

Successful Applications



Olaf Kellerhoff

The EFN Business Leader

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Impressum

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**Dedicated to the Youth of Pakistan
– bringing out its full potential
in a free market economy**

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Foreword



Young, dynamic, but jobless – a fate many of Pakistan's youth share. Yes, the current economic situation is not favourable to start a career. However, in the right spirit and with the right application strategy it will be possible to take the first steps into the professional world.

I receive a lot of applications, speak to many youngsters and see their challenges but many of them choose the wrong approach and are bound to fail in their search for a job. This is heart-breaking for me: On one hand there is a high-unemployment rate, there is so much will-power and there is much potential in this country; on the other hand unprofessional applications stop possible great careers right at the start. Most mistakes could be avoided so easily!

Seeing this triggered this publication. Basic advice, sample CVs and errors highlighted will help any applicant to increase his chances immediately. Furthermore, form and content of accompanying letters are decisive. Many "how to" will everyone help to improve. But foremost a guide will help to find you to find the strategy before the first CV is written.

This guide is part of the series *The EFN Business Leader*. Economic Freedom Network Pakistan (EFN) is a network

of businessmen, academics and politicians, who know about the advantages of a free market economy for a society and work for it accordingly. With this guidebook series EFN wants to contribute to the vibrant Pakistani economy where everybody can earn his or her livelihood in dignity – based on equal rights and equal opportunities.

Thus, I hope and wish to help all potential applicants success! May the better one succeed in a transparent, equal and free market! May a company get the most suitable employee! May you get your dream job!

Good Luck!

Olaf Kellerhoff

Resident Representative FNF Pakistan

P.S.: This book is also available in Urdu, Pashto, Sindhi and Balochi. You can ask for a free copy or download it from the EFN homepage: www.efn.net.pk.

P.P.S.: In the book the fictive persons of Muhammad Ali and Khadeeja Anwar are used. These are purely fictional characters used for illustrative purposes and have nothing in common with any living or dead persons.

1. Your dream job

Success is often described as climbing a ladder. You work hard, are committed and step-by-step you get higher and higher. At the end of your professional career you reach the top. But what if the ladder has leaned on the wrong wall? Yes, you had success, but did you get what you wanted in life?

Especially, at the start of your professional life – including your studies – you should foremost study yourself. With the help your parents, your friends and best with a mentor you should find out: What do I want to reach in life? What can I do best? What do I like to the most?

Remember the Movie “3 idiots”? Engineering just was the wrong choice for one of them. He just did it to please his parents. He corrected his choice at the end of his studies. Too late? Studies in vain? Perhaps, yes! But isn't it better than a wasted life?

So, better make your decisions thoroughly – as early as possible! There are also specialist advisors who can help you finding your potential and making the right decision. It costs money, but could prove to be well invested.



Career Coaching

A career coach or consultant supports you, based on your current basic position to identify your goals as well as to specify your structures of behaviours and values. Together you sketch your vision of life – not only of career. Some call it Life/Work Planning.

Thus, you can define an area of professions. He or she won't give you one single job description – for good reasons. The labour market is changing constantly.

Nowadays, people stay in a company on an average of 3.7 years. So, what be valid for now, will be different within a very short time.

Furthermore, your ideas of remuneration will develop with your progress and your life circumstances. A coach can help you in negotiations.

No shame to ask a pro!

The short-term consulting can aim at changing structures of behaviour and improve your entrance.

To be precise: A career coach will not give you a job. The emphasis is to advise you to become a detective to find a job on your own – a job suitable for your vision of life. All is possible: If your grandma wants to become a photo model, there is a chance.

In order to find a career coach you have to a little research on your own. It is important that trust and sympathy is built up during the first talk. You should be able to open up in order to tell the truth about your ideas, feelings, and dreams. Do not take someone from your friends or family with you as this might distort the outcome – as we all get influenced by the presence of others, especially when we want to please or impress them.

Career Coaching Questionnaire

This questionnaire should give you some ideas of the basic questions you have to clarify with a friend, mentor or career coach.

1	What are your personal strengths?	
2	What are your weaknesses?	
3	How do you envision your retirement in terms of job, family, and life?	
4	Where would you like to stand in five years with job, family, and life?	
5	What is your primary reason for seeking a job now?	
6	In your current position what is working and what is missing?	
7	What internal barriers or external constraints for making a career?	
9	What are types of role you would like to excel in?	
10	What type of work makes you the happiest?	
11	What are the characteristics of an environment you work best in?	
12	Can you easily articulate your experience and areas of expertise?	
13	Which professions have the main characteristics of your personality?	
14	How would you prioritize the professions?	
15	Do you know where to get help to achieve your career goals?	
16	Do you lack confidence for the right job?	

2. Application Strategy

In order to reach an objective we have to know the objective! Based on the questionnaire above and the analysis with family, friends, or mentors/consultants you have envisioned your life and identified the area of professions you would like to work in. The next step is to research the market in order to find out where you could get your dream job. Which companies offer what you want? Do you want to set-up your own business instead?

The objective

Where do I find my dream job? What is the right company to apply to? What is the pole position to start from? The answers will vary as much as there are job seekers in this world. You can approach your personal objective with the help of career coach. On the other hand you can also ask yourself some basic questions to approach your personal objective.

After having answered the questionnaire above you have encircled the area of professions already. But in

a Work-Life Planning you became also aware what are you willing to sacrifice for a job:

What do you expect to earn? Or is there a sum you have to earn, as a necessity, e.g. to support a family?

How much are you willing to spend for a job and much time do you want/need for family and friends as well as your other interests?

*Your priorities
for a happy life?*

How far can the job be away from home? What is the maximum time or distance you are willing to commute daily?

A trade in hand has gold in every land. There are chances across the world. Are you willing to leave your hometown? Not every job is worth doing. Before applying and committing to one you should be aware whether this fulfils your expectations.

You have to take into account the costs a new jobs involves, e.g. the price of commuting or moving, to see whether it is justified. Let's have a look at the needs in Pakistani Rupees (PKR) of Muhammad Ali as head of a family with two children and the single Khadeeja Anwar:

Type of Costs	M.Ali	Kh. Anwar	Me
Apartment	35,000	20,000	
Food	22,000	28,000	
Electricity/gas	12,000	3,500	

Telephone / Internet	3,500	3,500	
Clothes	10,000	10,000	
Household items/repairs	5,000	2,000	
Books/newspapers	3,000	2,000	
Gifts for family/friends	5,000	3,000	
Savings	5,000	8,000	
Insurances	4,000	2,000	
Holidays	5,000	8,000	
Total	109,000	90,000	
Commuting	10,000	5,000	

Assumed that both of them are offered a job in Islamabad for PKR 100,000 it becomes clear that it won't be possible for Muhammad Ali to accept. Muhammad living in Multan cannot move with his family due to family constraints and schooling. Furthermore, the rent in Islamabad would be too much for him. Commuting only on weekends means he would need a place to stay during the week, which will come up to 15–20,000 plus

Not every job is worth doing!

commuting in the city. Unless he is able and willing to cut his consumption he should not accept the offer.

This is different for Khadeeja, also from Multan. She can find a room in hostel and the costs of living will be similar. Still there will be surplus left. If she wants to increase savings (which she should for emergency cases as well as for possible investment in her educa-

tion) she could easily reduce dining out (as her food is quite expensive compared to the four mouths to feed in Muhammad's family).

It becomes clear that *not every job is worth taking*. While for Khadeeja it is a good option to achieve her career objectives, Muhammad has the responsibility of a family. The costs of the job are too high for him. Additionally, time is money. If accepted, he will spend every weekend travelling about four to five hours one way to his family. This is unproductive you neither use for the job nor can utilize for your family. So, consider for each job offer what you are willing to sacrifice.

Knowledge is power

In search of a job, you look for the right companies or organisations in your profession. There are many sources for your research available.

- Newspaper articles
- Newspaper advertisements
- Magazines of a certain branch
- Internet:
 - ▶ Homepages of companies
 - ▶ Job exchange or career fair sites
 - ▶ Online Application forms
- Conferences & Seminars announcements or reports
- Networking with right people

- Do not to neglect to ask family and friends. Often out-of- the- box approaches can direct your research into new directions.

Ask people you know and who are working in the field you are interested in where to look further. Often they know the right addresses.

Furthermore, search by keywords in search engines. Usually, it creates an avalanche into which to dig further and further.

I can! – Your skills

Do you? Certain jobs require certain skills. By my so far four years of experience in Pakistan I noticed that many people, especially young men, tend to overestimate themselves highly. Coming from Germany I am often surprised what some people claim to know. In Germany each profession is learned in an apprenticeship of three years in a workplace, which is entitled to teach, plus in a specialised training centre simultaneously. After three years and practical plus theoretical exams you are allowed to call yourself a mechanic, carpenter,

cook, baker, butcher or like myself a photographer. Even allegedly simple jobs like a bread seller are taught in an apprenticeship.

*Sharpen the saw:
use your time and
enhance your skills!*

After an apprenticeship you are still not allowed to open up your own business. Only after five years of work experience in a given profession you either attend a half-



year full time school or two years of evening school for doing your Masters in that profession. Only then, you can start your own business and are entitled to teach apprentices – with the result that the job market offers trained and specialised job seekers with required skills to potential employers.

When searching for a job, have a look at the skills required! Be honest with yourself – as well as to an employer – whether you bring these qualifications with you. Never claim what you are not or that you can do what you cannot! Of course, you can still acquire certain skills in the meantime.

Especially, when you are jobless you have an edge over all those who are employed: You have time – time for yourself, in which you can acquire more qualifications. Use this time to the utmost possible. Soon, once you have a job, you will not have this chance so easily.

If you have a certain job in mind, train yourself for the required skills. If there is nothing in your mind yet what



to do, for example you are still doing your O-levels, you can nonetheless work on yourself and the job market: Some skills are required everywhere and knowledge was never damage to someone.

Train yourself for the job in mind!

Some training might be expensive, other things you can learn for yourself without any costs involved. To give you some ideas:

Driving licence and experience (in order not to shy away when this skill is required, includes also taking care of car, e.g. changing tyres etc.)

Touch Typing – allows an increase of typing speed, reduction of errors and a more energy saving way for you. An average speed of 60 Words per Minute (WPM) is a good rate. Where do you stand? You can train to improve your speed!

Languages: there is always a need to improve in languages in this international world. You have an advantage in Pakistan to have at least partially grown up with English. But how good is your English really? Twenty new words a day is a very low rate for a learner – but try to keep it up!

Software: Many claims in CV do not withstand scrutiny. There are so many tutorials for free in the web. Use your free time to upgrade your IT skills!

The multi-way approach

Taken by surprise – Unsolicited Applications

By research, conferences and networks etc. you have the right addresses (see below). If you do not know any specific person within these companies and organisations or don't know about a specific vacancy you can nonetheless start your unsolicited applications.

Begin with low priority companies!

The best is to start with companies, which are quite low on your preference list. Thus, you learn about reactions on it and get valuable feedback in order to improve for the higher priorities. Nonetheless, you have to adapt your CV and accompanying letter to each of the companies. Customize as much as possible. How? See in the next Chapter targeted Application!

All in all it is of course better to target correctly. Therefore, take into account telephone calls as well as networking to address your application to the right person, which we deal with below.

Targeted Application

You have read of a vacancy? A friend sent you the hint about a person who is searching for a good employee? A CEO tells you at a conference he opens a new posting? Excellent! This is a good chance! Do not miss it!

A targeted application has much higher chances to be accepted – that is not to say an unsolicited has almost none. Of course you can send out 50–100 applications a day in a generic form, but mostly they get deleted right away (especially when applicants put 30 companies in the address field of an email). If you target, you will be only able to send maximum three applications a day if you work 12 hours on it.

The time spent is well invested. You increase your chances enormously. Additionally, customizing is an excellent preparation for a job interview.

One size fits all? – Customizing

You have your papers ready in a basic shape? Now, it's time to customize. It takes some time but it's worth the effort. A generic version of your CV is only suitable

The Name is the Person

Get the correct address, name of the responsible person including the correct spelling. During my time here I have learned that people don't pay attention to a correct spelling of their own names. Even some people write their names in different variations. This might work here, but if you apply for an international company or an organisation make sure the names are 100% right. A West-erner will take a misspelling personally and feel offended. For them names are part of the personality, which you disrespect by incorrect writing.

for your homepage or job fairs but not for a targeted application. Otherwise a generic CV does not work. Customizing shows your interest in the position. It outlines how your skills and experiences fit for the position. It proves that you are focused. It's a sign of professionalism.

