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Today's workshop is on writing personal statements in The

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Uk Civil Service, so welcome to everybody Who's joining us from all the way across the Uk.

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I can see we've got a lot of different different locations joining us.

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I can see We've got some people from Birmingham, and from Liverpool some in Wales as well got a few people in London as well, and I can see joining. us but that's really fantastic please do keep

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introducing yourselves in the chat I am delighted to be part of today's workshop.

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On writing a personal statement. for those of you who may be joining us for the first time, and if you are, please do let me know.

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In the chat. It would be great to see how many first time a political workshop uses we have here today.

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So please do let me know. But for those of you who are joining for the first time, a political is a network and learning platform used by a 150,000 public servants in a 170 different countries and our mission is to build

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20 first century governments that work for people and the planet by putting knowledge and skills at the fingertips of public servants all around the world.

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To we do this, for through our events our courses, and our knowledge sharing platform and network. Oh, fantastic!

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I can see we've got a lot of first-time attendees joining us today, so that's really really great to see

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I'm just gonna start off with a couple of housekeeping notes, and then we'll get underway with the content of today's session.

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So we will be recording today's session and It will be hosted on the a political website.

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Via Vimeo. we'll be doing this so participants and a political members can view the content on demand. and further, they're learning afterwards, and you can all come back and review anything if you missed.

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It, or weren't able to keep notes as we were going along.

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This will enable us to share the content with any participants who are unable to make today's session.

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But please be aware that if you have your camera on they will be able to see your face in addition to anything contained within your background as well as your zoom username.

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And please let me, or one of my colleagues know if you wish to object to being recorded, or to a political making.

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The recording available in the manner described, and if you have any further questions you can find the details of a political State protection officer at the footer of our homepage We also have live transcription available on today's call which you

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should be able to see at the bottom of your screens if you'd like to turn this off.

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You can locate this settings at bottom your screen by cricking.

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Live transcription, and then you can select hide from there today we've fortunate enough to be joined by Darren Weeks.

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Ruth Ross and Mahesh Nandy joining us for our conversation today.

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But before I introduce everybody, we are just going to start off with a couple of polling exercises.

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But first of all, if you can do, it would be great to see all of your faces.

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So if you can put yourselves on gallery mode, turn your cameras on, and just give everybody a quick wave.

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So it would be great to see how many people We've got us joining from different places all across the UK.

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So if you can do, just turn it on and give us away. If that'd be really fantastic.

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Okay, Great. Thank you, everybody. So we are just gonna get underway.

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One of my colleagues is just about to launch our first poll question.

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If you're joining via zoom. in your browser, then please do just put your answer in the chat, and said i'm happy to happy to read it out, but you should see it coming up straight away so so the first

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question is, what was the last time you wrote a personal statement for a civil service job, so you may be working on one right now.

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Within the last week month, or year, you can't remember or something else. and if it, if it's anything else, then please do pop that in the trap, Okay, and i'm just gonna give it a minute, or so for us to answer, We've got a lot of participants on the

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call today. so i'm just gonna give it a minute or so before

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So this one. It may be that you are you've never actually written one before, and you're working on one right now for the first time.

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So that would be great now. I can see we've got a couple who who haven't, or a couple of years ago, or quite a while ago.

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Janine says over 20 years ago that's got a while Okay, I think we're getting close now.

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Yeah. So we can launch these results of that poll so our most popular within the last years. a 37% of you saying that you've written one within the last year and 22% saying that you're working on one right now, all that's

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fantastic to see. And and hopefully, this, this workshop today can be really useful for you.

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Okay, Great. And we're just gonna launch our second poll Now, which is, what do you think is the most challenging part of writing a personal statement writing about motivation to apply for the job.

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Think about relevant examples to share getting something down on paper, biggering out what the right language is to use, or or anything else.

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So again. If you've got anything else to say please do just pop it in the chat.

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We've got some all of the aboves coming in yet that's definitely.

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There's definitely something there can see a lot of a lot of us are agreeing with and staying to the word count as well.

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Yeah, that's definitely something we're hoping to touch on later in later later on in today's session.

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So. so hopefully, we can. We can give you some tips and tricks there as well.

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Okay, I'm just gonna give it a few more seconds and then we can.

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We can share the results of this one you can't see the poll.

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Just feel free to answer the question in the chat. Last: Absolutely Fine?

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Yeah, a lot of people agreeing that it there's all of the options Okay, Great.

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I think we can go ahead and just launch the results of that pulse.

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Okay, So the most popular option with 52% of you are about that.

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That is a lot thinking about relevant examples to share.

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So that is a topic that we're we're hoping to touch on later on today.

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So hopefully we can be of help to you. And the second options.

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Second most popular option was figuring out the right language to use.

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Okay, great and 14% saying getting something down on paper. Fantastic: Okay, Thank you.

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So we can just get rid of that, Paul. question and we will move on. I'm just going to introduce our speakers, and then i'll be handing over to them and they could walk through the sessions.

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So first off we have Darren Weeks, who is a talent and recruitment partner at the office for national statistics.

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He's worked in the recruitment industry for over a decade, and has seen both the agency side and internal recruitment side of the role, and he currently manages the talent attraction team at the office for national statistics where

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he works with hiring managers and recruiters to build pipelines of talent for critical roles, attract and support candidates to the application process, and manage the development of our employer.

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Brand. Then we also have Ruth Frost joining us.

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Sorry who is a recruitment manager at company's house.

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Ruth specializes in operational delivery and project-based recruitment, whilst also enjoying, delivering great outreach work and schemes to provide opportunities for people looking to join civil service, She has been

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working in Civil Service recruitment for almost 3 years now, and has previously worked in the public sector as a teacher.

