

MAKE YOUR **MOVE**

ARE YOU A SENIOR MANAGER IN CONSTRUCTION OR UTILITIES FOR MAIN CONTRACTORS, PREPARING TO MAKE A CAREER MOVE?

THIS IS THE GUIDE FOR YOU!

It'll tell you what you need to know, what you need to consider, and what will help you gain an edge in a competitive marketplace.

E-BOOK RESOURCE

FIND OUT:

- How to create an achievements based CV
- How to prepare for interviews
- Getting references
- Negotiating your offer
- How to handle counteroffers



About the Author:

Rupert Price has over 20 years' experience working in the resourcing industry, fifteen which have been specializing in Infrastructure and Utilities recruitment. He has a passion for recruitment and enjoys working at all levels across a diverse range of clients.

Rupert graduated in 1992 with a BA(Hons) in Business Studies from Oxford Brookes University. In the first six years of his recruitment career he worked in search and selection and Interim for Harvey Nash plc. and Glotel plc. respectively.



In 2000 Rupert joined CPW Recruitment and then in 2011 he founded Ellis Fox Recruitment. This has allowed Rupert to build an honest, relationship driven recruitment business that focuses on best practice and instinct.

"I've learnt a lot about recruitment practice in the companies I've worked with – how to operate, but crucially, how not to. I am proud that Ellis Fox combines support and honesty with commercial results. All wrapped up with a bit of personality."

Introduction:

As a Senior Manager in your industry it can be a stressful time looking for new opportunities. It is therefore key that you get your house in order, ensuring you have a well written CV and are fully prepared for the interviews.

Regardless what employment statistics report or what economic factors and trends are being experienced, to take advantage of job opportunities, **you need to present yourself in the best possible way.**

This eBook will share with you some **top techniques** and **best practices** to ensure you have a clear strategy on how you're going to make your move. One that will ensure the job hunting process runs as smoothly as possible, helping you secure interviews with the right people at your chosen companies.

Starting out we'll first discuss what will make your CV stand out from the rest, and then share our top tips on preparing for interviews, getting references and negotiating the best offer to make your move worthwhile.

When writing your CV you need to cover your basic job responsibilities, however, you need to go beyond routine daily duties. Keep your duty summaries concise and concentrate instead on the **results that came out of your everyday work**. So, highlight your achievements, not your duties

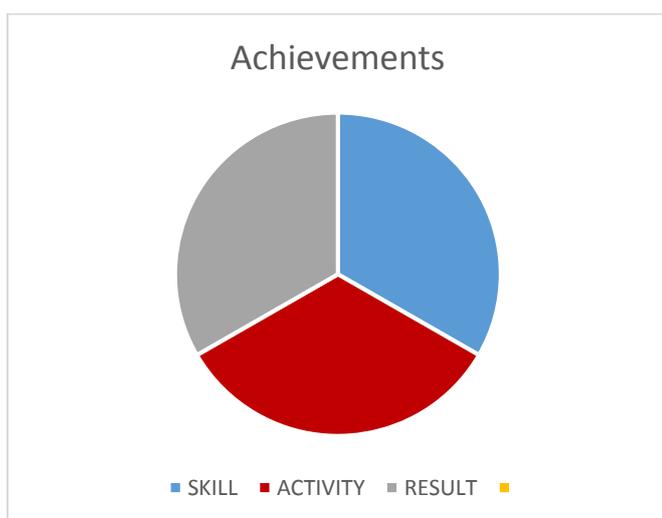
Achievements are things you did that had a **lasting impact** for your company or client. It is **a result that you bring about personally** while fulfilling a particular role. Typically achievements are things that you created, built, designed, sold or initiated.

Achievements are not the same as responsibilities that come under a job description, as these remain fixed no matter who is employed in the post. **An achievement is unique to your experience** and tells the employer that you can deliver. So, keep your duty summaries concise, and focus instead on unique accomplishments.

HIGHLIGHT THE **ACHIEVEMENTS** THAT ARE **UNIQUE TO YOU**, NOT JUST JOB RESPONSIBILITIES OR DUTIES THAT COULD BE ASSIGNED TO ANYONE.

Many people are uncertain how to express their achievements vs. responsibilities. This is because many responsibilities can often seem to be achievements and most achievements can appear to be responsibilities. To avoid any confusion, you must focus on determining which of the experiences that you have gained through the workforce can be classified as achievements and which ones can be classified as responsibilities.

Structure of an Achievement



An achievement consists of three components:

- ✓ Using a particular **skill**.
- ✓ Carrying out a particular **activity**.
- ✓ Getting a measurable or quantifiable **result or benefit**

Successfully writing the achievements section of your CV is perhaps the most difficult part. Here's our tip for getting it right: Think of your work experience in terms of the '**What? / So What?**' formula. It is a simple two-step process that asks:

What did I do?