Make each application unique!

On one hand you have your **CV** to adapt. It should highlight specifically the experience relevant to this specific job. Pick key points from the advertisement or the talk you had with the hiring person at a conference or your telephone call (see below). This will help a possible employer to find information that is relevant to him quicker. It shows that you are familiar with the company's culture and issues of the branch of profession. It proves that you have done your homework – which reflects an overall attitude you will hopefully also present in the job.

According to the job you should prioritize your achievements, skills and qualification. Perhaps you take a new one in and delete another one instead? For example:

You had once dealt with an engineering problem in your previous company and you have solved it successfully. In your standard CV there was no space to mention this additionally. Now, this company you are applying to specialises in engineering solutions. So, of course you have to mention it now.

A company shows Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) by supporting an orphanage foundation. You have been committed yourself to orphans for a while,

which you did not rate to be important as you have done many other things in life, too. Well, here is the place to reconsider it. It could engage someone's sympathy.

Leave out information, which is not relevant for this job. It helps to orientate quicker and not to overlook your most important relevant points. Sift all your information and choose only the relevant one. Prioritise: Most important always on the top (unless you have for example your education arranged by years – but even then the latest degree is the most important and it should be a descending order. So, it will also be on the top.). Furthermore:

- Match your language! Examine the language of the vacancy or the company's homepage and use their wording.
- If you are not sure, what is important of your skills try a phone call!
- Change your career focus on broader skills instead of on your previous job experiences.
- Restate the exact job title you are applying for on the Objective line of your resume. This is important when you apply to larger companies or organisations, which have several vacancies to fill. So, they know what you are applying for.

After having made changes to your standard CV you might have some new mistakes or misspelling in. Get it proofread by at least two persons and ask for a detailed feedback (see CV > Getting better)!

Success on call – the telephone

Most people underrate the possibilities of a telephone contact. Only about ten per cent use this method – a grave mistake! The telephone can help you in five ways during your application.

1. **Information Gathering:** you can contact the Public Relations department and ask for information material of a given company or organisation. This will help you getting a clear view what a company is doing and what the job might be about.
2. **Quest for Vacancies:** on one hand you can ask for vacancies and on the other for the right person to address your application to. Thus, you create interest and curiosity of a Human Resources

Manager. But then don't delay your application too long. It should reach there within two, three days after your call.

3. **Follow-up:** after having sent your application you follow up what has happened. But give a company at least a week's time and better avoid a reproachful voice. Stay friendly, interested and perhaps even humorous.



*A call at the right time
can lead to success!*

4. **Keeping in Touch:** Just one follow-up might not be enough. By a second or even third call in a time of about two weeks you express interest as well as stamina. But don't exaggerate as this could quickly lead to the opposite of your intension: you might be considered annoying and get a bad mark.
5. **After Rejection:** It is completely acceptable to ask for the reasons for your rejection. Thus, you learn about your weaknesses in your application and how to overcome them. It might be hard to do this call due to your disappointment. Nevertheless, stay friendly and avoid an offended voice!

Write your questions down before!

In a time when everybody uses a mobile phone at all places and at any moments, it is often forgotten: Also telephone calls have to be prepared.

- Finish your research on a company. If the research is a time back, go through it again to have the key points in mind.
- Choose a calm room where you can be alone for a while. The best is to sit at a desk to be able to take notes easily.
- Write down your questions. You should not redo the call just because you forgot something.
- In case you have sent your application already, have copies of all documents

with you. Your telephone partner might have a specific question, e.g. "I don't understand your third bullet under the heading qualification. Can you explain..."



- Have paper and pencil for notes and test it before you call.
- Smile! Even if we cannot see it on phone – we can hear it! Your voice changes when you smile. Additionally, it gets you in the right mood.

Please consider the **right time for telephone calls!**

You want to get the person in the right mood and open-mindedness. Understand that someone is brief and tells you for calling another time (he/she might be in a meeting). If someone promises to call back and doesn't do it due to a busy schedule, don't take it personally. It happens. So, just call again at another time! So what's the best time? It depends: Islamabadis are early birds compared to Lahoris or Karachites: after 11:15 morning meetings have taken place, while some-

Call at the right time!

one in Sindh must have joined office. Ask businessmen and women in your social circle what they would recommend! Don't call in the evening time, when private life has started.



When you call, please pay attention to the following points, and even more so if you do a so-called “cold call”, i.e. you don’t know the person you are talking to:

Introduce yourself and the reason of the call. It is highly annoying for a busy decision maker to try to find out who is calling and what for. For example:

Hello Mr. XYZ. My name is Muhammad Ali. Currently, I am studying at the University of Central Punjab in Lahore. I came across your company during the conference of xyz in Islamabad, in February. By some research I was impressed by your products as well as your company’s philosophy and got very curious. Thus, I would like to know whether you have not more than five minutes to satisfy my interest?

Do not ask straight forward “I need a job.” You may miss the chance to find out more information about the company or perhaps also other companies in a given area. Pay also attention to keywords about the branch and the culture of a company. It will definitely help you during an interview to reuse them.

Keep your questions as well as your statements short and precise. Therefore, it’s better to write them down. Stay within the promised five minutes. Thus, an interlocutor is more willing to take your call the next time, too.

Unlimited chances – Internet

The Internet offers unlimited chances for your life. Today it is the research tool No. 1 for your research. You cannot only visit the homepage of a company or organisation, but search for more contributions. If you have names of single names of employees or the director you can have look under his or her name.

Furthermore, there are many **online platforms, job fairs and job advertisement** you can register on. A little time investment might pay off.

You can subscribe to **RSS feeds** to keep yourself informed. **Really Simple Syndication** (RSS) is a web



format by which you subscribe to updates on chosen homepages. This will help you to save time and nonetheless to be always up-to-date. Whenever a new contribution is posted, you will be informed. Really practical!

Google Alerts are another way to get relevant information on the key words you choose. Go on Google and click on "more". Register at "alerts" and you will be informed by mail about the key words you are interested in, e.g. a certain company or a branch.

*Never claim to be
what you are not!*

The Internet is not only good for research, but also a good place to present you. Be pro-active on the Internet. Sell yourself – but don't exaggerate.

Never claim to be what you are not!

Your **own homepage** would be one way to present yourself and to be searchable. It is a place to have your key qualifications posted as well as a downloadable version of your CV. Publications, academic articles and



So many opportunities like job vacancies, conferences, or simply interesting organisations can be found.

blogs etc. can be added additionally. But KISS – Keep it short and simple! Less is more! The easier and quicker relevant information can be grasped from your site the better. For being searchable in a better way SEO is the magic word. By Search Engine Optimization (SEO) companies get higher rankings in search engines. Some of them pay of course. But by a few hints you can achieve almost the same results.

Kiss
It
Short &
Simple

- In your Meta data (title tag, meta description) line of your homepage relevant keywords should be mentioned. They will not be visible but relevant for search engines.

- If you have keywords repeated in the text it will help.
- Set links to other relevant pages.
- If possible get your homepage connected to important currently visited sites.
- Update your website regularly. This will keep the search engines coming back.

Furthermore, with the Web 2.0, Internet has become a tool of interaction. **Social media** is on a high. It is estimated that there will be around 50 million mobile Internet users in Pakistan; i.e. citizens who are accessing Internet by smart phones. So, do not miss the chance to present yourself there. Be searchable!

***Present yourself -
be searchable!***

This can be done in several ways. Be sure to be authentic and not to claim to be anything you are not (which might be sometimes tempting in the Internet):

- Create a Facebook account if you do not have any so far and start interacting with others.
- Linked-in.com is a site for professional networking. That would be the address number one for job search.
- You have a good presentation? Post it on www.slideshare.net especially when relevant for the job branch you are applying for.
- You can create your own blog. But be aware that a blog has to be maintained.

Absolute minimum is weekly to keep it alive. Only do it if you know that you will have the time to maintain it. Otherwise, it shows that you are neither disciplined nor focused.

- Still, the best to get known in a professional branch is to have published academic article in a relevant journal of your branch. Often they will be referred to in the web – and you can link your homepage to a relevant site.

All in all be aware what are you posting! Human Resources Managers know also to use the Internet. If interested in a person, they will of course do some research. If they find party pictures and doubtful or even insulting statements do not expect to get the job. Naturally, the rejection letter won't mention any of these reasons...



If you are not familiar with the vast chances of Social Media you can get trained in workshops. Here a FGP skill training supported by FNF.

Joint interests

– Conferences & Seminars

The best of conferences are the coffee breaks – well, at least for your networking with the right people. Besides general and specific knowledge you have the chance to learn many more things and get to know the right people.

One thing is the right vocabulary used in your specific branch. Listen carefully how people talk. Also, the way people dress is insightful. You will find more acceptance – unfortunately, human beings are often like this – when you obey the dress code that is the norm.

For your next small talk session you get to know the right topics. What are issues and topics of your branch?



Conference Programmes and handouts offer a number of names, which are relevant for your branch of interest. Add them to your network and follow them up!



EFN Pakistan members link up with internationals at a conference in Hong Kong in 2012.

You can impress with some background knowledge at the next given occasion.

In programmes of conferences and seminars you find names and organisations. Don't throw it in the waste bin – it can be gold for you. It is a good starting for further research!

And again: *be pro-active!* If you use the tea breaks to connect to others it can be only of advantage. Occasions and opportunities do not arise by themselves but are created.

You give also the occasion for others to get in touch with you if you have an intelligent question during the Question & Answer session. But don't go into excessive statement and self-appraisal. Be short and precise! Don't forget to mention your name and function. There

is no shame in being a student. If you are jobless after your studies, you can pursue some professional training or short courses. It looks much better to leave higher studies for a good job instead of having nothing. Don't invent a function, which is not true. Credibility is priceless.

Register for conferences and newsletters. This will create future occasions for deepening your knowledge and network.

Learning not earning – Internships

Learning years are not earning years. But learning is an investment in your own future. How could you invest better? So, delay consumption to a later stage and learn whatever is possible! Internships are often unpaid but offer a chance of learning – but not only this: oftentimes a good intern is absorbed as an employee by a company.

*Work & Life
experience for free*

Furthermore, an internship at a good place looks excellent on your CV. It shows interest and commitment as well as exposure. Being an intern you get different perspectives and insights in a profession, which will always help you later in any other job.

If you present yourself well during your internship you might kindly approach a CEO, or director or head of department and ask him if you could name him or her as reference person on your CV. Especially, when

starting out in your career you need the support of well known individuals to boost your chances.

After having identified the right company or organisation (see above) you could apply in different ways (also above).



Seeking international exposure: German intern Clara interacting with a workshop participant during her stay in Pakistan.

Once called in an interview ask what you will learn and what is the plan for interns. Do not get yourself exploited neither! Some companies see an intern as a source of cheap labour. When it turns out to be like this, seek an appointment with the responsible person and highlight your concerns. If it does not improve, quit. Do not waste your lifetime!

It is helpful for every responsible person who will write your reference letter if you can present him or her at the end of your internship a list of tasks you have done and what you have learned.

It is good style to thank the company in a letter thereafter, too. Thus, you keep in touch and stay in a good memory of the company – perhaps for a job at a later stage.

Getting connected – networks

Connections only harm the one who doesn't have them. Very true, especially in Pakistan, where many things are regulated via networks. Of course, you can lament that you are not born in the right family and therefore won't have a chance. So what? We all have constraints, but to cry and blame your parents is just insane. They have raised you in the best of their spirit, love and gave you all the best they could. Now you are grown up and it's up to you to use whatever is available. Lamenting doesn't help and won't improve your situation. *You don't have connections, you don't have a network – well, create it!*

Networking is work! When I came to Pakistan I didn't know anybody. Now, after four years there are about



4,000 people in my Blackberry from across all sections of society: there is the NGO activist in Badin (Sindh), the economics professor in Lahore, the journalist in Hyderabad, the student from Bahawalpur, the federal employee in the prime ministers' office, there is the movie actress famous in South Asia, there is the Minister from Khyber-Pakhtoonkhwa or the Senator from Balochistan etc. – all

Networking is work!



Speed Networking at the Asia Liberty Forum, Delhi.

of whom I know personally. Perhaps we just met once, but I keep their contact details and follow up whenever possible. I can tell you that it costs a lot of work and time. I spend about 12–15 hours a week just for that. But what a difference: four years back when I arrived in Pakistan and our office driver handed me a Blackberry at the airport it was blank!