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So she understands exactly what it's like to apply for a civil service recruitment process, and gets it. When people ask where to start when putting together a civil service application, then we have Mahesh Nanda who is in

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advocacy and engagement lead at the Department for International Trade.

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Maheshes has been a civil servant for 7 years, having previously served as a police officer, he is delivered master classes about the application process to over 500 people from across the civil service, so fantastic and it's great to be

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having our speakers here with, us. today i'm actually just going going to hand over to Darren in just a few seconds. but actually what we'd like to do.

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And hopefully, this can be really helpful for you and the so practically kind of apply some of your learning. we're going to be thinking about.

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What would you put as your first sentence when you were creating a personal statement?

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So if you can pop this in the chat and just have a think about what you'd like to what you'd like to do, will have our speakers kind of feedback on some of these opening sentences that they're seeing

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so if you if you'd like to and you'd like to take part.

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Please do pop your first centers that you think that you would use for a classical statement within the chat.

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So we'll we'll be feeding back on them later. But, Darren, i'm going to hand over to you first.

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He's just going to be sharing his opening statement with us. Thank you. and hi everybody. and yes, thank you for coming along.

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It's a good number of people on here, so we were asked to

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Just look at 3 things that we would give as tips and advice for people.

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Who are doing their personal statement So for me the first one is relating it to the person specification, and making sure that that what you're writing is relevant.

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One of the things I see quite a lot is a mistake that people make is, they think they know what the hiring manager is looking for.

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Without answering the question that the personal statement is asking

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An example of this would be one that we had before Christmas, where we had evolved a network engineer and a candidate wrote loads of information about how they were a Cisco network engineer.

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But we were looking for someone with experience on the uber Noxis.

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Go. And actually it was quite clear in the person specification that we were looking for that.

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But the person just assumed network engineer i'm a cisco network engineer must be right.

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They didn't get through because actually they just didn't give us the information we were looking for.

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They might have been fantastic by we were but they didn't tell us about it.

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So make sure you're relating it to what we're actually looking for.

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Don't guess what you think we might be looking for my second tip would be.

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Always remember that the personal statement and the Cv. sections on our application.

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They are looked at together, they're not too separate documents effectively when it goes through to sift, they look that together.

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Use that to your advantage with things like word counts but also use it to advantage when trying to get across the information that we're looking for.

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And last. The personal statement is not a cover. Letter They are 2 different things, and the approach that we take in the Civil Service is is not the same as your traditional cover.

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Letter that you would see in the private sector. Okay? Great.

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Thank you, darren, those are really really useful. tips and hopefully we can see some fantastic to see people already putting in their chat kind of what their opening sentences might be.

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So we'll come back to them a little bit later.

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On, Ruth, if I can hand over to you now. Hello, Lovely to meet you all, and have you all here today, and I can see some really really good kind of opening statements coming from the chat to thank you all for sharing those and as

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Taylor said I I don't come from a civil service background.

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I've been in the civil service. myself for about 3 years now, so I absolutely get people who were putting in the chat like I don't know where to start.

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I don't know go about I didn't have to go about it so hopefully, I said today session you will have some really kind of good practical ideas about how to move forward, so as darwin said we've been asked to

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share our top 3 tips. So kind of what would be our 3 top recommendations if you were licking the team, and to make that application, put in that great application to get the job that you are looking for.

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So for me I would start, and if I had a very similar place to where down started in terms of the advert, and I know that sounds incredibly obvious, but adverts across the school service they are different.

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I saw somebody put in the chat that they see maybe a little bit inconsistent, and I wouldn't say it's so much inconsistency.

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It's just a fact that civil service departments are different and so different places are looking for different things.

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So before you even kind of pit especially put penta paper in that sense very old-fashioned before you even start typing your application format.

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Start actually by reading the advert. I suggest, if you can, and you print it off, and you take a highlighter or a byray to it, and you really pull it apart.

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You won It's kind of the idea of mining the advert.

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Get everything out of there that you can to help people your application from together.

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So what experience is is that a hiring manager he's written? the advertising for all what behaviors can all civil service jobs typically have behaviors attached to them?

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What behaviors have been looked for. Only technical skills that are needed are the person specification.

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Say often that might be put as responsibilities in an advert to You know what kind of specific skills are they looking for?

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Highlight always, because then you have to an extent to take list.

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And, as Darren said, Use that ticklist then to start pulling together.

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Your application form because you want to sign paste or hire a manager.

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Look, I've got everything you want I am if you want your ideal candidate.

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But you need to make that super clear to hire managers and say, having that understanding before you even start thinking about, what examples am I going to use?

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What am I going to write? What am I going to say?

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Where is a really good starting place, and the advert is your gold dust.

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If you want to be able to do that, so that for me would be kind of tip number one.

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Use the advert, get every thing out of it before you do anything else.

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Secondly, this is a big hint and taper.

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This is something that we Dc. and I know I myself did this.

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Do you know, say real head and tip for you when you start writing your application form, and that might be the personal statement part.

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It might be the kind of Cv. the work history part that Dan was speaking about.

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As well focus on what you have done. So we always talk about focus on the eye and not the we.

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And that is a really good little hint. So when you read Yup, application form back to yourself, have you?

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Said I did this. I did that rather than we did this We did that hire managers.

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They don't want to know about your team your boss your colleagues.

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They want to hear about you make sure you don't fall into the wheat trap.

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If you want focus on that, I I have done this. I have done that.

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This is my experience, and that means you are showcasing yourself and your talents by rather than risking kind of shocking. What your colleagues or your boss is equally some people fall into what we call the

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storytelling trap. so on their personal statement they get a little bit bogged down with telling us the story.

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They go into. kind of. He did this Well, this was the situation and they don't actually tell us about how how they did things do.