So what? What was the quantifiable result?

Example: Rather than stating:

'I was responsible for a team of 20 people'

you could instead say:

'I planned, arranged and hosted a team building day, which resulted in improved communications within the office.'

Before creating achievement statements you'll want to **make a list of your achievements** using the what / so what formula.

Here's a list of examples of achievements to help get you started:

USING THE

WHAT?

SO WHAT?

FORMULA TO
CREATE
COMPELLING
ACHIEVEMENTS
STATEMENTS

LIST OF ACHIEVEMENTS:

- ✓ Re-organized something to make it **work better**
- ✓ Identified a problem and **solved it**
- ✓ Come up with a new idea that **improved things**
- ✓ Developed or implemented **new procedures or systems**
- ✓ Worked on **special projects**
- ✓ Received **awards**
- ✓ **Increased revenue** or sales for the company
- ✓ **Saved money** for the company
- ✓ **Saved time** for the company
- ✓ Contributed to **good customer service**

BEST PRACTICE:

HOW TO SHOWCASE
YOUR
ACHIEVEMENTS IN A
WAY THAT GETS
YOU

HIRED!

The following are example of achievements statements specific to the construction industry. The sections in bold italics are the ‘*what?*’ and the rest of the statements are the ‘so what?’

Think of your expertise in the context of these statements. Write down your list of achievements. Then work at converting the descriptions of your personal work experience into powerful statements such as these below that will get the attention of those who are hiring and put you at the top of their interview list.

Top tip: Think – “Does this statement make me want to hire this person?”

JOB WINNING ACHIEVEMENT STATEMENTS

- ✓ ***3-fold increase in profit margin*** by implementing operational improvement plans and adopting a more commercial approach to bidding.
- ✓ ***Leading the successful £45M tender*** for the sole design and consultancy position within the industry leading @one alliance, including participation in executive team interview.
- ✓ ***Building strong relationships*** with JV partner to allow for successful negotiation of commercial issues between partners, to move to a trust based relationship, resulting in a 5 year extension to the JV.
- ✓ ***Leading a cultural change programme*** to professionalise business development including a ‘Client First’ competency programme resulting in client satisfaction improvement from 86% to 97%.
- ✓ ***Leading a Group ‘Water Growth Segment’*** to share capability, knowledge and continuous improvements to harness the power of the 2,500 water professionals across seven countries for the benefit of clients.

PART 2 – Acing the Interview Process

No matter what stage of your career you're at, interviews can be unsettling, but taking the time to properly prepare can help you be more relaxed and come across as more confident.

Remember that **this is your opportunity to find out more about the company** because the interview is not just about whether you'll be the right person for the job, but also if the company and the position will be the right opportunity for you. It's probably the only inside view you'll get prior to actually starting to work there so make the most of it.

Making small talk

Small talk is not insignificant. When attending interviews, candidates are understandably focused on impressing their interviewers with their professional achievements and the contents of their CV.

Of course, these are essential components towards the decision-making process, but **interviewers also want to establish what sort of a personality they have in front of them.**

This can be established by engaging in a bit of friendly small talk and it will act also as an icebreaker - as we all know, interviews are a tense time for both parties.

As well as being an icebreaker, small talk is a good way for the interviewers to assess people skills and to see how a candidate reacts under pressure by observing body language and communication ability.

Ultimately, **being well-versed in small talk is an invaluable asset in all situations** and will boost your social acceptance. Practice small talk and see how it improves your performance at interviews!

HARNESS THE POWER OF SMALL TALK

DON'T:

- Waffle
- Try to flatter or be sycophantic
- Stray too far from relevant conversation
- Talk too much or too quickly so that the interviewer can't get a word in edgeways

DO:

- ✓ Look interested and engaged
- ✓ Let the interviewer take the lead and match your conversation to their topics
- ✓ Stick to safe subjects if you happen to take the lead
- ✓ Try to establish some common ground (it's perfectly acceptable to talk about the weather)

Interviewing the company – questions to ask the interviewer

When you go to an interview, don't forget that you are also interviewing the company. Industry reports reflect a shortage of skilled expertise in the construction industry and this is particularly relevant in more senior and specialist roles.

As a result of this currently it's a candidate-strong market which means that what an organisation can offer you is as important as what you can offer it.

Here are a few examples of questions that you can ask the interviewer that will give you some insight into the company and establish if it will be the right place for you to further your career.



QUESTIONS WORTH ASKING!

1. What are the core responsibilities of this position?

This is a key question and very important that you get this answer directly from “the horse’s mouth”! Job descriptions can be extremely generic and vague and you can get to the nub of what will be required of you by asking this at interview. With this question, you are showing you are looking to learn about the *real* responsibilities involved in the role.

