



Executive 2.0

Communicating your executive brand: from introduction to interview

You've defined the essential ingredients of your career ([read blog 5](#)) and know what's important to you in your next role. You've researched the industry and activated your network. Now you're ready to look at your executive brand through the lens of the interview setting.

But the interview itself is just one component of the journey to your ideal job. There is more groundwork to be done before you can sit comfortably in the interview chair.

Consider the calibre of your contacts

Good networking is a skill, carefully evaluate who you will ask to recommend you for the role. Some executive directors, search firm specialists and stakeholders will only accept introductions from contacts who are known to have a great network. I, too, am careful and selective about who is recommending or introducing people to me. Good leaders will recommend or introduce good people.

Review your resume

Professionally tune your resume – if a candidate doesn't have a high-quality CV in the correct format, I won't take them forward.



A resume starts with the first impression: is it structured, is it organised, is it focussed on the right subjects? Simple matters are of consequence here: font, good but functional design and a kind of executive summary format.

An executive level CV is not a list of previous roles or a copy of LinkedIn page.

For me LinkedIn is a modern version of a telephone book. It's easy to find and connect to people but it does not give a real qualitative insight into the executive. On LinkedIn everybody can present themselves as a superhero. But with a good CV that has been taken care of, you can stand out. To create it, follow these steps:

1. Keep your CV to no more than one piece of paper, double-side printed. Never underestimate the power of the one-pager<[link to Blog 1](#)>. This demonstrates that you can simplify the complex – a core skill for c-suite roles.
2. Make sure your CV header - the profile - doesn't go beyond three lines of text, describing who you are as an executive and what you're ready for in your next role. It's not easy but it shows you have the analytical skills to summarise.
3. Highlight in four bullets the four key achievements in your career. The four achievements should describe where you stand out and the impact of your performance.
4. List your current role first and work backwards. For each position describe in four bullet points your four key responsibilities. Then follow this with your four key achievements, where achievement one is the response to responsibility one, two to two, etc.
5. Detail relevant education, starting with the most recent.
6. Include a personal section at the bottom – referencing extra-curricular activities, charity roles and family. But be prepared to answer questions on it.



7. For instance, if I come across a 'film-lover', I expect them to demonstrate a depth of knowledge and interest on the subject. I always ask what the last movie they saw was, who their favourite producer is and which actors they appreciate and why. If answers start to fail, I know their claim is window dressing. But in most cases I discover true passion. For me it does not matter what that passion is as long as it is there.
8. The Golden Rule: a bullet point should never be more than two or three lines.

Tailor your CV to guide your interview

A good resume is an invitation for a job interview. Your resume is still the communication document towards the headhunter or hiring manager, but you can also think of it as an agenda for your interview – use it to guide the conversation by referring to it and elaborating on it. This gives you some control and means you are less dependent on the capability and expertise of your interviewer.

A good quality CV will trigger questions, so craft it to invite the interviewer to want to know more, and be prepared to add depth. Take the lead here and link everything back to the job description.

Adapt to the dress code

Remember this: you never get a second chance to make a first impression. How you enter the interview room is of key importance.

Find out the dress code in advance of the interview so you can adapt what you wear accordingly. You need to be clear on what environment you're going into, what message you need to convey, and how it fits with your personal brand and the role you're going for.

Not every interview requires a suit – in IT, executives don't wear ties and suits but high quality, designer shirts and jeans. Being unconventional with your appearance is fine but must be done with caution - there is a risk that some people won't like a more outspoken approach.



Be on display, all day

Keep the essential building blocks of your personal brand <[link to Blog 1](#)> in clear focus. You are inevitably on display once you're in the interview chair, but on the day of your interview you need to model a top performance at every touchpoint.

If you arrive by car, never park in the first parking spot as that is reserved for clients. Some companies will have observers in the car park, the lobby, in the lift, even on the street during your commute. Consider how you walk and how you interact with people throughout the day. Many companies ask the receptionist about their experience with interviewees.

The key to a successful interview is in your preparation. Get in touch<[link to contact](#)> with me to start refining your executive or personal branding - and bring your way forward into focus.

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