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We talk about less of the what more the how in terms of how do you do that? right?

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Obviously you've got to set the scene you've got to tell us about what you did, or kind of what the scenario was all right.

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Yes, but keep that reef you don't get bogged down in that detail that you don't leave space to tell us actually how How did you do the things within this so let's take a deny If

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you're writing about the behavior management quality service let the scene What was the quality service that you had to manage?

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What was, if you want the task you had to do. But then really, really focus on the actions the how?

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How did you do this thing? focus on the eye? Not the way I did this.

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I did that by doing this, by doing that, using that little word by is incredibly helpful, because it means you are actually focusing on really specific things that you've done.

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I can see some of these just popped in the chat.

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Starve all the way, and that star would probably just say Yes, Well, if you've not heard of Star approach before it stands for situation, task action results, and the situation in the task should have less.

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That's set in the scene than the action and the result they should be where you kind of focus a word, count, if you want.

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So the action that a star is all about the how how did you do it.

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And then don't forget the results. some people fall into that trap.

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They tell us all about what they've done. but they don't tell us what the outcome was.

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What the results were really make sure that you get those results it doesn't have to be new numerical or statistical results.

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The results can be a soft aside, it can be you got great feedback.

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You're praised by your manager and you saw increased customer satisfaction.

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And if anything like that that is still a result it doesn't have to be numerical.

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Okay, So that's kind of my second hint of tip more of the eye, less of the way over.

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How. Yes, you need the what, but not to such a great extent and don't forget that in star situation task action results the action and the result should take up the majority.

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You're kind of looking to divide out that word count and then for me the third tip, a little bit to do with the application form itself.

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And this might sound really really obvious, but it's such a practical tip that you can put into practice straight away.

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Okay, Yeah, the application form doesn't have tools on it such as word count, granite check and spell check.

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So we would always suggest that you write your application, form your work, history, your personal statement in some kind of office project word, for example, right? not them.

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Obviously, there are other projects you can use. Okay, but if you put it in something like that you will be able to make the best of all the great functionality of those sorts of programs.

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The word count feature the grammar, check the spelling check.

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Use them dna. you don't need to be a great kind of person at putting language together, because sometimes people like I don't know where to start, and i'm scared i'm gonna make mistakes using pragm such

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as word will stop you having to worry about making these grammatical areas.

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This spelling areas stand for you use the functionality that's there and then.

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Just copy and paste it across into an application form or say don't ever kind of d without he a human proofreader.

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Do you know the number of people who we see who don't pre feed application forms, and then they fall down because of it.

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So when did you are happy with your application? form you will probably be at the stage where, for one of the better phrase, you can't see the wood for the trees?

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You have with this application for them. so hard and read it so many times it's kind of stop in making sense to you.

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Yeah. somebody asked to read it. 3 for you. It can be a colleague.

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It might be a mentor a coach your boss But equally. it can just as happily be a family member, Janet, because all you're going to give them is you're going to say right that's it ad

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fit you can see i've highlighted the things that I need to be included.

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This is what i've written, can you just read through. you don't need to understand what i'm talking about.

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You need to just tell me do you think i've included those things in the advert, and do you think that I've got kind of it. makes sense.

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It reads Well, it flays that kind of thing a human proof reader can give you really, really great feedback on. And so these really are my 3 tips and Taylor back over to you.

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Thank you, Ruth. They were really great and really actionable tips, and I can see a lot of good feedback coming through in the chat as well.

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And I, in fact, we've had somebody given extra tip That kind of follows on from your third one of using the read aloud function on word, and listen to it back rather than reading it yourself, because that can help you kind of identify

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those middle errors, or those little mistakes in your sentences as well.

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So that's a really great extra little tip that we've had through, and the hash i'm gonna hand over to you.

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Now for your tips as well. Thank you. Taylor and the hello everyone.

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The thing back. Going last is most of the points have already been taken. so I'm going to try and just give you some of my tips and go over some of the tips that Darren and Ruth have given which were excellent and

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just try and clarify some of the the comments coming through.

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So first of all, number of different departments work differently.

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Some departments want 500 word person, statement, others want 1250.

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So how do you different differentiate what you do so all it's about is making sure if it is a 500 word statement as down the roof mentioned that you make sure you Look at the Job.

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Description what they are seeing for and focus on the essential and the desirable criteria.

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So break those down, because if it is a 500 word they have to give, look at those essential criteria and focus on that.

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So, for instance, i've got an example here experience of stakeholder engagement that could be one of the essential criteria.

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So what you write or what you should be writing is in my current role.

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I deliver diet's engagement to key stakeholders.

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I am responsible for key stakeholder forums such as.

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And then you start out your evidence. Yeah, because what that does is give the reader or the hiring manager knows that this is what I'm looking for.

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Stakeholder engagement. This is where the evidence is.

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And then the second one experience of project management, you can go and say I have experience of project management.

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When I worked at Cabinet Office, I led a cross-government project that focused on improving the inclusion of prisoners into society as project leader, and then go on to give your example.

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So just going through them one by one, which will help you.

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And you know a lot of people write at there's no need to give staff format on your responses on that as long as you give the what to a certain extent, and how you delivered that job, and and the result, as well so



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I think you can be a bit, You know in 500 word or even 750 words.

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You can't get down and you know the star format and all of the examples.

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So make sure you have the evidence there but so you're highlighting what behaviors or the essential criteria, or the desirable criteria they're looking, for.

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And that will actually make sure that the reader is looking at the right points.

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And you've covered everything off and as darren mentioned that you're not missing off any of the criteria of you know, and and right in the wrong things like being a 6 cisco engineer rather than the other one so it's

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just a matter of making sure you go through that document in detail. I've mentioned the 500 words 750 words, if at least 1,250 words.