So, get started to create your own network and your job opportunities! Just to sign a membership form

doesn't suffice for having a network. Also in here you have to invest time, energy, and commitment. But there are many things to gain from, too. Mostly non-materialistic: friends, even sometimes love (now I am married

due to networking in a seminar), learning, and connections. And the best is opportunities often open up surprisingly.

Business Cards: Even if you are jobless and don't have money left, business cards are an investment into your future. There are cheap ways to get one: you can buy special paper at a stationery shop and print it out in



Exchange of cards during the FGP Alumni Meeting in Lahore.

an Internet café. But have some! Don't save money on the paper. Go for good quality, but nothing colourful. Less is more! Don't exaggerate with your position and functions. Remember: The most important people just have their name on, an email address and sometimes not even a phone number. But as you want to

get connected you should have all that.

The human being is a social animal. We like to stick together and exchange. Networks arise – some purely social, e.g. a circle of friends or on Facebook, some purely professional, e.g. engineering society, or political like Economic Freedom Network (EFN), Liberal Forum Pakistan (LFP) or FreedomGate Pakistan (FGP).

All of them offer the chance to get in touch with more interesting and like-minded people.

In order to create job opportunities for yourself you have to choose the right network before you engage in it.

*Choose the
right network
and focus!*

The first question would be: which network is around my dream job? You can have three different approaches:

- Professional network: What associations, clubs or societies are existing in this branch? How to become member?
- Society-Politics network: Oftentimes an indirect approach to get to the right people is successful. So, where do the people you are interested in organize themselves?
- Social Network: Where do people of your dream company hang out? In which golf club the CEO is member? Where do the employees engage?

Networks cannot only help you to get to the right job but even more to support you in your further career and life later on. So, after having chosen the right network, don't just quit after having found the right job. That would be very short-sighted thinking.

Action, please! – The action plan

You have developed your own individual strategy to get a job. Now, it's time to get into action. But *action without planning might result in useless efforts*. Additionally, you might not be able to analyse failures and mistakes – and everybody does mistakes. There is nothing wrong with errors. Only the one, who doesn't do anything, does not make mistakes. That is normal – but not learning out of them is stupidity. Therefore, an action plan helps to review and to be better, more realistic and more successful the next time.

Here are two sample action plans, which from my perspective, would be realistic. One plan is for the jobless



The Action Plan is the centre piece of follow-up after each planning. The Participants of FNF's ToM Raider in September 2012 are proud of their specific guidance for self-improvement.

Muhammad Ali, i.e. someone who has ten hours available for his application daily. He has studied engineering, but found out that he wants to specialise in water management and environmental issues.

Someone like Khadeeja Anwar with a 12 hours job wouldn't have the same time available, but she has the advantage of knowing what she wants, being connected and working in the right branch already. She is employed in a local NGO but now wants to learn and expose herself more by working for an international NGO.

Be realistic!

The times below include always a testing phase. In order to get feedback and to improve you have to talk family and friends. You need to show your results to others and re-work your efforts. This costs time. Furthermore, you need to organise other things like a special paper, good photos for the CV etc. So, be realistic and base it on facts! A sound research as well as a thorough life-work planning requires some quiet moments. So, take your time and don't place your career ladder on the wrong wall!

Get feedback!

Actionplan			
	M.Ali	Kh. Anwar	Me
Life-work Plan	2 weeks	1 day (review pre-vious)	
Research	2 weeks	1 week	
Strategy	2 days	2 days	
Action Plan	1 day	1 day	
Generic CV	10 days	2 days (up-date)	
JIST	1 day	1 day	
Application letter	2 days	1 day	
Customizing & mailing (10 applica-tions)	2 days	2 days	
Follow-ups	3–4 weeks	2 weeks	
Review	1 day	1 day	

It is useful to set yourself deadlines in order to give yourself the right push in your efforts as well as to see how realistic you are about your own planning.

So, high time to work on your CV now! But this is well invested as you can use it with some adoptions for years.



*Yes, you can!
Do it!*



3. CV

A successful CV is like a piece of art. It demands hard work. Do not take it easy! Do not go for shortcuts. It is worth the effort.

Customzing

Many companies use keyword searches by engines to determine whether a HR Manager should view an application. And he or she will screen your application in 30 seconds. Therefore, it is absolutely crucial to write in a clear and concise manner to maximise the impact.

Deliberately, we have not placed sample CVs or resumes in here. The danger – it is a real threat to a successful application – is that you copy&paste; but a CV has to be tailored to the relevant job position. Accordingly, in each section samples help you formulating your own personalised CV.

*Customise –
no copy&paste!*

Follow instructions! Sometimes companies demand a special way for an application. By this they want to see if you are able to follow instructions. The logic is: when you don't do it for your application, you won't do it on the job either. So, send your CV, cover letter and whatever else demanded in the exact way it is demanded, as your application will be immediately sorted out, if you have not committed to a certain formality.

Resume or CV?

In the US the term 'Resume' is more in use. But some people make the distinction between resume and CV. For them a resume is brief (one page), while a CV can have two or more pages including a detailed synopsis of your background and skills. Make clear what you send!

Structure

Heading

You are in lead! Put your name on the top! Don't mention the word CV or resume! This is redundant information (and waste of crucial space). Be consistent in your



Be consistent! Always use exactly the name for everything: email address, CV, cover letter etc. Otherwise you might be mistaken for two or more persons.

name, i.e. use only one form of your name. Several version are misleading: a HR Manager could think he is dealing with different persons.

Every text has a heading!

Next or beneath your name relevant contact details are immediately visible. This is very important: a HR manager must be able to spot your phone number or email easily. If he/she has to waste time for searching he/she will get annoyed.

Pay attention to the telephone numbers: if you apply abroad do not expect others to know the country code of Pakistan – though it might be so familiar to you. The same goes with the city code. Okay, most people know for example 051 for Islamabad, but what if the HR Manager of an international organisation is newly posted in here? Write it down!

Every text has a date!

You are still in a job? Do not put your office number on the CV as this means that also in a new company you will use office time for your private matters. Better give timings to your private number, e.g. after 4 p.m.

Every text has an originator.

Concerning the email address: leave out any nonsense or childish names (see Mail > Email address)!

Check it and get it checked!

Make sure that they are consistent with your name (on top) as well as your other formats of application (cover letter, business card etc.).

Personal Details

Generally, there is no need to put personal details on your CV:

- Your sex can be detected by the name. No need to mention it.
- Your marital status is your private affair. It shouldn't affect the work.
- Your religion is your private affair. It shouldn't affect the work.
- Your age is your private affair. It shouldn't affect the work.
- Your CNIC number is not important unless you get hired. Then, you can still deliver it to the HR department for the records. Of course, it's convenient for the HR people to have it all together, but you are wasting crucial space, which is not relevant for the decision of hiring.
- Your weight and size are not of concern – unless you apply as fighter pilot or similar jobs.

What you should include:

- Address
- Telephone Number(s)
- Fax if you have (don't put your current office fax)
- Email
- Website if you have

Skills Summary / Personal Profile

This section summarises in very few key words, what characterises you. What are your Unique Selling Points (USP)? It highlights your relevant experience as well as unique skills. That is the first thing of interest getting into the eye of an HR manager (he/she will look on your name and contact details only if interested).

Accordingly, it should be crispy, using key words of the position / company's culture and put everything you are (related to the job) in maximum seven bullet points – the less, the better. For example:

*What is
your
USP -
Unique
Selling
Point?*

- *7+ years of extensive retail, sales & customary services background*
- *first sales consultant reaching PKR 1,000,000 a month*
- *strong passion for team work: setting up and forming five branches in Punjab*
- *multilingual: Urdu, Punjabi, Seraiki, Sindhi and English*
- *ability to perform and deliver under stress*

Objective

Your objective statement answers the question “What is the next step in my career?” This is short and concise presentation of what kind of job you are looking for. This also includes the type: managerial, supervisor, contractor.



Hunt for new talents

This is optional: If you do not have it in your CV you should definitely place it in your cover letter; but most commonly you'll find it in a CV.

Even more important than in other parts of the CV it is important to tailor your objective to the position you are applying for. The more specific you are, the higher are your chances. Here are a few examples giving you some direction:

Obtain a position at 123 company where I can maximise my management skills and training experience

Marketing position that utilises my writing skills and enables me to make a positive contribution to the company

Elementary education teacher in private school sector

Management position where I can effectively utilise my experience in human relations an project management

Experienced HR Coordinator who enjoys challenge-seeking opportunity to learn and improve skills.

Achievements or Experience

Writing achievements well is the most challenging part of your application work. Nevertheless, here at the heart of the issue you can gain a competitive edge over others.

There are three basic ways to structure your CV after your Personal details and objective:

1. **Chronological:** your jobs are listed in reverse chronological order with the current or most recent job on the top. Education, skills, and other information are listed below. Many employers prefer this, as they can grasp at one glance what jobs you had and when. Gaps become visible easily.
2. **Functional:** you group your skills and experiences in order to highlight them. This can also be helpful for changes in careers and gaps in employment history.
3. **Combination:** the combination of both, chronological and functional, puts skills and experience first, followed by a chronological order of employment history. This helps you to focus on your skills, but also takes into account the employer's preference.

Use accomplishment statements instead of mere job descriptions! These statements should support your job objective. For example: you have finished a major project, you have won an award. You can ask yourself: What challenges existed in a previous job/situation and

you have mastered it well, e.g. in shorter time or better results than expected. Achievements could be:

- Clear measures of success in the industry or profession
- Quantifiable amounts in PKR
- Properly expressed to be comprehensible
- A job related asset meaningful to the employer

Make it real! Give concrete and tangible examples or explanations, which only you have made. Do not copy paste from the Internet! Get ideas from there and adopt them in an individual manner!

Show your previous responsibilities!

Responsibility: You have managed a team successfully? Write the number of persons you have led! You dealt with a portfolio? How big was the amount you have been responsible for?

What's the company's motivation? Again: take the perspective of the HR manager. How may the new company or organisation benefit from your achievements? Increased sales? More efficiency? Beat competitors? Improve customer satisfaction? Get more customers? Drive higher quality? Solve problems? Enter new markets? So, your achievements should promise the company to help them to achieve their goals.

So what? You mention: *Mentored other team members* – So what? The company spent money on you to do so. What's the benefit out of that?

Made document retrieval faster – So what? How much faster? What was it before, what is it now, how much money does it save for the company?

Used expert knowledge of project management to deliver ahead schedule and under budget – resulting in first mover advantage over competitors and subsequent 70% market share. – So, can you do that for our company, please!

After all you should be ready to explain your success stories in detail during the interview!

Focus on the most important facts!

Education

In the education section you list the schools, colleges and universities you have attended including the degrees. You can add special awards and honours you earned. Focus on the most important. There is no need to name your primary school if you have Masters degree.

Furthermore, special trainings and professional development courses should be mentioned, too.

Qualifications or Skills

In the skills section your qualification for the job is demanded; e.g. computer skills, management skills etc. Of course they have to be customised to the job.

There are job-related skills and soft skills, also named transferable skills as you can use them in any job. Transferable Skills are:

- Communication Skills
- Problem-Solving Skills
- Organizational Skills
- Management Skills

Computer Skills can be both: Nowadays, in most jobs you will need computer skills, but if your current job requires specific knowledge, e.g. programming in Assembler, this would be very much job-related.

What you choose and how your wording will be depends highly on the position you are targeting at. For example:

Communication: Deals with internal and external customers at all levels and received positive feedback; Award Oct. 2010 Employee of the month

Team Player – enjoys sharing knowledge and encouraging others to meet team goals and deadlines

I work hard and confidently under pressure.

Example 1: I handled all my university assignments in time while also working in two part-time jobs.

Example 2: As member of my school's gala committee I organised the outside year end-festival in a very short time frame and solved shortcomings in a sudden thunderstorm.

Team Player: I am able to motivate others.

How I used the skill: I have coached two cricket teams at school, of which one has won the provincial competition.

Hobbies & other

A company hires an individual not a skills machine. Consequently, they are interested what kind of personality you have. It will give them a fuller and more complete picture of you. Sports indicate that you are fit



and healthy. A social engagement in the community will highlight your social responsibility as well as good interpersonal skills. Outside engagements show that you have a good work-life balance. Additionally, hobbies are always a good conversation starter during the job interview.

Motorbikes are my hobby, which I also mention in my CV.

