

CV & Interview Preparation

Leigh Griffin

What makes a Good CV?

One that gets you hired?
One that makes you stand out?
The truth!

Do NOT lie

- Legality of lying on your CV is questionable
- Very easy to discover an outright lie, referees, your google footprint, common sense and the right questions
- White lies are just as bad particularly if zoned in on
- It is perfectly fine to say you don't know, you don't understand or you haven't seen it before

First Glance Impression

- A Technical Person will review your CV
- HR might do an initial screen but most “sane” looking CVs will land at a technical person
- Average CVs received to fill a roll in Red Hat EMEA : 48
- I do this during my normal workload, you need to stand out in a good way

First Glance Impression

- Don't make my eyes water!!!
- A clean layout is hugely important
- Avoid tables, minimise bold text / capitals
- Try something creative, if you have the skills!

Top Level Information

- What I care about for Grads:
 - Name
 - Email Address (a professional looking email name)
 - Contact Details (in +353 format)
 - LinkedIn Profile (clickable link)
 - Github / BitBucket / Public Facing Code link / Public Portfolio (clickable)
- What I don't really care about
 - Address (still important to have!)
 - Full Clean Driving License

Dr. Leigh Griffin

CONTACT INFORMATION	14 Newport's Terrace Waterford City Co. Waterford, Ireland	home: +353 (0)51 350010 mobile: +353 (0)87 7545162 e-mail: leighgriffin@gmail.com
PROFILE	Senior Software Engineer in the mobile industry with over 9 years experience of pragmatic software development and research using emerging tools and languages. Excellent problem solving, prioritisation and troubleshooting skills. Excellent presentation, organisational and communication skills that would be an asset to any role.	
EDUCATION	Waterford Institute of Technology, Waterford, Ireland <i>Doctor of Philosophy</i> September 2007 – October 2012 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supervisors: Dr. Dmitri Botvich and Mr Eamonn de Leastar• External Examiner: Professor Nazim Agoulmine, University of Evry• PhD title: <i>Managing the Formation and Interaction of Groups within Emerging Social Networks</i> <i>BSc (Hons) in Applied Computing (Commercial), First Class</i> September 2003 – May 2007 Mount Sion CBS, Waterford, Ireland <i>Leaving Certificate Examinations</i> September 2001 – June 2003	
PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE	Red Hat, Waterford, Ireland <i>Senior Software Engineer</i> December 2015 – Present <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Senior Node.js Developer on Red Hat Mobile Application Platform• Member of the Sustaining Engineering team responsible for stability improvements• Initiator of focus on Software Quality using SonarQube• Focus on reduction of Technical Debt ahead of Open Source release• Active Open Source contributor to Red Hat products• Build Automation using Jenkins Job Builder• Scrum Coach for two distributed teams• Tasked with implementing Large Scale Scrum across 15 teams in 2016 Primeur Ltd, Waterford, Ireland	

Give me a Profile

- 3-4 lines of a high level introduction
- Sell me who you are, ~~where you come from~~, any high level skills that you can bring to the table
- Tell me what interests you, computing is a HUGEY diverse industry

Give me a Profile

- “Senior Software Engineer with 10 years experience in backend system development. Excellent troubleshooting skills, excellent communication skills, would be an asset to any role”
- From this I know:
 - This person is a backend engineer
 - Has a decade of experience
 - Values their troubleshooting and communication skills

Give me a Profile

- “Graduate Software Engineer with a passion for creating websites. Looking to explore opportunities in mobile computing and front end design. Hard working and willing to learn”
- From this I know:
 - This person feels creative
 - This person is a graduate
 - Looks honest and willing to grow as a person

Bullet Points vs Wall of Text

- Bullet Points are:
 - Clear and concise
 - Each point represents a talking point
 - Each point should be standalone so that an interviewer can jump around your CV
 - Each point should be a single line

Bullet Points vs Wall of Text

- Wall of Text are:
 - Confusing
 - Higher possibility of introducing a grammatical mistake
 - Means you lose an opportunity to talk about something important
 - Difficult for an interviewer to progress an interview
 - Makes me as a CV reviewer lose interest

Bullet Points vs Wall of Text

Worked in ACME Software Design Company as an intern in the engineering team. Here I looked after a lot of different systems and worked with the wider team as part out our Agile methodology. I learned how to read and document specifications and tested my own code. I also helped with the wider QA efforts during production releases which was a good experience.