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What you can do is just use that to just expand on your evidence, because there is always a lot more.

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You want to write, and the 501 word, one is the most hardest.

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So, making sure that you can write the evidence for up to 1,250 words, I mean it doesn't need to be 1,250.

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It can be shorter. They just give you the option of going that far.

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So just bear that in mind as well also thinking about there's a lot of expression of interests that are advertising majority of the department.

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But what's the difference between expression of interest and a personal statement there isn't one, because in the expression of interest there's going to be a job description they can ask for the same things.

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So just making sure that you have that right information on there as well similar to a personal statement, and that's all the tips I have, as I said, down in a roof, give some excellent tip, and and I have got what

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I read out with my examples, I have got that which I will share with that Taylor and Helen who circulates it on Monday.

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To you go. Thank you for that. Okay, So we're going to move on to the Q.

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And a part of our session now, and I can see a lot of you have already putting questions in the chat, which is really really great.

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Please do continue to do so. We will try and get through as many as we can.

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I can see we've got some coming through. that We were already hoping to touch on what we're actually gonna start off with is obviously a lot of you have put your your kind of opening statements in the chat it would be great

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if we can talk a little bit about how to close a personal statement I think that's something that's very very hard.

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You want to leave a really great impression at the end.

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So. How can we kind of do this and maybe ruth if I can come to you first? What would be your best advice for how to close a personal statement?

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Yeah, so it's a really good question in terms of that opening that close in people typically will say to us, I don't know where to start, and then I've written it.

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How do I kind of close off? I know somebody has said, How do I make sure I leave, and really positive example of myself?

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I suppose, for me. One of the first things that I would kind of revisit is what Darren said at the start.

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Just remember a personal statement in the civil service is not the same as writing a letter of application. Don't feel you need to structure it as a letter, you know.

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Don't feel you need to start with a d so and say and then you're sincerely in your name.

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I don't know you're about in other parts of the Civil Service. but for S.

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Eric applications are anonymized. Okay, to avoid any kind of bias.

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And so we would actually say, Please don't put things like your name on that personal statement section, because we will have anonymized it, and the places where it appears as we're in the application form so in terms of how to close it off

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you You don't need to say things like thank you for considering my statement, or thank you through your application.

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Forum, I would always encourage you to make the very best of the word count.

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I know a couple of people in the chat i've been saying, Do I need to use the full word count that an application form is not going to go through a word counter with the hire manager They're not gonna check

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did you use every last word, but would always encourage you to use as much as the word can, as you can, and that kind of is to deal with how you do closure statement in terms of if you've got 500 words use as many of them as

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you can do, you know, Really, showcase yourself? Everybody in this chord will have some great experiences.

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They will have really great skill sets. but they will want to share.

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So they don't come kind of do do yourself a disservice.

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I guess I would say by missing things out if you have got those extra words that you can use, and using toward to the very end if you weren't.

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Okay, so don't feel you've got to kind of save a sentence at the end to thank the the panel for reading your application, or anything like that.

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Keep packing that personal statement full of really great evidence that I know everybody will have.

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When you start thinking about your examples, you will always have loads that you can use and keep that kind of relevancy going to the very kind of last sentence.

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So. yeah, that would be for me kind of how to close that and that's where it also ties in with making the best of the way it can thank you for that.

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And the hash Can I come to you with the same question I think we'll go through all our speakers on it on this question?

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Sure I think the key about the last sentence is if you're. obviously on a 500 word personal statement is going really really difficult.

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Key is what you need to get in to it is showcasing.

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You showcase your experience, and then you want to ram it off by saying that how excited you are, and you believe with the experience that you have showcased that you have the right qualities, etc., for the role, as well

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so it just closes up really, really nicely and in a succinct way, because obviously you just want to make sure that you don't use up all your word.

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Count on that last sentence. but making sure that you highlight 2, the reader that you're excited about job and and personal surveillance all about showing how motivated you are for that role.

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You need to show that motivation with the evidence, and you can do that in the first sentence, but also in the last sentence as well.

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Great and darren over to you as well. Yes, so for me and the training that we give to our panels.

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When they're doing sift assessments is you It's the relevancy of the content to the essential skills.

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That's the important bit whether someone has written a really nice opening statement or closing statement at the end really is secondary to that. The bit we're looking for is essential skills.

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So, as we said, as mahesh said if you can get something in there that you know at the end, and at the start they're fantastic.

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But actually, if it's you don't ever leave out something that links to an essential skill for the sake of getting a sentence at the end, saying, Thank you for reading my application.

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You know definitely get the essential skills information in their first you know if how I've closed it off in the past, and how I've advised people to do it.

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If you've got space, is to say if you have any questions about anything on my personal statement, please feel free to contact me now.

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They might not always do it, and actually it might be that we can't do it because of the the process that we've set up.

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But it leaves that door open, the, you know. Actually, if the panel have but something in the in the advert that says, In some cases we may contact you before making the decision.

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It leaves the door open that you're happy for them to do that so great.

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Thank you and so we can see I see there's a there's one question that's coming up quite a few times, and I think we're gonna kick off kind of with this one.

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So, Ruth, I'm gonna come across to you with this one if it's okay.

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But what is the difference between behavior examples, and personal statements that's a real question.

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Okay, So they are used differently across the civil service and that's way.

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Understanding. What is in the advert is so important because the advert will tell you what's being looked for.

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Different departments will use different things and different jobs within the same department will use different ways of kind of applying.

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So in terms of a personal statement, a personal statement will be a longer piece.

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Normally. again, check. Yeah. advert to understand the word count, because it will have different work.

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Cancer pencil departments as standard. In In where I work we are using personal statements of 1,250 words.

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But other places may use shorter maze different lengths.