Nonetheless, not everything is useful and the list should not occupy much space as you have only one page! Two, three are enough. In case you have too many one might question, when you will work!

Music can be difficult as not everyone enjoys the same type. So, if music is important for you keep it better general: founding member of a music band and lead singer.

*No politics!
No religion!*

Political and religious affiliations

are dangerous. Keep them out – unless they are fitting to the job and you are sure the association will be welcomed. If you are applying for Islamic Relief and you are engaged in social work or voluntary teaching at your home town *madrassa* it will be a

plus. If you are Christian and seek a job at a Catholic orphanage, name it. You want to be employed at the PPP General Secretariat as Election Campaign Manager, it is recommended that you mention your long-term membership and volunteer work during election campaigns in the past.

Irrelevant hobbies should be left out accordingly: Collecting stamps will not help you in an application for an administrative position. Unless you apply as Stamp Appraiser it should stay unmentioned.

Senior Management position applications should not contain any hobbies. Experience and achievements count.



If anything goes wrong – please don't panic! Stay calm and controlled – things will be solved easier that way.

References

To have good references can be a real push! But never give a relative's name. It might be very tempting especially when you are from a good family. But how poor is that?! You want to get hired for your knowledge, your skills, and your merits – and not for what others have done. This is a question of pride and self-esteem.

Ask for permission before you add a person!

Before you include a reference on your list make sure that you have the permission to do so. By your request you can directly also verify and eventually update the contact details. It is also useful to have letters of recommendation available in case the HR manager doesn't want to get in touch personally, but wants to know nonetheless what previous employers have to say about you.

On the average, employers check about three references. It's absolutely ok to have references, which are not related to your previous jobs, e.g. professor at university, a business acquaintance or a customer.

Ask your reference persons kindly. For example: Do you consider my work well enough to write me a good recommendation letter? Thus, the person can have a better way out to say 'No!' or an enthusiastic 'Yes'!

There is no need to put the references on your CV. You can also put them on an extra page. When you do the statement "Can be delivered on request", the documents should be ready and delivered within a day.

Layout

Any kind of layout always serves the purpose to help a reader. That is even more important for a CV, which is looked at only for a few seconds. Outstanding headings, space between paragraphs and sections are absolutely necessary. Don't try minimising the font size and margins for putting in more information. Rather prioritise, think and shorten!

You will find a few samples in the appendix.

Layout Principles

1. **Layout helps the reader to understand and navigate through the structure. Layout is orientation. If the structure is unclear you yourself are unclear.**
2. **Use white (negative) space around the positive space (form and text)!**
3. **Double marking, e.g. bold and underlined, is showing off and bad style.**
4. **USING CAPITAL LETTERS IS SHOUTING.**
5. **Use the four basics of layout with caution:**
 - **Proximity:** *what belongs together is next to each other*
 - **Contrast:** *what is different looks different: Headings of first order are larger than 2nd order*
 - **Repetition:** *certain elements are repeated, e.g. your footer with contact details*
 - **Alignment:** *everything is arranged for a reason, e.g. the golden ratio.*

Working with MS Word

Often times I have a look at CVs, in which the applicant claims that she/he has mastered Microsoft Word (MS Word) or even rates her/his knowledge as proficient or excellent. Then, of course I have a closer look how the given CV has been worked out. In almost 100 per cent of the cases this was a pure lie! The applicant can open a document and type (often with mistakes!) – and that's it. He has neither a clue how to use the software properly nor how to layout a document. Accordingly, I have strong doubts that also all the other claims of the CV are correct, but rather assume that these are lies, too.

You can avoid this in two ways:

1. **Never claim what you cannot fulfil!**
2. **Learn to work with MS Word properly!**

In here there is no place to give you a complete training in Word. Therefore, other specialist books exist. Nonetheless, a few tips will help you out to avoid the most common mistakes.

Filename

It is self-explanatory that your CV should have a name. The automatically generated "Document1" is definitely not appropriate. Imagine a Human Resources Manager wants to invite you for an interview and does not find your CV on his computer because the filename does not have anything to do with you! Furthermore, it is annoying to open the wrong document (it costs time!). So, there should be a difference between CV and cover

letter. It becomes clear that the filename has to include your name and the type of document.

Give your proper name!

Name: Give your proper name under which you apply, i.e. the same on your CNIC. Nicknames are not appropriate. Keep them for your family and friends but not in professional life.

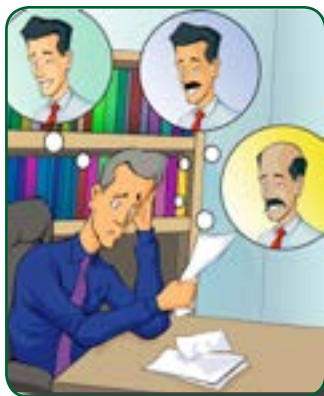
Especially for Westerners it is confusing when Pakistanis play with their names – for example when a fictive person named Muhammad Ghulam Ali writes Muhammad Ali on his CV but the filename includes Muhammad Ghulam and on the business card one finds Ghulam Ali. For a Westerner these are three different persons!

Remember?

Type of document: KISS! *Keep It Short and Simple*. Either it is a CV (or Resume) or it is a cover letter.

Furthermore, be specific! It happened to me once that I have mailed the wrong document to a company. I had to excuse and resend! That gives a bad impression. Consequently, it is of advantage to put a date in

the filename (easier to find when you attach it in a mail) as well as the company's or organisation's name. Then, any kind of mix-ups is very unlikely.



Avoid special characters like “. ’ / # % &” as some computer systems are not able to deal with them!

Accordingly, find below a few examples how you could name your files:

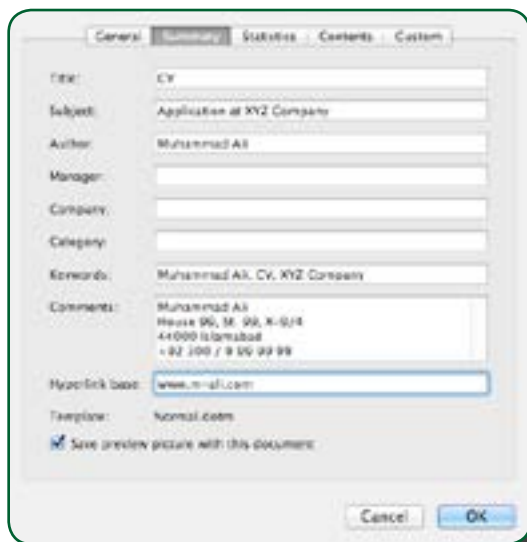
- 2012-09-30 Muhammad Ali – CV – FNF
- Ali-Muhammad 2012-09-30 CV for FNF
- CV Muhammad Ali 30-09-2012 FNF
- Muhammad Ali CV 2012-09-30
- Muhammad Ali Cover Letter 2012-09-30 FNF

If you either start with your name or the date and then the document type (and do this for all your documents accordingly) they are going to be ranged in Windows Explorer or Apple Finder next to each other. That makes it for HR Managers easier to have all your relevant documents together.

Properties

There is a quite unknown MS Word function called properties. If I am interested in an applicant I always have a look into that. You'll find it under File > Properties.

Normally, MS Word takes the basic set-up name of the whole system over. If a company has a good Computer Administrator the computer bears the name of the company and a specification. Some nerds find it funny to name their computer in a weird or insulting name. All this tells you something about an applicant: Is he a nerd or does he do his applications during office time on the



In 'Properties' you often find crucial information, e.g. whether someone has done his CV during office time on the office computer...

company's equipment? If the latter applies she/he will do so most likely in the new job – instead of working for the company.

Better avoid this! Additionally, you can give more information as these properties are used for an index research on the system. If someone searches on his drive your name the results will be shown quicker if you have included it in the properties.

look like a heading, but it is still not. Use the pre-set style formats or create your own ones.

Fonts

A font says a lot about any author – and even more so about an applicant. Which type are you?

Standard Font: Only standard persons – either without personality or without knowledge about layout use the standard font. It can also mean that you are “lazy, apathetic and unimaginative” (Don McMillan). The Standard

*Neither Standard nor
Fancy - fonts express
your personality...*

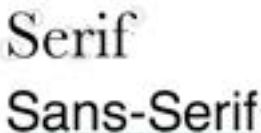
Font used to be Times New Roman, now it is Calibri or in Apple, Cambria. In PowerPoint it was always Arial, now it is also Calibri. The

world seems to be calibrated by Microsoft. What a uniform pity!

Fancy Font: As we liberals believe in the individual we think it should also be expressed by unique appearance. Subsequently, an outstanding font is required to express your personality. But stop! Wait a minute! It depends also on the company as well as the job you are applying for: as an accountant you should not use the same fancy font that a web designer might use. The font speaks for you. The same goes for management positions. If the font is too extreme it means you are not sensitive to social norms. In other words you might misbehave in the next given occasion – not a good choice for a company.

What to choose? Basically there are two different font families

1. Serif
2. Sans-Serif



Serif
Sans-Serif

Serif fonts have little “serifs” at the end of each letter, while sans-serif fonts (French: sans = without) have not. All in all serif fonts are better readable if you have a larger amount of text while

The *normal font* size is 12 pt. Imagine: Most decision makers are between 50 and 60 years old. This is the time when the eyesight loosens out often. So, don't annoy your possible employer by forcing him or her take up a magnifier just because you have been too lazy for prioritizing and have therefore used a very small font size!

On the other hand *sans serif* fonts are also called poster type fonts. They give a more modern impression, and are very striking.

So, it remains a question of personal choice. Do not look only what is available on your computer, but ask also friends and family for advice: Does this font represent me? Is it appropriate for this and that job? So, consider well and in discussion with friends and family, which font to choose; but then stick to it throughout your paperwork (business cards, CV, cover letter, JIST card).

You can shorten text, but don't go smaller than 11pt!

Be aware that the font you choose is available on other computers! If this not the case your font of an email, of your word document or your presentation is going to be replaced by a standard font – here we are at the top again. So, in case you use an unusual font you better send your document as a pdf where the fonts are embedded.

Final advice: don't use CAPITAL LETTERS. In typography caps are SHOUTING – and you don't want to YELL at a possible employer, do you?

Tabs and Tables

Oftentimes I see CVs, where the applicant tried to get a kind of order by tabs or even worse by space bar. Forget about it! It always looks as “nice try”. Instead use tables. Table lines must not be visible – you can just switch them off. But by tables your arrangements look proper and arranged.

Paragraph Marks

A paragraph mark is named paragraph mark because it marks a paragraph. That might sound very banal, but in fact it is not: almost every document I get into my hand violates this. And I don't need to see the electronic version; I will also notice it on a printout.



Go to the Menu "Table" click "insert" and define the number of rows (mostly two, e.g. year and qualification) and the number of columns.

After filling the table with content you format it. Don't start immediately as other items will come across, which won't fit to the formatting. So, better do this at the end. Be consistent with content, e.g. when you have always had year, function, company don't switch to year, company, function in the next line.

Basically, in literature and academia a paragraph stands for one thought. When the thought is elaborated we press [enter] and receive a paragraph mark and a new line. A paragraph mark looks like this "¶" in case we have enabled the view of steering symbols. Nothing else is a paragraph mark: a steering symbol for view and printer. It contains a lot of information, such as:

style	font	font size	font character
font colour	line spacing	indent	language
hyphenation	numbering	page break	frame and lines
background / shadow	orphan/widow control	and other text effects	

All this is incorporated in the paragraph mark. So, in case you want to increase the distance between lines do it via the paragraph mark.

Photos

A picture says more than thousand words – but sometimes talk is silver, silence is gold. Make sure that a photo is accepted and welcomed where you apply – and not a reason of exclusion from the selection process. For example, in the USA date of birth and photo are not accepted due to possible discrimination, while in Germany it is still standard (though changing slowly). Furthermore, a recent study in Israel has shown that as a beautiful woman you might think you have advantage, but it came out that, as many HR managers are female, beautiful women have been invited much less to interviews.



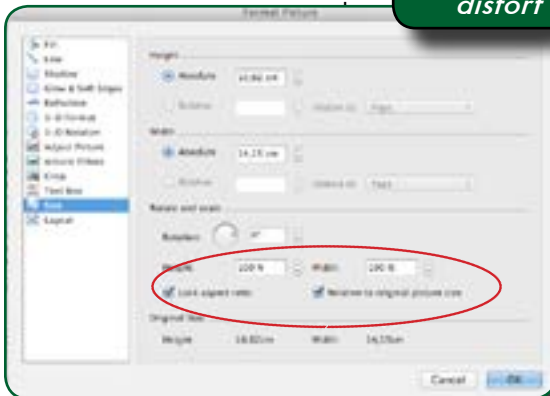
If a photo is required - but only then - invest in a professional picture. It's worth it.