2. What is the most challenging part of this position?

Again, you are showing that you are planning ahead to prepare for the hardest part of the role. If you’re informed honestly about the more difficult aspects of the position, you will be ready to accept these challenges more readily – forewarned is forearmed!

3. Why is the last person who held this position leaving?

This may seem a slightly awkward question to ask, but certainly a fair one and essential for your own peace of mind, as obviously there could either be a good or bad reasons for their departure - were they promoted? Moved to a different office? Fired? Let go?

4. How would you describe the company culture?

A huge part of staff retention is determined by the company fit. By asking this, you are showing that you understand the importance of fit and that you’re assessing whether it is a good match for you – it needs to work both ways!

5. How much support and training will be available to me?

This is a very important question. You need to establish what support will be available to you for professional development – we all know that good training is the lynchpin of a successful career benefitting employee and employer equally. This question will illustrate that you're open to continual learning and personal growth.

7. If you could improve one thing about the company, what would it be?

By asking about where the company can improve, you not only establishes that the interview process is a two-way street, but may also find out some important information to use in your decision making. If the answer given is not candid, there is information in that as well.

8. When can I expect to be notified for the next interviewing process?

Don't forget to ask this question at the end of your interview as it's entirely reasonable to want to know the time period you may have to wait. Also, it's a signal to the interviewer that time management is of importance (and everyone needs to be efficient at this to be successful).

PART 3 – Getting References

Many candidates spend a great deal of time researching prospective employers, polishing their cover letters and resumés and preparing for job interviews. However, they often neglect one crucial aspect of the job search process and that is to ask people to be their references.

Sometimes your references can make or break a job opportunity for you, therefore you have to be careful about who you include. If you're a bit lost about who to use as a reference and how to go about it, here are a few pointers to help you out.

Who should you use?

1. Your current or former bosses

Bosses make good references, as they know about your reliability and professional abilities and if they can put in a good word for you, you have a much better chance of landing a job.



However, if you left a company on bad terms, then it's probably best that you avoid using your bosses from that company as your references, as you don't want any negative words to be exchanged about you as a person, or your work performance.

Also, it goes without saying that if your current employer is unaware that you are looking for a new job, *do not* use them as a reference! A call from another employer regarding your application isn't exactly the most subtle way of revealing that you are looking to jump ship and you don't want to jeopardise your current role if you have not yet made any progress in your job hunt.

2. Co-workers

Your former co-workers know your strengths as a team player and are likely to have got to know you pretty well as an individual too, having worked with you on a daily basis. Have you helped out some co-workers in the past or worked on a successful project together? If so, they will most likely have something positive to say about you.

3. Customers or clients

If you have a good relationship with some customers or clients working in a particular role, ask them if they can be your references. This is particularly useful if you are looking for work in the service sector or a client-facing role, as it puts an emphasis on your customer service and communication abilities.

How should you go about it?

Now that you know who to use as your references, there are several things that you should keep in mind:

1. Ask for permission to use someone as a reference



Before you give out someone's contact information as your reference, get their permission first. Most people will say yes, but it's a common courtesy to ask for permission. Another reason to contact your reference prior to giving out their details is that they will then be expecting contact and will be prepared, without having been put on the spot.

2. Get the details of each reference

You need more than just their names and phone numbers. Make sure that you know their current position, company name, business phone numbers, as well as their personal contact information, including email address, as some employers prefer to make contact by email.

3. Prepare your references

Make sure that your references know what type of positions you are applying for. Give them a copy of your latest CV and point out any skills and accomplishments that you would like to highlight.

4. Thank your references

Whether your references were contacted by your prospective employers or not, make sure that you thank them for their help. It's not unlikely that you will require their services again.

PART 4 - Negotiating your offer

While getting your CV together and going for interviews may require you getting out of your comfort zone, the next challenge is what to do when you do get an offer. Is it what you were expecting or what you want? And if it isn't, how far can you push to get the offer you really want?

This is where as a senior manager, your negotiation and diplomacy skills will come to the fore, and you shouldn't be scared to show them. After all the construction industry requires strong leadership, and being able to negotiate well is a big part of that.

Tip 1: Know the value

When you started the process of applying for the role, seeing what salary was being offered was likely a big part of that. Knowing in advance what the industry standards are as well as the value of your skills and expertise, will help you clarify your offer expectations. If asked what salary you want, knowing your value in relation to industry norms gives you a range that you can put forward to open the negotiations.



Tip 2 - Don't talk money first

Be patient and first sell your expertise. Salary should be one of the last items discussed at an interview and it usually only comes at the point where you're both in agreement that you may be the right person for the role. It's also more professional if the company mentions it first.