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That will be in the advert that's why the advert is so important that personal statement is looking for evidence of your skill as a you experience.

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It would be looking for kind of evidence of the person spec.

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So; for as the responsibilities, and it may be looking for evidence of behaviors that the advert will tell you that some places may look for more evidence of technical scalars, But the advert will tell you what to include in

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that personal statement. That is why the advert is so important.

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Okay and different places will look for different things in terms of behavior.

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Example is, they will be shorter and they will be looking for examples of the specific behaviors.

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Again that are listed in the advert and again that advert will tell you which behaviors have been looked for, which behaviors you're looking for evidence of, and also how many words you need to write for each behavior So there are different styles

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of application, but use your advert min it for everything that's in it, and it will tell you how you need to approach the application, for thank you for that.

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That's really really great we've had a question come through and mahesh i'm gonna come to you for this one as well around tips on structuring your personal statement I know i've seen a couple of

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different examples coming through with people asking questions or should they be using bullet points to be using sub headings. So it would be really great to know kind of what you're thinking about.

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What is an ideal structure for a personal statement? Thanks. Yeah.

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I think the way I do it. And I did a personal statement a few months ago, and the way I always look at it and advise people to do it is, Look at the job description, and look at the essential criteria.

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And then follow that process. There may be examples that you have.

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They give, which might there may be one example that might fit 2 of the essential criteria.

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Just making sure that you've highlighted that in so make sure it's empowering graphs.

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I wouldn't suggest using bullet points because that breaks it out and makes it more. You know, sort of like a readout if you like.

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You want to make sure that you're given a lot of information and the right information in there.

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So look at your experience of you know the experience that's required for the job, and break it down into that what I do to help the recruiter.

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See that this is what i'm talking about is the evidence you require, and i'm writing about this here is maybe highlight.

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The keywords so previously I gave you the example of experience with stakeholder engagement.

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If you're writing the example, make sure stakeholder engagement is highlighted in that sentence, so it just goes to show you don't have to do that. but it just is there to make it easier for the recruiter.

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To see, because they may have you know 5060 applications to go through it.

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They're going to get word blind going through all of those and So it's making sure that you make it as easy as possible for them to see where the evidence is and for you to stand out had that help that's definitely definitely

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helpful, and we can see some other tips coming through the chat.

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So please do check that. If you are on the call there's a lot of different tips coming through from a lot from all of our other people on the call today.

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Say darren, i'm gonna come across to you with I know this is something that we've spoken about already.

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But a question on on word counts. So we had a couple of different questions come through here.

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So how do we kind of meet the word count is it seen. negatively? If we're a little bit too shorter or when it's so difficult to stick to the word count when there's a lot we want to cover

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what would kind of be the advice here if we've maybe got one of them one of the shorter ones kind of 500 words.

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How are we making sure that we're hitting all of those points in such a limited word?

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Count. So I guess the first thing I say is hopefully that the the recruitment team have made the length of the personal statement appropriate to how much information they're asking for you know if you've got 3 bullet points

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on the essential criteria. and you've done 500. then great. If you've got 10 essential criteria, and you've asked for 500.

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Everyone is going to struggle. to get it within that word limit i'd say as far as sort of missing the word count, and not getting near the word count.

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It's couldn't depend on whether you've covered all of the information.

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You know I wouldn't negatively look at someone's application because they've done 500 words rather than 1,250 words if they've covered everything that they need to cover within that application and they've been able

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to evidence how they do meet those criteria i'd always say, though, that you know if if you've got 6, 7, 8 bullet points that you've got to try and new match against if you've only written 500

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words, Then are you putting enough detail in? Have you actually explained everything properly?

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Or could you actually use that word, count to to get a little bit more assurity?

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Across to the panel and the other thing going back on the hes point is, however, you write it, and especially if it is one where you're struggling to get within the word, and just remember that it's read by a human being you

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know. imagine that someone is sat in a room. and they've got a tick list in their left hand of all of the essential criteria, and in their right hand They've got your application, and your personal statement.

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They want to be ticking off that box. those boxes as they go through the easy.

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You can make it for them to do that the better. whether you do put it into pat headed paragraphs, whether you do use bullet points, you know.

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However, you break it up. and however, you do design it just remember someone's reading it. We're not using magic tools that pull out the keywords.

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That's really great to that's really great to hear on a kind of related note, and actually the hash I'm sorry I'm gonna come back to you with this one because this was a question that we had submitted

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beforehand. And what can you safely leave out of a personal statement?

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If you are, if you are one of the ones where you are getting to that maximum on that word, count, what are the other parts that you would?

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You would want to kind of get rid of first when you're trying to meet that word limit that's fine so to make the background information or the context about what you're going to speak about or your evidence is cut that down

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as much as you can, and there will be ways to do that.

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I was helping some of the outlast week where they put too much focus on.

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You know the background to give a bit of context and it just took up like maybe 50 words when they could have done it in a sentence with 10 words. so that's what I would suggest.

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So just and as others have said before, make sure that you've got somebody to read over your statement, even when you draft in it to see what can be cut down.

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And it sounds right as well, because you know, as Ruth mentioned, I think before you have.

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You know the situation. I know it's not start format and personal statement. But there will be a situation and what you have to do, making sure that you don't just focus on that.

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It's what you did, and more more importantly How you did that so?

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Just focus on that Thank you Ruth i'm gonna come back to you with the question that's related again.

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Back to the the behaviors that we had and we We spoke about earlier, and we've had a question through it in a chat.

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That's. asked If you're using an example within your personal statement, And you also want to use that same example within your behaviors as well.

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Is that okay to do? Should you be looking for different examples in both, or

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Or is it okay to be repeating, repeating the same example in multiple places during your application?