If you place a photo in your CV, it should be a real portrait by a professional photographer. Any party, wedding or holiday photos are not appropriate. Please invest a few rupees for that and get a real photo. Even as a man do not shy away from powder in order to minimise

glossy areas in your face. Get a nice smile on your face! Smiling is contagious, convincing and will win your sympathies.

In case you send an email application make sure that the file size is not

When inserting a photo don't distort it!



large. You can reduce the size practically in every photo programme. A usual resolution is 72dpi while many cameras take 300dpi shots. So, by reduction you already save a lot of space. The second step can be the size reduction in inches/cm: There is no need for a three feet picture squeezed in your CV – five inches are enough. Furthermore, with file formats like jpg you can further get the size down by more compression.

When you insert a photo in word please, please, please do not – ever – distort it! It looks ugly. Better leave the photo out when you are not sure about. In Word you

can reduce the size by clicking on a corner and dragging with click. If you go to the squares at the sides you are going to distort it. You can check it up by double-clicking and then reviewing it in "size". If you see different percentages there it is distorted.

Don't forget to smile! A smile is infectious and wins sympathies!

Getting better – Feedback

Feedback is the breakfast for champions! You can only improve if you know what to improve. Accordingly, don't ask your friends or family "how do you like my CV?" As they like you, they won't say that they dislike it. And even if your CV is excellent you still don't know why. So, here is a little checklist you can ask step- by- step in order to improve specific points.

1	Describe your first impression, your feelings when you first saw the CV.	
2	In which way does the layout reflect my personality?	
3	Is the structure visible at one glance?	
4	What associations do you have with font used?	
5	What associations do you have with the colour scheme (if applicable)?	
6	Are my objectives formulated in a SMART way?	

7	Do my key points reflect me or are they exaggerated? Are they short and crisp?	
8	Is the position mentioned in the exact wording?	
9	Do my achievements suit the post?	
10	Is the wording according to the company's vacancy announcement or homepage?	
11	Is all information required (see Structure) given?	
12	Is the formatting consistent in itself?	
13	Are abbreviations explained?	
14	Can you check again for mistakes, please!	
15	Any other ideas, recommendations, suggestions?	

4. Cover Letter / Mail

There is no second chance for the first impression. The cover letter (also covering letter) or mail is the first impression an employer might get from you. Fittingly, you should take well care of it.

There is no second chance for the first impression.

The abandonment of a cover letter / mail equals a blank or a bad impression. Do not neglect it – it is really crucial!

After having spent so much time in search of your dream job, make sure that a possible employer will get to know why you are the best candidate. But don't put yourself first!

View your cover letter from an employer's perspective! For him it is not important that you have a job. Before you are hired he or she doesn't care for your needs. He cares about having a position filled with the best possible person. So, avoid statements like "I need that job for supporting my family." So what? That's just like million others. Think of the company's needs not yours!

Nonetheless, the cover letter is advertisement in pure form. Advertisement follows since almost hundred years – for good reasons! – the AIDA principle:

*A*ttention

*I*nterest

*D*esire

*A*ction

In other words you need the reader's **attention**. This

could be by a high quality paper, an interesting design or your formulations. Or you may refer to a previous phone call or a meeting. Then, he/she will remember start reading with a "Ah, I remember! Let's see what he has to offer."

If you have someone's attention you must create his or her **interest** to read your letter/mail. This is mostly done by good wordings. In case you write "In the Dawn of 30th Sep. 2012 you have published the vacancy of an accountant. I hereby would like to apply for this post." you could hear the HR manager yawning already and could see him



At least signature should be handwritten - take a fountain pen. It attracts attention, looks much better and more serious!

Test it! Ask friends in relevant positions to check!

turning the page. It must be grippy and sticky like peanut butter – that he/she can't put the page down out of excitement. To formulate like this often takes time. The Nobel Laureate and author Ernest Hemmingway (1899–1961) sometimes took a day to formulate one single sentence – but then it was all in there.

So take your time! Test it with persons who belong to the target audience, i.e. a CEO friend or a family friend, who is director. They will tell you the right perspective.

The next step is to create **desire**. "I want that person in my company!" That is difficult – what do you have, what others have not? Furthermore, the better you target the position – by excellent research – the more likely it is that you create the desire to fill that position with you.

No misunderstandings: who should contact whom?

Action, please! All is in vain, when a HR manager liked your cover letter, got an excellent impression of you, and wants to hire you, but he/she won't know how! For example your contact details are missing or it is unclear who contacts whom first – and over many other tasks he/she forgets! So, you are the one who guides action and makes action as easy as possible: Your email and mobile number are there. You state that you are waiting for a message (so it's clear the company contacts first), but otherwise you would call in three days. And of course during that time you are available on the phone / email all the time. A company might get in touch with

you a second time, but perhaps not a third time. No advertisement without guided action!

Elements

Salutation & Greetings

When writing a cover letter appropriate salutation and complimentary close are a *sine qua non*. To do without it is big mistake! And appropriate means it should reflect honour and respect. A simple “hi” or even “hi, guys” is a no-go!

If you don't know the person your write to by name then you salute with Dear Sir or Madam! An alternative is To whom it may concern, but from my perspective not too elegant.

If the person is known to you use of course his or her name:

Dear Ms. Anwar,

Dear Mr. Ali:

Dear Khadeeja Anwar,

The best is to let follow a comma or a colon. Continue after one empty line with a capital letter. I

To address someone with the first name without knowing him personally is impolite. Even if you know the person but he or she hasn't offered you to do so, is too much. In many languages and cultures other than the Anglo-Saxon one there is a strong differentiation

between the use of first and family name and between speaking levels, which in Urdu would correspond to “tum” and “aap”. So, addressing your possible employer in a way you would talk to your servant at home is not the best approach. The best and most respectful way is to say Mr. or Ms. *Family name*.

The use of titles varies from country to country. For example in the United States the President is addressed with Mr. President, while in most other countries it will be “Your Excellency”. Accordingly, there is no fixed law but some general rules below. Find out the exact honorific in case of doubt!

Position	Title / Envelope	Salutation / Speech
President	His/Her Excellency the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan	Your Excellency
Prime Minister	The Honourable Prime Minister	Dear Prime Minister
Speaker of Senate	Senator the Hon. Muhammad Ali, President of the Senate	Dear Mr. President
Senator	Senator Muhammad Ali	(Dear) Senator Ali
Speaker of NA	The Hon. Muhammad Ali, Speaker of the National Assembly	Dear Mr. Speaker
Minister	The Honourable Muhammad Ali, Minister for XYZ	Dear Minister

MNA	Dr/Mr Muhammad Ali, MNA	Dear Dr/Mr Ali
Ambassador	His Excellency Dr/Mr Muhammad Ali, Ambassador for XYZ	Your Excellency
Knight	Sir Muhammad Ali GCMG	Dear Sir Muhammad
Dame	Dame Khadeeja Anwar DBE	Dear Dame Khadeeja
Professor	Prof. Muhammad Ali	Dear Professor Ali
Doctor	Dr. Muhammad Ali	Dear Doctor Ali
Military	General / Colonel etc. Muhammad Ali	General / Colonel (also after retirement)
High/Federal/ Family/Sharia Court	The Honourable Chief Justice	Dear Chief Justice Ali or Dear Judge
Federal Magistrate	Chief Federal Magistrate Citizen	Dear Chief Federal Magistrate Citizen
Supreme Court	The Honourable Chief Justice	Dear Chief Justice Ali or Dear Judge
Barrister	The Learned Mr. Ali	Dear Learned Mr. Ali
Pilot	Captain	Captain Ali

The Title “The Honourable” in Parliaments is used for:

- Executive Councillors
- President of the Senate
- Speaker of the House of Representatives
- Ministers of State Governments
- Presidents and Members of Legislative Councils
- Speakers of Legislative Assemblies
- Former Judges of the High Court, Federal Court, Supreme Court and Family Court

The complimentary close or greeting is also a question of relationship. So, how close are you to greet the hiring manager with *Warm regards* or CU (abbr. for See you)?

The usual way should be still Sincerely Yours until you know someone better. If you have used the title The Honourable or Excellency you should close with Yours Faithfully.

Company

Do not waste any time and space. The first sentence after your salutation has to be sticky! Additionally, there must be content.

Why do you apply for exactly this company or organisation? This must be clear in the first run. Again: See it from the perspective of the organisation. They want to know why you come to them? Why Pepsi and not Coca-Cola? Make it crystal-clear!

Highlight what from your viewpoint is in this company and why you fit in here better than in any other job! Related to that is your motivation: what makes you go for this job?

Your description

Avoid repeating stuff from the CV or resume. For this the HR manager just has to turn the page.

Do name your professional and personal strengths. What is your USP (Unique Selling Point/Proposition)? Soft skills are demanded in this place – hard facts on the CV. If social responsibility is asked refer to your voluntary engagement for disabled people for example. If communication and team integration are key words in the advertisement mention your engagement in the local cricket team.

You can shorten text, but don't go smaller than 11pt!

Remember: HR personnel are used to read positive statements and big words all day long. Make it concrete and name it!

Thus, you can also point out major achievements, which might be missed otherwise in the CV.

The self-description in the cover letter is also the place to explain gaps in your CV or why you as an overqualified person are applying for this position.

Action Statement

The best is to close with an action statement. Never end without saying what will be your next step. This shows initiative and task orientation. What do you want to initiate with this letter? Should the company call you or would you contact them?

What's your next step?

The best way is to have either in your description or in your action statement a good reason for the HR manager "Why should I see?"

For example:

I am eager to help advance the success of your company, and I am convinced that we should arrange a time to meet. I will call your office in the next week to schedule an appointment.

Let us explore a few more examples – starting with a boring one:

Dear Human Resources:

Enclosed please find my resume for the position of staff writer.

I currently work as a copy editor for Acme Company, where I am responsible for editing brochures, fact sheets, and Web content. Before that, I spent a year interning at Tiger Beat magazine, where I had the opportunity to write several articles for publication. I also majored in English in college, with a concentration in writing.

I am seeking a position that that will utilise my writing skills with opportunity for growth.

I hope to hear from you to schedule an interview.

Sincerely,

Jane Doe

This one is an excellent example. A good exercise is to track down all the points mentioned above in this letter for best outcome of learning. Start with **AIDA** principle, the greeting, the company, your achievements!

Dear Ms. Smith: I hope you will consider me for the position of staff writer, as advertised in The Washington Post.

I was particularly excited to see a position open at the Sierra Club, as I have long been a fan of your work. I'm impressed by the way you make environmental issues accessible to non-environmentalists (particularly in the pages of Sierra Magazine, which has sucked me in more times than I can count), and I would love the opportunity to be part of your work.

Reading over the job description for the position, I recognised myself. As you will see on my attached resume, I have more than seven years' experience in non-profits, writing everything from newsletters to Web sites to brochures to letters to the editor and op-eds. In addition to in-house publications, my work has been published in newspapers around the country. Additionally, I am a fast, versatile writer, and I specialize in taking complicated information and presenting it in an easy-to-understand, upbeat format. I've never missed a deadline (in a recent performance review, my manager called me "the fastest writer on the planet") and pride myself on being able to juggle many different projects. My copy-editing skills border on the obsessive-compulsive; I have been known

to correct mistakes on restaurant menus! I think my skills and experience are an excellent match with what you are seeking, and I am excited about the chance to work with you. If you would like to talk with me or schedule an interview, please call me at 555-555-1212. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jane Doe

If you ever are sending an application for two positions in a company this could serve as example:

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name:

Your IT department has advertised two job openings for which my experience directly qualifies me. While I do not have any direct chemical industry experience I do have nuclear power experience. The two are not directly related, but both industries endure extreme regulatory pressure for environmental impact. I have been exposed to this kind of regulatory environment and I recognize how vital IT is for the record keeping that is necessary for dealing with that kind of scrutiny.

My IT experience gives me a unique ability to apply technology, in all its forms, to business processes. Some of the business process knowledge includes accounting, finance, facilities, inventory control, budgeting, vendor management and various operational processes.