Bullet Points vs Wall of Text

- Member of the Backend Engineering Team
- Primary development language was JavaScript using Node.js and Express.js framework for REST based services
- Full exposure to Scrum workflow and methodology
- Experience writing and documenting User Stories
- Exposure to business workflow and release management
- Developed following a TDD approach
- Gained exposure to formal QA processes and tools

Bullet Points vs Wall of Text

- I brought in the language I used
- I got to name check processes like TDD, REST
- I focused on the area of the business {Backend}
- I made the skill “reading & writing specs” into something generic and more transferrable
- I now have launchpads and can spin a story around each one.

Sell yourself as a Person

- The CV reviewer has to work with you for 8 hours a day, 40 hours a week
- Breakfast, lunch and coffee breaks
- Tell me about YOU as a person, put some thought into your Hobbies and Interests.
- I'd weigh personality and ability to fit into a team as high as 40% with ability the other 60%

Sell yourself as a Person

- This style approach feels weak, almost forced:
- Hobbies and Interests
 - Soccer, GAA, going to the gym, reading, travelling
- Achievements
 - Various medals for sport

Sell yourself as a Person

- Hobbies and Interests
 - Member of FC United for the past 10 years
 - Member of the South East MakerSpace
 - Passionate Gamer playing MMO Games
 - Interested in new cultures and travelling
 - Huge science fiction fan
- Achievements
 - Raising two wonderful children
 - Ran my first ever 10k race last week

We all have a past

- Hugely relevant for your course
- Sell me Transferrable Skills rather than your old day to day responsibilities or from your previous academic course
- If you worked as a cashier, a labourer, an engineer or if you never worked at all, tell me:
 - What can you bring to an IT role
 - Why did it inspire you to come into IT
 - Why this could set you apart from others

We all have a past

- Construction background:
 - Attention to detail
 - Working well as a team
- Business Background:
 - Strong documentation skills
 - Excellent problem solving
- No prior employment but you have a prior course
 - Share with me the transferrable content e.g. Maths module, problem solving approaches, similar methodologies (LEAN & Agile for example)

Course Content

- List YOUR most relevant subject first. This is highly subjective, Java for me, JavaScript for you
- Tell me your level of experience perhaps, competent in Java, highly skilled in JavaScript.
- Show your marks, give me something to help you standout, be proud of your achievements
- Tell me about a project you completed. Add it as an Appendix, show me your thought process

Course Content

- Project Goal:
- Project Technologies:
- What I learned from it:
- What I could do to enhance it knowing what I know right now

TECHNICAL
SKILLSET

Programming Languages and Patterns

Experienced level of use with Java SE, Java EE, Javascript (server side), Coffeescript, C++, C#.

Working proficiency in C, Prolog, Groovy, HTML5, CSS, Javascript (client side), R, Z, Lisp, APL, ASP.Net Linux shell scripting, Java ME, Android Development, XML, SQL, Internal DSL design and implementation

Implementation experience of multiple Software Design Patterns including MVC, MVP, Facade, Decorator, Prototype, Factory, Composite, Proxy, Observer, Bridge, Builder.

Tools and Technologies

Experienced level of use with Behaviour Driven Development Toolsets (JBehave, GSpec, Vows, Custom build), L^AT_EX 2_ε, Gnuplot, Eclipse IDE, Netbeans IDE, Matisse GUI, Github, Gitlab, Subversion, Bugzero, JIRA, Office suite, Node.js, UML2, Structure 101, Redmine project management tool, Xen Virtualisation Systems, Linux command line, Moodle, JIRA

Working proficiency in JUnit, OSGi, Spring Framework, Grails, Hibernate, Mercurial, Glassfish, Nginx, Apache, Maven, ANT

CV Order

- Completely up to you, however I would like to see the following sections in some way:
 - Profile has to come first
 - Academic history (particularly for you ; not so much for an experienced dev it reduces down to 1 line)
 - Skills and Experience
 - Personal Touches {Hobbies, Achievements, Interests}
 - Referees MUST be listed, I do not want “Available on Request” I want to know who will back you and I will never call them without your permission

CV Style

- Use as many pages as you feel is necessary. At your level you should be filling 3. My CV is 6, I could go to 8 depending on the role and what I want to show.
- Be creative, stand apart from the masses, don't download a generic template.
 - Build a CV website
 - Create a very visual CV if you are aiming for a job in that domain
 - Have your CV be a talking point
 - Have your portfolio visible on your CV (Appendix it)

CV Style

- Consider a Career Path Diagram, a picture paints a thousand words
- Consider writing your CV in LaTeX
 - Recruiters will hate you which is a positive!
 - Much more polished and professional looking
- Always deliver a PDF, your Word doc will render horribly on my Mac or my Linux OS and it is a poor first impression (or you might leave track changes on....)