Sometimes, sensing a salary negotiation is on the cards, interviewers will try get you to make the first move and name your salary. If this happens give a range rather than a specific sum as this then leaves room for negotiation. Tie this into data relating to industry figures and your level of expertise rather than your personal financial needs. Remember that companies are most interested in what you can do for them.

Tip 3 – More than Money

Some companies offer attractive benefits such as health insurance, additional annual leave or flexible working hours. Benefits could also include a company car, travel expenses or bonuses. These additional perks can make an otherwise mediocre offer a lot more attractive and should be given careful consideration. If a company has budget restrictions, then benefits could be the area to negotiate on to make the offer worth your while.

Tip 4 – Careful Consideration

Before saying yes or no, take the time to carefully consider your options and if this really would be the best move for you. Think beyond the offer, is it an industry sector where there is potential for growth? Does the company have a culture where you feel you could fit in? How much autonomy or freedom will you be given to make decisions? Are they open to new technology or new ideas? Telling them you need time to consider the offer can also get you a better offer if they are really sold on hiring you.

**IS THE OFFER AND
THE ROLE THE
BEST MOVE FOR
YOU AND YOUR
CAREER?**

Tip 5 – Saying No

If you have your doubts and questions go unanswered then it's likely it's not the right position for you. Don't be afraid to decline an offer unless it's a job you really want or need. Sometimes declining an offer can get you a better offer, but it can also get you crossed off the list, so be aware of this.

The Counteroffer:

So, you've accepted an offer to work for a new company and it's time to quit your current job. Shouldn't be too difficult, right?

You go about things in the right way by giving notice, offering to help in the transition, finishing up projects, and even say thanks for the opportunity. But instead of just shaking your hand and wishing you good luck, your boss hits you with a counteroffer – one that includes more money, more holidays, and better benefits. Now what?

While a counteroffer can be flattering, chances are your boss has ulterior motives. Employee resignations can hurt a manager's record. Or, maybe, he or she wants to keep you on long enough to find a replacement. Perhaps it's their motive because it's cheaper to pay you a bit more than it is to recruit, hire, and train a new employee.

In some instances, accepting a counteroffer may be a good move. But before you say yes, consider these very good reasons why you should decline.

1. You had to quit to get a raise.

Suddenly you became more valuable after you give notice? It should make you wonder why you weren't valuable enough to deserve a raise before—when you were coming into the office every day and dutifully attending to your job duties.

2. Things won't change.

The frustration, the stifling feelings, and the dissatisfaction that led you to seek new job opportunities will remain, and it's unlikely that the bump in pay will make those things any more bearable. Whatever turned you off about your job prior to the new offer will continue to be irksome after you accept a counteroffer.

3. Job security will diminish.

Your boss fought to keep you from quitting, sure. But when it comes time to lay off some people, it's a safe bet that you'll be somewhere toward the top of the list. Remember: Your boss wanted you to stay for his benefit, not yours. If he has the opportunity to get rid of you

THE RULE OF THUMB
AMONG RECRUITERS
IS THAT **70 TO 80**
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EITHER LEAVE OR
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YEAR.

on his terms— now that you've revealed a willingness to be a turncoat—he's likely going to take it.

4. You may be shunned.

When you give notice, you are, in effect, dumping your boss. As in many types of relationships, the rebuffed party begins to bargain: Give me another chance. Things will get better. I can change! No one, after all, wants to be dumped. But once your boss' anxiety is eased and you've agreed to the counteroffer, new emotions will set in: resentment, suspicion, distrust. You will likely spend your remaining time at the company on the fringes—excised from the inner circle for your show of disloyalty (and coworkers may resent the raise and how you got it).

5. You're going to leave anyway.

Four out of five employees who accept counteroffers end up leaving the company within nine months.

6. You've already accepted an offer.

And what about the new job offer you already accepted? By virtue of hiring you, that employer already has demonstrated a belief that you are valuable – and you haven't even had your first day yet. Your current employer, on the other hand, has begrudgingly offered you more money to get you to stay to suit his purposes. Also, leading on prospective employers by attending interviews, negotiating, accepting an offer, allowing them to think the job has been filled, is a bad career strategy in general. If you've made the decision to move on, then do so.

Conclusion:

At a senior manager level, moving on is a big decision and not one to be taken lightly. After all there are fewer positions at the top and more pressure to get results from the teams and the projects you take on. Being properly prepared for the process will give you more confidence and help you showcase your value and expertise to potential employers. With the current skills shortage if you can demonstrate that you can get results in these challenging economic times and have the skills to work effectively with people, you will be sought after and more likely to land the job offer you want and need. Ellis Fox recruits top talent for main contractors. If this is you, and you're looking for new opportunities, contact us today. Tel: 020 7183 0255