I have experience with merger/acquisition events, high growth challenges, technology replacement projects and IT process improvement. I have delivered large technology projects on schedule/on budget and in alignment with the business strategy. Companies I

have worked for include Dakil Energy, Hoppy Rent a Car, Digit Equipment, and Miners Gas and Electric.

I would enjoy an opportunity to talk with you or someone in your organization to see where my skill set would be of the greatest benefit to your company.

Sincerely,

5. Letter

The classy way of application would be a resume accompanied by a cover letter. The letter should never be more than one single page. It is up to you reflect and prioritise to shorten it down. Don't start trying formatting tricks to make it fit. First of all the layout and

*No formatting tricks –
they will be detected!*

thus the orientation suffers. Second, a HR Manager will see that you are not able to prioritise and

to decide. That would be a bad advertisement for your skills. The letter includes all elements mentioned above.

Letterhead

You should create your own letterhead, which includes all relevant contact details, i.e.

- your name
- address
- telephone numbers
- email

If you have your own web address you can add it, too. But this is not obligatory. The thing of main importance is that a company can contact you easily.

Subject & Reference

In professional correspondence each letter has a subject and eventually a reference. This helps to channel the correspondence to the right person first and then to give this right person an immediate idea what the letter is about.

*Always, always, always
give a subject!*

For an application on a specific vacancy you should write the exact position (if given with reference number) in the subject line in bold (see Letter > Layout).

If you write an unsolicited application mention here that it is an application, for example:

xyz

In case you have contacted the respective person already, be it by a cold call or you met him/her at a conference for example you can write this in the line below as reference.

Our telecom on Sept., 5th, 2012

Our talk at the Conference on Human Rights, Islamabad, organised by HRCP last week

This will help the reader to remember and recall your face.

I don't want this job!

- 1. Address it anonymously (Dear Madam or Sir / To whom it may concern) instead a specific person!**
- 2. Do not mention which position you apply for!**
- 3. Allow careless errors, typos and misspellings!**
- 4. Sound arrogant or overconfident!**

Layout & Fonts

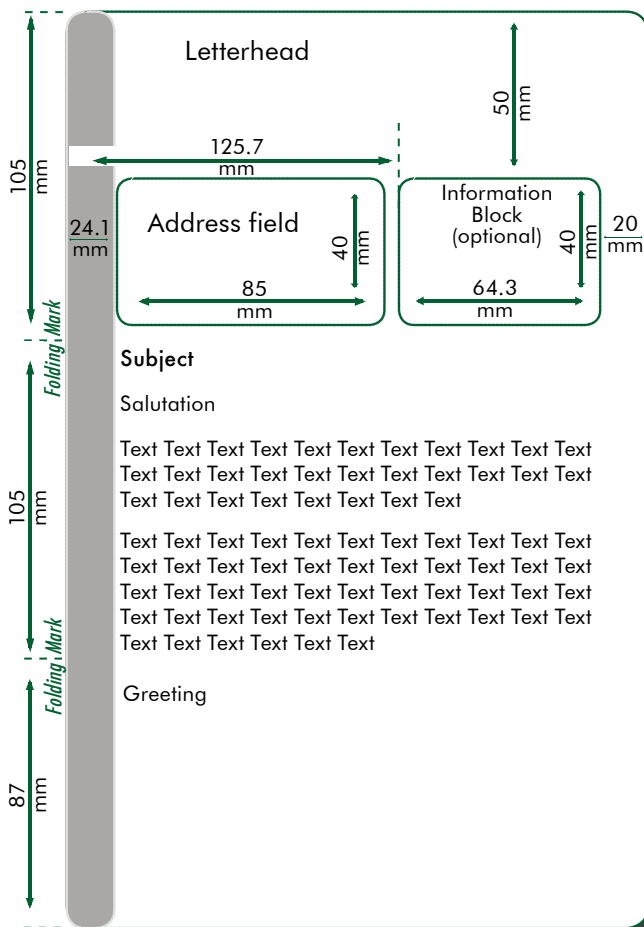
It is useful to use the same font like on the CV. Thus, it becomes recognizable one single application, one single person.

There is a large number of alternatives for the layout of a letter. Nonetheless, I recommend using the German DIN format for letters, which has evolved out hundreds of years of correspondence and gives any reader an immediate and easy orientation. Furthermore, it suits the DIN A4 size and the right folding.

*Same fonts
= same person*

On the right side you find a sample of the DIN A4 letter suitable for a C6-long envelope with address field.

Whatever layout you use, make sure that it is structured and that it helps to highlight your content.



Paper

If someone opens a letter almost all senses are involved:

- Eyes: how does it look like?
- Ears: good papers sound different from cheap one.
- Nose: each paper has its own smell.
- Haptic: how does it feel?

A good paper stands out from the usual correspondence. This does not only apply to applications but remains valid in general. Consequently, I would recommend a paper of good quality and thickness (120–150 g). It can be slightly coloured (beige, ivory), but shouldn't

*Same paper
= same person*

be too much. You should use the same paper like for the CV, again to make it a unit and recognizable as belonging to one single person.

It should be printed in best possible quality – choose the printer settings accordingly.

Signature

The times are gone when companies asked for handwritten cover letters in order to let a graphologist rate your personality. Nonetheless, HR managers see themselves as amateur graphologists: They think they can get your personality out of the handwriting.

Accordingly, make the best impression with your signature, too: Use a fountain pen, not a pen. A pencil is a

no-go, anyways. Blue and black ink are recommended; while other colours are possible, think of understatement! In some countries' military and bureaucracies some colours are forbidden as there are colours related to function, e.g. the commanding officer would write in green – and you don't want to violate this principle as an applicant, do you?

If you are not used to handwriting test several versions of your signature and ask again family and friends what they imagine is connected with your autograph.

Cover letters from Hell

- 1. It is presumptuous by telling a company the ways you will improve it.**
- 2. It is excessively formulated, i.e. generic and not tailored to the job.**
- 3. It rambles.**
- 4. It is aggressive, arrogant or pushy in tone.**
- 5. It uses wimpy language and uses words like "I feel" or "I believe".**
- 6. It exaggerates and embellishes the qualifications.**
- 7. It is sloppy in appearance and includes many typos and/or grammatical mistakes.**

Folding

This is an extra sub-chapter as I have noticed how necessary it is to highlight the right folding. On daily basis I can see how less attention people pay to a simple thing like folding.

Nowadays, the German DIN A4 (Deutsches Institut für Normung, i.e. German Institute for Standardization) is the standard format worldwide. Still, some people in South Asia, especially government offices, use the British letter size. This is possible, but honestly speaking not very practical as most machines (e.g. scanners), file folders, envelopes etc. are developed for the A4 format. So, better use for your letter and CV A4. Folded twice it fits perfectly in a DIN C6 long envelope or unfolded in a C4 envelope.



Fold it first by little less than one third.



With your thumb's nail press the bend



Fold it against the backside + bend!

Folder

There are many options in the market available. Choose one, which suits the job and the content of your application. It shouldn't be clear-transparent as inside is

personal information. A decent colour is recommendable. People in creative professions can of course draw attention to their application by having a self-designed file folder.



Check it, get it checked, protect it against crumbling – it's a document! Typos, errors and buckles are shameful!

6. Mail

My favourite No-go in email application is the following: "Hey guys! Open attachment!" or "HLW, GV ME JOB IN UR ORG PLZZZZ!" or "I Also be part of you TEam." You won't believe it but I have indeed received such mails a few times. You can be sure that this mail is deleted in a second. So, how should an email application look like? Let's go step-by-step:

Email address

The email address says a lot about you, too. Send it from a proper one. It is completely okay if you have a gmail-, hotmail- or yahoo account; but in front of the @ please don't place any nonsense. If you don't have it already create an account with your proper name, i.e. the same you use on your CV (see filenames). Avoid absolutely any fantasy names like sunshine@yahoo.com, thecoolguy@gmail.com or hotchick@hotmail.com. These are inappropriate and misleading. These addresses give a wrong impression.

The same applies to numbers. If your name is taken already, then better don't accept a number Muhammad789@xyz.com is practically nameless. Better try out other version, which correspond with your name, e.g. M.Ali@, or Muhammad.Ali@, or M.Gh.Ali@.

Subject

The subject line serves as quick orientation. Especially, this is important to who receives more than hundred mails a day. Be specific and say what your mail is about. Here a few examples:

*Always, always, always
give a subject!*

- *Job Code 1234: District Sales Manager*
- *Application for Accountant Position*
- *Job Interest in your company*
- *Career Opportunity targeted*
- *Referred by Khadeeja Anwar*
- *Meeting request*
- *Meeting follow up*

You can create curiosity with the aid of your subject, too; but don't exaggerate. See also Letter > Subject & Reference.

Signature

An email signature is helpful to quickly get back to you. Consequently, don't miss the chance! All email programmes allow defining one or more signatures. A signature should comprise:

- *Your name*
- *Function*
- *Email*
- *Telephone numbers*

Optional are:

- *Your address*
- *Your website*

It should be grouped for easy orientation, e.g.:

Muhammad Gh. Ali
PhD Student at University of Central Punjab (UCP)

Off.: +92 (21) 4 56-7890

Res.: +92 (21) 4 56 78 90

Mob.: +92 (300) 4 56 78 90

Email: M.Ali@gmail.com

Web: www.m-ali.com

Typographical Hint

It is good typography manner to group telephone numbers in pairs by two starting from the right side. Extensions are written together separated from the main number by a hyphen. For example: 0300 / 1 23 45 67 or with extension +92 (51) 1 23 45-6789.

Attachments

Usually, you should attach your CV and your cover letter. The cover letter can have the same text as the email, but honestly speaking it is better to be shorter in your mail.

Please pay attention to the file size. Nothing is more annoying than long download times. Envision that many managers work upon their mails by blackberry or iPhone on their way. While downloading your file you cannot work in other applications (unlike on a desktop computer). So, keeping someone waiting is not a good start for your career...

Downsize attachments to avoid long download.

You can reduce file size by choosing the right size of your photos (see CV > Photos).

Some employers do not allow attachments. In this case follow their instructions carefully. If you are asked to send your CV as email text, do so. Don't go for HTML as you don't know which email client the employer is using and how it will look like. In this case paste your resume into your email message.

Before sending

Emails are a very quick means of communication. This is very seducing – don't "fire and forget"! Rather let the spell-checking run over it, ask a friend to proofread and don't forget to check the attachments. Better wait, before sending it out incorrectly!

7. JIST Cards

This is the latest tool for job hunters from the US. JIST comes from the Indiana-based "Career Publisher" JIST Publishing . It stands for Job Information Seeking and Training. A JIST card is 3"x5" (or postcard size) on card-board paper and contains the most relevant information about you for a possible employer. It is a mixture of a business card and your resume. The career counselor Mike Farr came up with this idea. The cards should not get lost on the desk of an HR manager, but are often pinned on the wall or bulletin board, while classical resumes might get stacked in piles.

Create your JIST

A JIST contains all relevant information of a resume, but even more reduced and condensed. So, now you have to think even little bit harder what is important.

- Contact Information
- Job Objective
- Specific Skills
- Accomplishments
- Work related Personal Assets

I suggest strongly using the same font and layout style as in CV and cover letter. Print it out at home or get it printed by a company. It should be on cardboard paper. If you plan to have it pinned outside (on trees or behind car window wipers) it should be laminated.

Use it – all the time

The handy size recommends the use for all the time. You can add it to your application, but foremost you should carry it with you all the time as often situations develop suddenly and surprisingly, where you could hand it over, for example:

- Job interview
- Job fairs
- Give it on to family and friends to pass it on.
- Dinner Receptions (in case the topic comes up – don't press your discussion partner)
- Attach them as jpg to emails
- Place it in your application along with CV and cover letter

According to research 90% of those who received a JIST forms a positive impression of a candidate within 30 seconds. 80% of employers in the USA receiving a JIST Card are willing to invite the person behind the card for an interview even if they do not have a vacancy to offer. This might be the effect for the beginning and loosen out be the time everybody gets used to it; but still it works and is definitely worth a try.

8. Interview

You got it! Your strategy, your preparation and work have been successful. You are invited! Congratulations!

Of course you are going to be excited. So better, be well prepared in order to master the last hurdle to your dream job.

Confirmation mail

Confirm time and venue of the interview. If there are any questions related to it ask them know – but please don't let the HR manager explain you the way, e.g. how to get to Islamabad or where the street is: This would show how dependent you are. It expresses that you are not able to overcome the easiest challenges and that also in the future you will rely on others. As a possible employee you won't be a problem solver, but a burden for the team. This might easily lead to negative outcome of the interview before it has even started!