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Good question, and the other one that we often get is, Can I use the same example?

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An interview that I used in application. People kind of worry about that.

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So, what I would always say is, remember your application. form is setting yourself a showcasing yourself.

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You are showing the real breadth of your talents, your skills, and your experiences.

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So whilst suppose to an extent, there is no right or wrong answer to that one tailor, you absolutely. Yeah.

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If you want to use same example twice, you can. But I would always say, really trying to think, is there something different that you can use the showcases?

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These skills shake uses that behavior chick is you experience. but maybe takes a different twist on it, or she's a different side, or shows that you've got it in a different context.

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I would always suggest, before you start writing an application form, that actually you do a bit of kind of a mind-making exercise.

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So you get a big piece of paper out, and you try and go back over your past couple of years of experience.

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Go backwards with you want to and just kind of mind map all the different things you've done The projects you've worked on the teams.

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You've been part of experiences you've had think inside and outside of work, you know, you might add in things in terms of a voluntary capacity.

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You might have been out of work for a while when you were doing, and different kinds of things.

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All of that is really valuable evidence. Get all down so that you can see all these different things you've done.

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Then see how they relate back to what is in the advert. What has been asked for.

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You will often find that you have formal evidence and potentially you first realized in terms of the things you've got to say, and then often you will find you don't necessarily need to use the same example because you will have other ones that you

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can use. I think a lot of the time people we we sometimes don't necessarily blur and trumpet front, and the better phrase.

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Your application form is your shop window. It is, you say it.

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I am a really great candidate. I have got all this great experience. Look, I can't do the job that you are advertising for bit.

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Take that as a shot window, and so definitely training cleaned as all these different examples.

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So think you have to repeat something yeah there's something wrong with it, necessarily.

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But if you can avoid doing say it's always better because it just includes a new example and new kind of set of your skills, and that's such a thing. Okay, So if we if we're I mean it's a hard question

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to answer about. how many examples should we be hoping to include in a personal statement?

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And I know that might be dependent on the on the job role.

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That was exactly why I was gonna tell you that so there's no heart of pastoral.

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It's. not that you must have x number in it's more make it relevant to what is the asked for in the advert, so I know sometimes people say i've got my personal statement written I headed in kind of I put it for a good

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couple of jobs most. You can do that. Always try and tailor it to the job you are applying for.

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And so in terms of tweak this example is you might want to take one lot of kind of skills out one prototype you've worked on and puts something else in, because it's more relevant to the role you were playing

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for always try and make it as specific as you can to the world.

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You are playing for. so it's not so much in terms of Unities X.

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And that advert entire in terms of their skills, the experiences, the behaviors, all that sort of thing.

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I always kind of say to candidates you were trying to stay and paste to every creating manager to a hiring manager a little differently different places.

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Nick i've done everything you've asked for you've got to interview me.

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I am your candidate. Okay, and you will only be out to deep that if you are absolutely showing them, Yeah, all these things you'll ask for.

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I've got him I done them I can see them that's such a thing. Thank you.

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That was pretty fantastic. i'm darren i'm gonna come across to you.

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We've got a we've got a question through and I think this will be useful for our audience today.

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They've asked kind of what's the difference between showing what you did, and how you did it.

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So how do we show those kind of how? answers? Yeah, how should we be using those?

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So I think the difference in there is. You know what what I did would be that I came along to this webinar.

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You know how the how is is about the the conversation in the background with yourselves, with Helen.

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You know the Us. getting together and agreeing? Who was going to cover what in the session?

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That is that more, it's that detail that brings to life?

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What I did rather than well, actually, I just my laptop on.

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Suddenly I was in this meeting, and that's the solve that the best way of explaining it.

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Really it's explaining how you got to that position. or how you ended up doing that particular thing rather than just saying, you know I led a team to manage an upgrade of an office. 365 It's Well, how did you

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manage that team, You know. What did you do? how to decide who was doing what and allocate the tasks?

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If your job was actually to be the manager. The eye in this is is, I managed the team and I led to the team, and I made these decisions.

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The we is that the team did this, and how much emphasis should should people be putting on either part?

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Should that kind of that starting it just be your context, and the majority should be the how. How should we be splitting?

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So I I think I spotted in the chat.

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Someone said, You know you want to keep those initial bits high level, you know It's just settings it's just setting the scene

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Of what it was that you were doing is those later bits it's the how that you need to give them more detail on.

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So when we talk about Star, we tend to say that, you know, for the personal statement we want to look about 10% is the Us.

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Is your situation, and the percentages go up through the the tea and the a part of that, and then they drop down again.

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When you get to the results we do want to know the result.

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It is important. but please don't. spend 50% of your explanation on the result, because actually the important bit is the actions that were done in the middle fantastic.

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That was great and the hash i'm going to come to you Next, we've had a question come through that, says I'm. can can non-work examples be used so when you're looking at a personal statement are you looking

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for for kind of just jobs, specific experience. Or if somebody has other experience, kind of outside of that, that they think would be relevant.

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And is that okay? to use Yes, definitely. you know look I came into the Civil Service 7 years ago, so when I joined.

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I had to use my previous experience. so it's good to use a combination if you can, because you might have that relevant experience and knowledge from outside that you want to showcase.

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So making sure that you have that and so yeah it's okay to use that experience from outside.

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Also it doesn't have to be work related it could be something you do in your you know spare time if you're volunteering, for instance, it could be that kind of example as well so making sure it's you you

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you know you can use whatever you want, I won't go too far back, though, so maybe examples given 20 years ago. so maybe keep it to the last 5 6 years. perhaps. and keeping those relevant also, I just want to take the opportunity because I know it's come up on the

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sidebar from a few people, and I just want to reiterate it.

