

Interviewer: LearnEnglish Professionals is talking to John Woodrow, who works in the Human Resources department of a large UK-based company. John, tell us about your work ...

John Woodrow: I work on recruitment, especially - so I'm the person who reads the hundreds of CVs we get sent each year!

Interviewer: Do you accept CVs as part of your recruitment process?

John Woodrow: When we advertise for a particular post, we send out our own application form, which is tailored to our company, and we can use it to make sure we find exactly what we're looking for ...

Interviewer: So a CV is useless?

John Woodrow: No! Not at all - we're happy to accept CVs from people even when we're not recruiting. That way we can build up a database of possible candidates, and as our company is always changing - we're very flexible in our needs right now (laughs) - it's good to know what kind of people are out there. We do keep everything on file, and will get back to people who look promising.

Interviewer: So we should be sending you our CVs?

John Woodrow: Yes, absolutely, yes!

Interviewer: What advice can you give us on writing a CV?

John Woodrow: Keep it short, keep it simple, keep it relevant. Anything longer than three pages will automatically go into the bin. Just tell us what we need to know. Make sure it's clearly written - and that there are no spelling mistakes on it! And no fancy fonts ... or photographs. We don't need to know what people look like, just what they've done, and what they're capable of ...

Interviewer: So we're going to look at a couple of CVs now ...

John Woodrow: Yes - these are a couple that arrived just this morning, so let's take a look ... (sound of paper unfolding) ... OK, I can see straight away that we have a good one and a bad one here ...

Interviewer (laughs): How can you tell so soon?

John Woodrow: Well, as I just said, this one here is ... how many? ... one, two, three, four pages long, it's written in tiny type, I can hardly read it ... and, wait, yes, there's a photograph attached to the front!

Interviewer: Too much information?

John Woodrow: Yes ... just leafing through it, I can see he's written about where he went to primary school - that's just not relevant.

Interviewer: What kind of educational background should be included?

John Woodrow: Perhaps your high school, but it's mostly further education we're interested in, university or college, then any professional qualifications you may have, as well as work experience, of course.

Interviewer: That's important?

John Woodrow: Oh yes - placements or internships all count!

Interviewer: What about personal information?

John Woodrow: A bit is necessary ... but look, this guy has written he was a member of the stamp collecting society in secondary school! Not interested ...

Interviewer: What about the other CV?

John Woodrow: OK, again, I can see right away this looks more promising ... only two and a half pages, lots of space on the page, easy to read, well organised. Hmmm, a couple of impressive looking references, that's good. And, yes, they've included language skills - very important ...

Interviewer: What languages are you looking for?

John Woodrow: Well, English, obviously, as we're a UK-based company and English is still the language of global business, and then, well, anything really - Spanish is useful, Russian, Mandarin Chinese too ...

Interviewer: OK, we'll get studying! Thanks, John!