it a permanent situation. We are human and being human, we can be depressed, sad or disappointed about how a situation turns out but remember the beauty of life. A woman giving birth is among one of the most wonderful thing on earth and when she holds her baby in her hands, she forgets about the pain of delivery and the 9 months of carrying that little human inside her. This is how life is: we have trials; we dealt with failures and struggles to reach our goals but ***remember those who hold on long enough always succeed...***

Made in Mauritius, 2021.