Don't forget to thank for the opportunity of getting invited!

Preparation

The better you are prepared the higher the chances to master the interview situation. There is no magic behind, but simple work – which requires time. So, plan it accordingly.

It is self-evident that you have read intensively the homepage of the company. Is the organisation active on social media? Follow-it!

Make a list of key strengths and verse them into words. You can exercise a short self-presentation. Very good is to force yourself for an exact 60 seconds statement about yourself. Test it with family and friends in content and form. You can also record yourself with a mobile phone and check what to improve.

Make a list of questions you want to ask the company. It shows interest as well as your preparation.

Sooner or later you will be asked for your desired salary. Be prepared and inform yourself forehands! Discuss it with friends. It's good not to underrate you – but please be realistic.

Make a list of own questions!

There are also professional services available in order to prepare you for interview situation. This can be helpful as you gain confidence and won't be taken by surprise so much by inconvenient questions. However, all in all you should persuade because of your skills and your personality.

Dress Code

For the job interview notch up better than the standard office wear. This shows respect for the HR Manager but even more so for the situation and how much you consider the job.

If there are different dress codes within the same company or organisation orientate yourself by the management level and be more conservative.

Avoid items, which draw attention: a gold chain, a big golden watch or one with diamonds are no-gos. Understatement is demanded.

Be prepared for different weather conditions. There is no harm in informing yourself about the weather conditions the next day. If it is not clear think of several options.

For a man the maximum is a watch, a wedding ring, and one additional ring (seal or family insignia. Depending on the job (a mechanic or a cook don't need suit and tie, but should be well and proper dressed nonetheless) a suit, tie (no strong colours, no cartoons), socks in dark colour (white ones are no-go), classic brown or black shoes, a briefcase and a little Eau de cologne. That's it.

Well dressed –but understatement!

For a woman it is more difficult, but also there are more choices. She can either choose the classic Pakistani dress or if applying for example for an international organisation a classy suit. There is more variety

in colours and jewellery; but also please no attention seeking: colours should be modest, jewellery not distracting and of course nothing sexually provocative (this includes not to exaggerate with perfume).

Here is a little checklist before you leave, but which I recommend to go through the evening before as you then have still



If you are not experienced in binding a tie, exercise at least a day before or ask someone for help!

enough time to prepare. It is also good to lay out your clothes for the next day so that all the decisions (which socks, does the tie suit to this dress or to charge your mobile etc.) are taken calmly and without stress.

- Have you taken a shower?
- Have you taken a deodorant or antiperspirant?
- Is the Eau de Toilette decent and not too much?
- Are nails clean and shortened?
- Is your hair neat?
- Are your shoes clean?
- Have you removed extra jewellery?

- Do you have clean copies of your cover letter and CV in a file folder?
- Do you have extra material to show with you?
- Have you prepared notebook and pen?
- Do you have your charged mobile with you?
- Do you have address and phone number of the company with you?
- Do you know where to go and how long it will take?



There is no second chance for the first impression.

- Can you recall the names of the relevant people, e.g. the HR Manager, the secretary, or the CEO (you might meet him in the lift?)?
- Are you prepared for the weather (rain, snow, hail etc.)?
- For women: do you have your powder, lipstick, an extra pair of stockings, and in times of period an extra sanitary napkin?



Let it be a good one!

Questions

Many questions are possible, but not all of them might be asked. Nonetheless, it is much better to reflect upon the answers forehands. Consequently, we have put together some hard questions HR Managers have raised in the past and might raise to you. Think about the answer!

Explaining overqualification

Overqualified? Then be prepared to be asked why you did apply for this job and accept a lower salary.

You can refer to the point that you want more time for your family, or for a social engagement. Stay truthful, but it is recommended to underline the commitment to the job, as an employer sees more that you will be dissatisfied and more likely to leave.

You can rearrange your CV and stress on experiences and less on last positions in order that the new position is not immediately seen as a step downwards.

For the following questions you have to have the right answer.

How old are you? Age discrimination is prohibited in some countries by law. Though an HR manager can see more or less your age from the CV you can always reply that you feel on the top of your game and you have so much experience.

Where were you born? Especially, when it comes to questions of nationality or being an ethnic minority you can refer to your citizenship. Nonetheless, you need to tell whether you have valid visa and work permit.

Married with children? This is quite direct. The politer question would be "Do family obligations affect your job?" You can answer that and give it a positive touch: "Yes, but my husband and I have decided ever since to keep work and family separated."

Do you want to have children? This is quite thorny. You can either deny the legitimacy of the question or answer honestly in two ways: "No, not at the moment." Or "Yes, someday perhaps in a few years, but this will depend on how my career goes."

What's your sexual orientation? This question is clearly illegitimate and you should consider working at a place, where this is brought into discussion. If this job is important to you should stay calm and reply "Is that question of importance here?" or "What does that have to do with my fitness for this job?"

What's your religion? Also in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan your religion is a private affair. You can still answer: "My spirituality is important to me and I practice, but I do not discuss or practice it at work place."

How do you explain the gap in your CV? A gap of two, three weeks is without importance; but quickly they turn into few months. Human Resources Managers don't like gaps at all. At your career start you might be treated with some tolerance, but later in your professional life it will

be tricky. Your CV should not be chronological in this case. But still, a clever HR Manager will find out. So, be prepared to this question.

Internships and travel could fill this gap and you refer to certain interests and self-grooming. Longer illnesses are better not to mention: first of all they are private and second an HR Manager might fear that you will be ill a lot at the possible new workplace, too. If it was for taking care of a relative's illness, it shows your social responsibility and values. But won't this happen again? Might you take a long leave from the new job then?

Pregnancy and child education is surely a valid reason for taking some time off. The gap should not be too long: after ten years the professional world has changed tremendously and just reading a few professional magazine to keep up won't be enough. You would need to restart – perhaps also in another branch.

Have you tried to start your own business? Basically, that's excellent. If you failed and can come with some key learning it will be a plus point of your personality and your experience. So, you can openly state so.

A time out or professional reorientation is seen more and more positively compared to years before. Don't try to lie, but explain why and what you have done and how you and the company are benefitting from this experience.

Just jobless? That might be true, but not a good formulation. Don't lie, but get some positive aspects out of it and just say so. The decision is then on the com-

pany. Provide a clear rationale, e.g. the downsizing of the company. Express your enthusiasm for returning to work! Mention trainings you have attended in the meantime.

What are your strengths? This should be easy to answer after having worked on CV. Nevertheless, recall your key points in order not to reflect too long. You can list your virtues or name good examples: Nice anecdotes are much more likely to be remembered.

What was the hardest thing you faced in a job? Prepare yourself for that: present a real story where you have been instrumental in solving it and not a catastrophe. This will show that you are able to cope with challenges.

Here are some tricky questions and what they aim at:

How do you feel today? Banal – not at all! What sounds like a simple question of how you are doing will show how you react: if you are not eloquent or funny how should you represent the company in front of others?

What do you know about our company? This will show how well you have done your research, how serious you take the job offer. It can also appear as open question: Tell us what you know about our organisation.

Why do you want to work with us? This is clear and simple question, which shouldn't be answered by praise of the company but individual factors, which attracted you.

What did you want to be as child? Sounds easy, but is not: It relaxes and candidates open to talk about themselves

– thus, revealing motivation factors and objectives. Additionally, mostly we will learn what an applicant thinks about himself.

Where do you know from that you have done a good job? This is a tricky question as it will reveal whether an applicant is motivated in- or extrinsically. Intrinsic persons have their own measurement, while extrinsic depend on others, e.g. colleagues, the boss, or customers. This helps an HR Manager to see whether you fit to his leading style as well as in the team.

When you leave this company one day: What should colleagues say about you? This question hardly anyone expects and throws the applicant a curve. Taken by surprise, many answers tend to be answered quite openly and more honestly. The answers will tell whether the applicant just wants to have money for a job or is looking for a company which suits him or her and where he or she can groom.

What did you like the least in your previous job? This will show without too much pressure how someone deals with frustration and negative situations.

What is most appealing to you in this position you are applying for compared to your previous job? This open question forces the applicant to a concrete but at the same time differentiated answer, which reveals much about his career objectives and his last assignment.

What do you expect from a company you are investing your talent and your time in? This turns the usual perspective upside down. Normally people try to hit the points a company is paying attention to. Nonetheless, a job interview aims also

at finding out whether both sides suit each other. The answer can give a strong hint how stable this relationship is going to be. And it eases negotiations about salary.

What owes a company its employees? This is an unusual question and therefore triggers thinking out of the box. It clarifies your expectations, what you understand by fairness and is your main motivation.

When you compare your last two to three positions – have you been more of a leader or an executer? This is a further open question, which forces equally to denominations. Most people will call themselves a leader, but then have to specify further.

How do you feel about being led yourself? The answer will give an insight how well a candidate will integrate in a team and the company culture. It is important that the applicant replies in full.

In case you could be on the cover of a magazine – which one should it be according to your choice? This sounds very trivial, but it shows how creative and perhaps arrogant an applicant is. Furthermore, it shows where an applicant sees him- or herself and what demands or objectives he/she has.

When have you broken rules for the last time and why? Everybody has broken the rule at least once. The reply will prove your honesty. But depending on the context the HR Manager will know whether you are a querulous person, a loner or a smart decision maker.

What does integrity mean to you? This might be the most important and most direct question. In direct manner it'll find out what your values are, how loyal you are and how

you fit to the company's culture. An alternative question to that is: Range the following words and explain your rating: Loyalty, Integrity, Respect.

If you could create your perfect job, how would it look like? After a first smile beads of perspiration will appear on your face. This will bring to light how much you reflect upon your job, how you deal with your job, which objectives you have, and whether you drive your career or your are driven.

If I ask your former colleagues, one is a friend of yours the other not, about you. In which points would both agree with each other? This is a tricky question as it shows how emphatic you are and how much you reflect upon yourself. Both aspects are becoming more and more important in the professional world.

If we hire you, what would you do in the next 90 days first? Your answer will reveal whether you envision this job already. It delivers indicators if you suit the company and will survive the first 90 days.

What will your future colleagues learn from you? The question aims at your contribution to the company. It shows also your team integration.

In case money doesn't matter, what would you like to work for? What do you want effect in this world by your life? Yet, another question forcing you to think out of the box. It shows intrinsic motivation but moreover your values and career objectives become clear.

Tell us a little what is not written in your CV, which will help me to make a difference between you and other candidates as well as to remember you!

In an aggressive style it provokes you to make some advertisement for yourself. This is the core of an application process.

What's your major concern about this job? It could not only reveal how well you have prepared yourself and researched about the company but also which type of challenges you expect and how you want to tackle them.

Tell me about the best boss you ever had! This will clarify what you expect from a manager and how much personal space you need.

How would you rate your own interest for this job on a scale from 1 to 10? Of course in an interview most people would rate 10. But why? If not 10, what has reduced his or her rating?

Salary

All in all let the HR Manager come to the topic of salary. It does not mean that you hired already, but it's a positive sign. In case you bring it up it could be seen that you are money and not task-focused. It can also happen that the interviewer has not rated you yet and by bringing up the topic he would rate you down.

If you do not know your market value or you don't have a certain sum in mind you definitely need to you can ask whether the interviewer can give you a range. Then you could negotiate and see the reactions. So far, you do not have to decide on the spot. It is perfectly fine to ask for consideration time.

Interview

The big day has come! So, increase your chances by applying the top five:

1. **Be in time!** That means five minutes before the appointment time; but not too early neither. You can wait for a few minutes next to the venue. Coming too late will almost for sure cost you the job. You can test the drive to the company a day before to know how much time you need – and still plan some security time.
2. **Be prepared!** (See chapter on Preparations)
3. **Dress up correctly!** (See Chapter on Dress Code)
4. **Smile, speak short and clearly,** and look into the eyes! Be authentic! Don't claim to be what you are not. Avoid "big words" – sooner or later it will be found out that you are exaggerating.
5. **Thank twice!** The first one at the end of the interview, the second one will be mail or letter on the same day for taking out time for you. Use it to recall your strengths.

Do not be surprised if there is more than one person. It often happens that there are two or more people present, e.g. the HR Manager, the Director of the relevant department (for whom you will work) and a secretary for the protocol.



Be in time and don't bring unnecessary stuff!