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Yes, please do that. You know the training that's on civil service learning about interviewing. and you know what you need to do.

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Is it's really really helpful? and you can see what interviews are then looking at, because they should be doing that training before interviewing anyone, or sifting as well.

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But also more than that, I encourage everyone to become independent panel members, because that's going to give you an opportunity to learn how to sift and also see applications, but also more importantly at interviews as well seeing what the interview, is looking

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for, and it's a good way, of learning and putting that into practice when you're applying for things I just don't need that type.

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Yeah, go ahead, and great leave my hash phone I couldn't agree with Mahesh more on that it being able to sit if you want the other side of the desk is so valuable in terms of just seeing how

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does this sift to take place? What does an interview look like?

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And I know in our department, and i'm sure a lot of the time the same.

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We are always looking for people who are willing to sit an interview panel who are willing to part of it, as Mahesh said, as independent panel members.

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So you don't necessarily need to be in the team that the hiring is taking place for the just gives you such insight into kind of good examples.

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Maybe not say great examples, and also I think you put yourself with the sheets of the interview. But and you realize they're not looking to judge you. They're not looking to catch you out.

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They want you to do well. they are little to kind of capture.

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Your best examples and all that such a thing. I think it takes some of the anxiety potentially that is absolutely natural, as part of the application in the inter process.

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It can help to take some of that away. because she's see it from the other side of things.

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So. Yeah, I couldn't agree more on that we've just had a couple of people ask how how do you and get that opportunity?

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Is it you need to go to your manager? or is it best to go to kind of the hate child team?

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They're just asking for specifics. be a good question so I was thinking, to differ in different departments.

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I know, in our department it probably be a conversation initially initially, you'd have a lot of the line manager and kind of a check in a one-to-one whatever that looks like in your department.

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But equally you can get directly in touch with Hr.

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Say we have a specific recruitment team in our department, and we would just people get in touch with this all the time.

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But it is going to depend on kind of specificity department.

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You path just coming there. it should be. There should be information on Internet as well. So just making sure that you have a look for independent panel members.

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Just put that search within, and as Ruth said otherwise just contact your line manager, or you know Hr: great, thank you both.

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I'm actually gonna take us back to that first exercise that we did just when we joined around and those openings statements.

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So i've got a couple that i'm just gonna read out, and my colleague is also going to put in the chat from some of the examples that we saw.

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And it would be great if I can just come to our 3 speakers and just ask kind of what you're what you're liking, and what you're seeing, and through these 3 examples.

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So one we had was, I have all the necessary skills to meet the criteria of this role.

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The second one was, I am passionate about, and then they would go on and insert their job title third one.

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I am qualified and experienced with 20 years of experience in X industry, and a member of ex-professional body.

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And it is, it is with great Enthusiasm. and interest that I apply for the role of X at Y.

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And then the final one was i'm really excited about this opportunity.

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So my colleague is just going to pop them in the chat as well, and so we can see them just collected them together.

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But it would be great if we can see here. from our speakers about what they're what they're really enjoying about those so darren, if I can come to you first.

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Is there any of those sentences that that really stand out to you? or any parts that you think would be really great to include so actually to me?

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I think that I've used the first one and the last one, probably more than any of the others, and I would tend to play it based upon the vault.

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I'm applying for and and and How they've worded the advert a little bit. that might give an insight. And actually someone further up in the chat asked is it okay to phone the hiring manager or the

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recruitment team. Absolutely. You know the reason we put the contact details on the address so that people can get in touch to find out more about the role.

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Why would you not use that to your advantage to try and find out a bit of information?

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In terms of using it. I would say actually if i've got the space. I would talk about how i'm excited about the opportunity.

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If I feel that is going to be, maybe the bit that really bites and gets the attention.

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If I feel like the person, if I have had a conversation with them, is much more just practical.

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Down the line. i'd go with I believe I have all the relevant skills and experience.

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Then underneath it. I then talk about them all. So thank you, Ruth.

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If I can come across you next of course, you can i've got to be honest, tailor, I think they're all really good, Janet, there is nothing there that would cause me any concern What's the weather and I think

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they are all really positive stars, and in terms of what I said about using the eye.

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They are all really freakers to item. this I am this all incredibly positive.

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You know a positive strand start but they're all they're very specific.

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They're to the point they're not kind of getting they're not.

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They're not wasting words if you want and kind of just being a bit vague and a bit generalized.

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They're really to the point so there is nothing there but I would say, Oh, don't use that, or don't use that one or anything like that, or really really good puzzle strung starts and they get you right into it as

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Well, do you know they're jumping you straight in we're not wasting words.

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We are absolutely, really getting on with this. So yet, or really did great, Thank you.

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And mahesh your comments as well. Thanks. Yeah.

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I think they're. really, really, good and you know I think all of these can be used in the right context to depend on the job that's available.

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So, for instance, if I just highlight I am qualified in experience with 20 years experience in such such industry, i'm member of a professional body, if you're applying for a specific role where they need that kind of experience like an accountant

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or a slister anything like that. So you would like that, and that was great.

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Most of the jobs are quite general and I think as I agree with Darren, the first one, and the last one is probably the ones that I have probably framed and used before as well.

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And so I think, they're, all good just making sure that use it within context of the job role. and and what you're going for. be perfect.

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I'm. Darren, can I just come back to you quickly we've just had a question in the chat. Obviously you mentioned about phoning in and talking to either the hiring manager or the recruitment team and somebody has

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asked, Would it be okay to mention that in your application, or should you, would that be a risk of kind of identifying yourself?

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And you should maybe not mention that. I guess the first thing I say today is, is it relevant? Is it?

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Is it relevant? and is it in the essential criterion?

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I know this might sound flippant is it an essential criteria that you must have had a phone call with Darwin. It's not.