Applying for a job

- Write a cover letter
- They will be dismissed and ignored for the most part but they are nice to have and I always read them as it gives me an insight into you
- 3 out of 24 students who applied for placement wrote cover letters. 3 out of 3 were given a screener.
- Consider calling to a business in person and delivering the CV by hand & follow up with a mail. The personal touch is appreciated.
- Be proactive, a job will not find you

Screenener Tips

- Some companies run Screeners before hand
 - Gaining in relevance, complete it on site or in your own time
 - We do both!!
- <https://www.hackerrank.com/> getting very popular
- It's a time saving mechanism and ensures a good fit on several levels to proceed with an interview (48 to <10)

Screenener Tips

- If the company runs a Screener pre interview
 - The questions are equally as important as the practical part
 - The philosophy you show in the questions **MUST** match that of the implementation
 - Code Comments, Testing, Good Layout, Documentation, ideally works first time out of the box

Screenener Tips

- Sometimes you just can't solve the problem
- Be honest and upfront as to why BUT state the steps you took
- Code Comments, Testing, Good Layout, Documentation can overcome this

The Interview Itself

Interview Tips

- Know something about the company you are applying to
- Know about their culture, their offices, their style of work
- WANT to work there, don't give the impression that you just want any kind of job, you WANT this job

Interview Tips

- Ask questions reactively & come into the interview with at least 3 questions to ask e.g.
 - Chance to learn and grow?
 - Will there be pair programming for training?
 - How would a typical day in the role look like?

Interview Tips

- Arrive Early and get comfortable
- Dress appropriately, full formal dress is overkill 99% of the time but know your target market. Business casual is fine, be comfortable in your own clothes!!
- Bring 5 copies of your CV
 - 3 for the people conducting the interview who will politely refuse as they have a copy
 - Strategically place the stacked CVs in front of you to glance at (makes your first page very important)

Interview Tips

- Have a story about EVERY bullet point on your CV
- Very easy to control an interview as MOST people conducting an interview have never had formal training in that regard
- Be able to link those bullet point seamlessly e.g. going back to our CV example:

Linking points

- Member of the Backend Engineering Team
- Primary development language was JavaScript using Node.js and Express.js framework for REST based services
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Interview Tips

- If there is water in front of you drink it regularly.
 - Useful break to gather your thoughts
- Don't be afraid to say I don't know or can you rephrase the question
- Don't lie, it will be caught and it will have consequences to your interview as I would try turn the focus up on areas I think you are lying on
- Relax and remember you done the course, your CV is truthful and anything they ask you is in the area you know

Interview Tips

- If the interview has a practical element
 - Stay calm, your thought process is more valuable than the correct answer
 - Make notes on the question, try and flesh it out
 - Show me your train of thought, logically break the problem down

Interview Tips

- Example: the classic FizzBuzz question!!
- "Write a program that prints the numbers from 1 to 100. But for multiples of three print “Fizz” instead of the number and for the multiples of five print “Buzz”. For numbers which are multiples of both three and five print “FizzBuzz”."

Interview Tips

- Step 1: Re write the problem, just writing it helps you think about it and writing it out helps you break it into parts. Use pseudocode English to help you transition it
 - If number % 3 then Fizz
 - If number % 5 then Buzz
 - If number %3 and %5 then FizzBuzz
 - If neither we just print the number
 - Range is 1-100

Interview Tips

- Step 2: Make a pseudocode solution

```
for(1 to 100)
{
  if (i % 3 == 0) print Fizz
  if (i % 5 == 0) print Buzz
  if (i % 3 == 0 AND i % 5 == 0) == print FizzBuzz
  else print i
}
```

Interview Tips

- Step 3: Write it in your language of choice:
This might not be necessary sometimes your pseudocode is enough.

```
public class FizzBuzz {  
  
    public static void main(String[] args) {  
  
        for(int i = 1; i <= 100; i++) {  
  
            if (((i % 3) == 0) && ((i % 5) == 0))  
                System.out.print("fizzbuzz");  
  
            else if ((i % 3) == 0) System.out.print("fizz");  
  
            else if ((i % 5) == 0) System.out.print("buzz");  
  
            else System.out.print(i);  
                }  
            }  
        }
```

Interview Tips

- Step 4: Comments, notes, enhancements
- Put a `//` comment next to most lines
- Write a test? Can you refactor it? Can you improve it somehow?

Summary

- Don't lie
- Create a unique CV put a lot of time into it
- Know your CV inside out and upside down
- Sell yourself as a person
- Cast enough lines and something will bite

Questions?