How to mess it up

- 1. Arriving late**
- 2. Body or clothes not in order (smelly, dirty, unironed etc.)**
- 3. Chewing-gum or Smoking**
- 4. Bringing shopping bags or boxes**
- 5. Using first names without knowing the person**
- 6. Playing with your hairs**
- 7. Jiggling with your knee or fidgeting in general**
- 8. Talking on and on**

Waiting...

The time after an interview is the most stressful. Nonetheless, be patient. The best is to continue your application efforts for other opportunities.

However important the job to you is, you are just one concern out of many for the HR manager. Even so, you can have contact with the company – after the thank-you note – within about two, better three weeks time (unless stated otherwise during interview). You can make a short call and ask politely if there is something you should send additionally (certificates, references etc.). This shows interest in the job, but do not bother with too many calls. Do not call more than twice to follow up.



Responding to the response

Responding to a rejection

Do not take it personally. Imagine you have to reject someone. It is not out of meanness that you have received a rejection. Surely, it has been a difficult decision for the manager.

See the advantages: You had an opportunity for learning and improving. And you never know what is was good for – perhaps the next job offer is the much better one!

So, write a polite answer after a day or two! Thank for the time and their consideration! This will show you as a person of substance and good manners. And who knows: You might have missed by air and when the number 1 declines suddenly you can be in again – provided that you have written a nice and kind reply.

Responding to a job offer

Congratulations! All your efforts have paid off. Nonetheless, do not succumb to pressure to send an answer right away. Instead it is better to ask for a day or two to consider.

When you meet again with the HR Manager it is the time to have maximum leverage. Now, it is time to negotiate your benefits package as well as to discuss upward mobility and growth. But please be realistic: just

out of college don't expect PKR 100,000.- and a car on the top.

If you are still employed ask for the time of notice to your actual employer. Then accept with full enthusiasm.

Congratulations! You made it! Thorough preparation, hard work and focus have paid off! We wish also a successful start in your career! In a free market with equal rights and opportunities the better one will succeed and make it to the top in an honest way through work and commitment.

Further Reading

Books

- Riley, Jeff: Getting into International Development. 2006.
Guideline for international organisations and how to get there.
- Perveen, Rakhshinda: Successful Social Entrepreneur. (= The EFN Business Leader). Islamabad, 2013.
All you need to know to become a Social Entrepreneur.

More guidebooks for career starters will be published in the series The EFN Business Leader. Please do check from time to time our homepage.

Websites

- <http://jobsearch.about.com>
A website full of recommendations and tips for applicants.
- www.cvtips.com
Tips and guidance for resumes , CVs and cover letter as well as job search.
- www.dayjob.com
calls itself a "career advice site" and indeed you find many hints and examples.
- www.hireme101.com
is a page of a former HR manager guiding applicants.

CV Sample 1

Muhammad Ali

H/no. B-09, Main Railway Road, Shahwali Colony, Wah Cantt

muhammad.ali@gmail.com

Residence: +92 (51)-9 99 99 99

Cell: +92 (333) 4 44 44 44

Objective

- a finance
- and public policy graduate
- enthusiast to undertake policy research in area of market liberties

Experience

- **Policy Analyst** (January, 2010 – May, 2012) in **Strategic Development and Management Consultant**.
Prime responsibility is to do policy analysis; Privatization of Pakistan Railways.
- **Trainee Officer** (May, 2007 – Aug, 2008) in **WAHWAH BANK LIMITED**.
Held various positions in Branch Banking; SME portfolio management, General Banking and Forex.

Training and Certifications

- **General Banking Training**, (May, 2007 – June, 2007) at **WAHWAH Staff College, Rawalpindi**.
- **Training of Moderators**; Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom, Islamabad.
- Working as Volunteer to promote ideals of free-market in financial sector with **Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom**, (July, 2012 – Present)

Academics

- **Masters in Public Policy** (Sep, 2008 – June, 2010) with emphasis on economic policy from **Local Defense University, Islamabad**.
- **Masters in Business Administration** (Sep, 2004 – April, 2007), majors in finance from **Hawiah University, Islamabad**.
- **Bachelors in Commerce** (Sep, 2002 – Aug, 2004) from **University of Province, Lahore**.

Skills

- Strong communication skills both written and oral.
- Well versed with statistical software (PH Stat) and their application.
- Good at using Excel's SOLVER and other MS Office applications.

References

Joe R. Waterfall

Country Director

The Helpful Atlantis People (THAP)

email: j.r.waterfall@thad.org

Phone: +92 (51) 7 77 77 77

Cell: +92 (333) 6 66 66 66

Ali Aliman

Managing Partner, Creative Destruction Pool (Socio-Economic Consultancy)

Email: ali.aliman@CD-pool.org

Phone: +92 (22) 2 22 22 22

Cell +92 (345) 7 89 10 11

CV Sample 2

Khadeeja Anwar

House 312, Asghar Mall Scheme
Rawalpindi, Pakistan.

Email: kh.anwar@me.com
Cell: +92-333-3 33 33 33

CAREER STATEMENT

I am a law postgraduate who combined studies with working and other commitments. In achieving this, I have shown myself to be self-motivated, committed and determined in achieving my goals, come what may. I have also demonstrated negotiating and organizing skills, a firm sense of responsibility and my capacity to work hard under pressure. I possess excellent verbal and written communication skills and am able to relate to a wide range of people, as proven by my varied work experiences.

KEY SKILLS

Problem Solving - an analytical, logical and determined approach to problem solving demanded by research work at University.

Working independently - worked unsupervised for much of the time during involvement in societies/organisations and final year project.

Communication Skills - Demonstrated oral and written communication skills in various work experiences.

EDUCATION

L.L.M (2008-2010) : Cardiff University, United Kingdom
Commercial Law

L.L.B (2004-2007): University of Punjab
Law

BA (2002-2004): University of the Punjab
Political Science, Sociology

HSSC (2000-2002): FG F-7/4, Islamabad
Maths, Stats, Physics

SSC (1998-2000):Beaconhouse School Islamabad
Physics, Chemistry, Biology

WORK EXPERIENCE

2012: Internship at FNF (Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom)

A non profitable organisation promoting liberal democracy, economic freedom and respect for rule of law. It's working basically involved interaction with politicians, policy makers, academics, civilians and NGO staff. Being a promoter of liberal democracy it carries out several workshops, seminars and conferences for the protection of individual human rights and freedom.

2012: Internship at AARI (Corporate Law Firm)

Paralegal work experience consisting of updating case files, data entry work on nationwide database and answering out-of-hours research requests. Broadened knowledge of the legal administrative framework and gave a real grounding in a variety of commercial issues.

2010–2012: Practicing in courts

Dealing with numerous cases ranging from criminal to civil. Includes research, drafting and pleading of cases while appearing before the judge.

2009–2010: Internship with XYZ Ltd.

Invaluable insight into the work of a major regional commercial firm. Shadowed a trainee in the Commercial Property department for a fortnight, then spent a week working in the Projects department. Highlights included sitting in on a number of client meetings and taking an active role in the organisation of a press briefing.

REFEREES

Mr Oswald Spengler (Personal Tutor)

School of Law
Brighton University
Brighton XF10 3AX
UK

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spengler@brighton.uni

Barr. Muhammad Khalid

AARI
Sector XYZ, Clifton
Karachi
Pakistan

Tel.: +92 (0) 21 5 55 55 55
M.Khalid@aari.com

CV Sample 3

MARIAM PARACHA



EDUCATION

Bahria University	Islamabad
Bachelor of Social Sciences	June 2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Specialization: Development Studies• Final Semester Thesis: Flood Response in Bangladesh and Pakistan: A Comparative Study	
Beacon House Public School	Islamabad,
A-Level	May 2009
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• General Group: Business Studies, Accounting, Economics	
Bahria College	Islamabad
O-Level	May 2007
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Computer Studies, Math, Physics, Chemistry, English, Urdu, Pakistan Studies, Islamiyat	

EXPERIENCE

LETTUCE FLY KIDS (NGO supporting street children)	Islamabad
<i>Volunteer</i>	Aug.–Sept. 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Taught street children basic English, Urdu, and Math	
THE AFRICA FOUNDATION (TAF)	Islamabad
<i>Consultant</i>	Sept.–Nov. 2012
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mid-term report on STAEP	
FRIEDRICH-NAUMANN-STIFTUNG (FNF)	Islamabad
<i>Intern</i>	July–Sept. 2011
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prepare engagement with file, and folder structure and archive as well as with databases (OPAL)• Work with planning tool, filing, printing, mailing and preparation of photos for publication• Involved in marketing activities, wrote a web article and executed social web activities• Involved in the logistical preparation and post-processing of seminars and workshop including evaluation	

HOUSE-123, STREET 4, F-6/2 – 333-3 33 33 – MARIAM@PARACHA.COM

MEN AID TRUST

Islamabad, Pakistan

Intern

Feb.–May 2011

- Conducted surveys on vulnerable women in various locations including women jails
- Responsible for analysis of surveys
- Organized flea market for women being focused on by the organization

INTRAMUN

Islamabad, Pakistan

Member Host Team

Feb. 2010

- Liaison for over 200 delegates
- Responsible for ensuring the smooth running of the forum
- Hall Management In Charge

SKILLS

- Computer: MS-Office, Adobe Acrobat, Safari, Firefox, Chrome, Explorer
- Excellent written and oral communication skills in English and Urdu
- Strong research coordination and conducting abilities
- Good technical writing and report writing skills
- Ability to build and maintain effective and productive working relationships with others
- Adept at event organization
- Motivated, creative and versatile

CONFERENCES/SEMINARS ATTENDED

- New Growth Framework, Planning Commission of Pakistan (Marriott, Islamabad)
- Interfaith Harmony, Conciliation Resources (Serena, Islamabad)
- Human Rights, FreedomGate Pakistan (Heritage, Islamabad)
- Art of Photography, Friedrich-Stiftung für die Freiheit (FNF Office, Islamabad)

JIST Cards

Syed.Ali.Muhammad@gmail.com

St. 2, DHA VI, Lahore – 0300 / 9 99 99 99

Objective: **Research, Research, Research**

Experience: - one year MCB Bank Ltd.
 - two y. XYZ Consultancy
 - ½ y. micro-finance NGO

Qualification MBA & Public Poicy (MA)

Skills: research, banking, presentation

Achievement: published six monographs
 organised XYZ conference

For Publication list turn the page!

MARIAM PARACHA



EVENT MANAGER

CREATIVE * SELF-RELIANT * FLEXIBLE

BA BEACONHOUSE, 2010 + MA IN PSYCHOLOGY, 2012

3 MONTHS INTERNSHIP ABC EVENTS, 03-05/2013

WORKSHOPS: EVENT MANAGEMENT, 10/2012
 TRG. OF MODERATORS, 08/2012
 TRAIN THE YOUNG TRAINER, 05/2012
 PRESENATION SKILLS, 11 2011

MARIAM@PARACHA.COM

0333 / 3 33 33 33

About the Author

"Equal chances plus self-responsibility for individuals across the cultures – to make the best out of it!" That is what Olaf Kellerhoff, the Resident Representative of Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF) in Pakistan is working for.

Born in 1970 in Verden (Germany), and having struggled to enable his education and experiences, Olaf was working as a factory worker, parcel deliverer, waiter, cab driver, and journalist to do his apprenticeship as photographer and thereafter to finance his master studies in Islamic History and International Relations. Equally and in parallel he served his way up in the military from an ordinary paratrooper, via the ranks of a corporal, staff sergeant, and lieutenant to captain, being a reserve officer now.

His living, working, serving and traveling in Islamic countries from *maghrib* to *mashriq* sharpened his view that everybody should have the opportunities for own choices in his life. Being confronted with the striking disparities, he joined FNF in 2008 to do his part to make that happen.

About EFN

Economic Freedom Network Pakistan (EFN), established in 2006, is an informal network of academics, businessmen and politicians – organizations and individuals alike – who share the trust in open and free markets benefiting each and every member of the society.



We believe in personal choice, voluntary exchange coordinated by markets, freedom to enter and compete in markets, and protection of persons and their property from aggression by others including government.

In order to facilitate economic growth and human development through meaningful reforms, we welcome public policy advisors, political decision-makers, specialists and experts, businessmen and entrepreneurs to an open dialogue on the merits of free markets and limited government.

For more information: www.efn.net.pk

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Young, dynamic, but jobless – a fate many of Pakistan's youth share. However, in the right spirit and with the right application strategy it will be possible to take the first steps into the professional world.

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