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It's probably not relevant so so a good example, recently is actually, we asked a question for you in industry program.

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And the question. One of the questions we asked them to write about in the personal statement was why they're interested in this role.

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And someone came back to me and said you would not believe you might have times.

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Your name comes up in the in the answer, because a lot of them said, after talking to Darwin at the university, or going along to the webinar, you thought.

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See. in that case it's absolutely fine that they've named Chat the manager, or someone in the team, because I mean, we almost opened them up to answering it that way.

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By doing the webinars but if it's just you know actually, i'm just foaming up the equipment team to get more advice, and the information on the role I probably wouldn't write in Oh, I spoke to

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roost in the recruitment team because it's not relevant.

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Okay, great. We are getting close to the end of our hours So i'm gonna come to all of my speakers with one final question, And I think this is something that a lot of us are gonna want to know.

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How do we make a personal statement? Stand out I know That's a that's a harder one to answer.

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But, Mahesh, if I come to you first, how do you make your your personal statement?

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Stand out from every other one that they're getting through in the application process.

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Yeah use different colors for each paragraph now i'm going to joke out in a readable format.

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We've had applications come in with which it would not paragraphs.

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They just hit one lumped you know verb if you like, and the problem with that is not the person put in the information on, or cut and paste it on to the application.

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It's something with the system that we have which joins it all up. So the key thing to that is there is a way around.

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It is having 2 space bars in between each of the paragraphs, and then, when it does get printed out for the recruiter to see, it will be set out in paragraphs.

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Otherwise it makes it so hard to see the default is quite small when it does get printed out.

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So it's It's just making sure that you have that space in between the paragraphs, and I think, as I said, to make it stand out, it's just making sure you follow in the job description the essential

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criteria and making sure you're following it and making it as easy as possible for the and create all the reader to know what what evidence is, where Thank you that's a really really helpful tip actually that I think I wouldn't have come across before

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so that double spacing is really really useful to know as well.

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Darren can I Come across you with the same question Yes, it's the same answer to Mahesh is really which is making it clear and easy.

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I think that's the biggest thing you can do on your personal statement to make it stand out is make it easy to read, you know, if you've ever read a news article online or in a paper and it's huge long

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sentences with no punctuation in them, and just one never-ending paragraph.

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Your brain switches off, and it loses focus of where it is and it doesn't matter how much Anti-bias training and things like that.

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You've had as a panel member your brain is just gonna almost felt a bits out to try and get to the end of the sentence or the paragraph keeping it clear, and he and flowing is is always the best advice that i'd give to make it

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stand out to people. Yeah, definitely, there's nothing worse than a sentence that is 3 lines long, and you don't know when it's gonna end.

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So yeah, definitely agree with that one, Ruth, and your final thoughts on this.

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So I think for me. if I very much what Mesh said absolutely okay, that in terms of just making sure that it is clear, and it is there.

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But also be brave. Believe in yourself hack that personal statement full of all the great stuff you've done.

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Don't be afraid of blowing your own trim pit Don't be afraid of telling us and tell them hiring manager about the things you did. make sure you cross-reference it to the adverts absolutely use that advert as

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a tick list, and as you were going through which you include an example that takes off one of the requirements the behaviors of technical skills, whatever it is about Ad.

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That's asking for. Take it off and and keep using as a tick list.

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And when you have finished your personal statement, Crawford cross-reference it back to the Advent.

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Have you ticked off all these different things that you highlighted when you looked at the advertiser. If you've got something that you haven't included.

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But you've got examples for try and rewear that person's statement.

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Can you kind of cut a few words here and there, so you can pick that extra example in a don't?

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Do yourself a disservice by missing out things that you have got these great examples of, and be brave.

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Blow your intrepid. don't be afraid to absolutely tell us about all the great things that you will have done.

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You know you will have these experiences. They skills, you know, gave for it.

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Thank you. so I am going to start wrapping up today's session.

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I know there was quite a few unanswered questions that came through, and unfortunately i'm really sorry that we didn't have time to get to everybody's questions.

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I do just want to highlight that we do have a Q.

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And a feature on a political where you can ask any of these questions to our 150,000 community members that we've got.

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So please do feel free to use that feature, and hopefully, someone within our community can can help you answer those questions before we finish today.

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I would like to ask everybody if they can post in their chat their one word takeaways from today's session.

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It's really fantastic to see and what everybody's taking away.

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So, if you can. In one word, please do pop it in the session.

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Please do pop it in the chat sorry it's really really great to see, and we are just going to be launching a really really quick Poll, for you just before you leave.

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So my colleagues going to pop that up now i'm just on a scale of one, to 10 please rank your agreement with this statement. that is this workshop was a valuable use of your time one meaning you

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disagree in 10 min. You agree, so please do, please do just answer that policy.

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Is, it is coming up. Being brave is definitely coming through quite a few times and selling yourself as well.

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So thank you, everybody for taking part in today's session I just want to thank our 3 fantastic speakers who have taken their time to be with us today and share their expertise.

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It was really really great. we if you've enjoyed this session.

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We have a lot of opportunity of other opportunities to learn with a political, and you can attend some of our courses coming up that we've got on essential writing skills, and how to be a facilitator.

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And we will share these with you in our follow-up email. if you've enjoyed today's session, then you can create a workshop or a boot camp with. us.

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So we will will also be passing through that information if you've got any topics that you'd like us to cover.

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Please do let us know. It would be really great to see that as well, and you can also see our premium learning offerings through our courses as well.

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So we will be sharing all of these links with you.

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Following the session. But I just want to thank you all for for joining today.

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The recording and resources will be sent to you in our follow-up email on Monday, and I hope everybody has a fantastic day, and we'll see you all at the next event.