

# Fail to prepare and you prepare to fail

David Fielding, Director at attenti highlights some of the ways chief executives can help put themselves in a good light during the recruitment process.

**Due to the nature of the role some chief executives can be detached from their staff and don't always get honest feedback. Without this vital feedback, CEOs can sometimes make poor candidates and can struggle to secure their next big job. Going for your next role with a planned and considered approach is the only way to go about landing your dream role.**

Shooting from the hip doesn't work. Without the right approach, you could get a reputation for being someone that is ill-prepared and disorganised. Remember you only get one chance to make a good first impression. So when you see a role that you like the look of, adhere to the guidelines below to put yourself in the best light.

Once you see the job of your dreams, begin your groundwork. Look at the organisation's website, annual report and Google them. Look carefully at the Person Specification and Job Description. The JD is important and will give you some clues about what the organisation expects from you when in the job. The Person Specification however is far more important. You will be asked at a number of stages along the way to provide evidence against each of the criteria. Work out in draft your responses to each point, but be honest. Then make your call to the Head hunter, setting out what research you have done and why you think you are a good fit. Ask for feedback at that stage and where the emphasis will be placed by the client.

You will be asked to produce a CV and written statement. There is lots of conflicting advice about CVs. Bottom line: it's a sales document. Keep it brief and ensure you specify achievements and

metrics. What you actually did and what the outcomes were far outweigh just listing your responsibilities. Do include a bit that makes you human and what you do outside work but ensure you jettison things like 'DSC Accounting Module 1' and 'NCVO-How to be a good manager course'. Get a friend to look at it and give you their impressions. When you produce your written statement, do give it justice, it will be read and scrutinised. Don't just copy and paste a previous one you did for the last job you didn't get.

Hopefully, you will be invited to attend a longlist interview with a headhunter. Impressions count. Don't arrive late and flustered or come unprepared. Reread all the documentation in advance. Get your facts right and be really clear about what you can offer. Look like a Chief Executive. A haircut and smart clothes will make you look better and feel better. Ideally cuff links for men and subtle jewellery for women. And less is definitely more when it comes to aftershave and perfume. One sensitive question.....when was the last time you bought anything from somebody with bad breath? Dental hygiene is a must.

Try not to ramble. A good interviewee says what they are going to say, then drills into some of the details. Try to smile and show enthusiasm. Be honest in your reflections and come prepared with questions. Having done all this, hopefully, you will get through to the next stage...then it gets even more difficult.

**David Fielding MBE, Director at attenti. David Fielding leads the Not for Profit recruitment practice at attenti and is one of the UK's leading head-hunters. He is a trustee for Equinox Care and a special advisor to ACEVO and for the past decade has contributed to the debates around service delivery, governance, funding and trust. He is an Independent Assessor and advises on wide range of high profile Ministerial Public Appointments. David is an ex-World Record Holder and four time Aikido World Champion. Prior to becoming a head-hunter, David was a successful HR Director.**

*Read future issues of network where David will cover how to handle psychometric testing, references, informal meetings, presentations and the final interview.*

