

Mental Nutrition®

Thinking flexibly. Speaking confidently.

Selection Criteria Review Service and Interview Coaching

With Dr Ann Villiers, *Mental Nutritionist*®



**Building strong roots to
buttress your career**

Purpose of these services

My aim is to give you guidance and support so you gain immediate benefit and can apply the ideas and strategies independently in the future.

Who are these services for?

These services are for people who:

- Are applying for jobs where selection criteria are used from entry level, including graduate programs, through middle to senior management (salary level approx. \$135,000 equivalent).
- Are applying for executive level positions (EL 1-2 in the APS or equivalent), although if you are seeking an SES role in the APS you may be better served by working with an SES-experienced coach.
- Are new to jobs where selection criteria are used and are unfamiliar with how to prepare responses.
- Are unfamiliar with capability frameworks and how they are used in job applications.
- Are unfamiliar with government job application processes and want to maximise their chances of being short listed.
- Are struggling to write an Expression of Interest, Pitch or suitability statement.
- Are already in the public service and have missed out on being short listed.
- Are already in the public service and want to position themselves for a promotion.
- Are familiar with preparing for government jobs and want to check that they have prepared a strong case.
- Feel their resume does not market what they offer.
- Have been short listed for a government job and want to prepare for an interview.
- Have missed out on jobs because of poor interview performance.
- Are unfamiliar with government interviews and want to know how to prepare.

Who these services may NOT benefit

- People interested in Senior Executive Service (SES) jobs. While I have helped people to apply for executive roles, I can also refer you to people to assist with these roles.
- People who want someone to write responses for them or work with them to prepare responses. You can search for a career practitioner on www.cdaa.org.au.
- People who are not prepared to invest in their professional development. If you want help but do not wish to spend more than \$200.00 then these services are not for you. Keep in mind, these services are an investment. The fee will be easily recouped if you gain a different result from the past with your applications. You can check with your accountant about tax deductibility.

For further information

If you wish to obtain specific information about how these services relate to your needs, please use the Contact Us section on www.selectioncriteria.com.au and provide these details:

- The level or salary of the job you are applying for.
- Who is paying for the service – you or your organisation.
- The deadline you are working to.
- What service you need.

What clients say about these services

Examples of comments people have made about their experience of these services:

‘You really helped me start focusing on my strengths instead of my weaknesses, and you got me thinking in line with the ILS.’

‘A quick note to let you know that after much preparation and planning, I was successful in winning the EL2 position - what a wonderful outcome! I am now in the job and it is full steam ahead - I am thoroughly enjoying every moment. Once again I thank you for your coaching services and assisting me to achieve this major milestone in my career.’

‘I’m very grateful for your time and professional guidance in this process, which gave me a sound approach to preparing for my interview. The feedback from the recruitment panel was incredibly positive as a result. It’s been a positive development experience for me, learning from you, in a relatively short period of time and I would be keen to call on your services again in the future.’

How do these services work?

Selection Criteria Review Service

- First you decide if my service is the appropriate one for you. You then secure a review by pre-paying one hour's review fee. You will be invoiced post-review. If the fee is less than one hour, the balance is refunded. If the fee is more than one hour, the balance is paid within 5 days.
- You email your draft application (in Word), resume (in Word not PDF) and the full job description (unedited), information pack, details of application requirements (whichever apply) plus any other information that may be relevant, such as strategic documents, work level standards, capability frameworks, information obtained from the contact person.
- Your draft should be as good as you can make it. If your document is riddled with spelling and grammatical mistakes, this may increase the time taken to review your document. It also raises a question about whether you want the review to include an edit.
- I read and analyse the job description and if needed conduct further research to understand the job context. I may have questions for you about the role.
- I may ask you further questions about the job context. If you haven't spoken to the Contact Person you may be unaware of vital information about the role. The time to gather this information is before applications close.
- I read your application and resume based on the job context, first in full to gauge overall quality, then I examine more closely each response. Sometimes this means reading and re-reading if the writing is difficult to follow, wordy, illogical, incomplete.
- I identify ways to improve and strengthen your material. This may include:
 - Better linking to the job context
 - Changing the language to reflect the level of seniority
 - Editing to meet word limits
 - Proof reading to reduce grammatical and spelling errors.
 - Identifying gaps in examples.
 - Identifying overlooked capability behaviours.
 - Crafting a coherent pitch.
 - Building a results focus.
- Suggestions are inserted into your documents and/or summarised in a return email.
- When an application shows patterns across several or all responses that indicate a significant re-write is called for, then these patterns will be identified rather than suggestions for individual responses.
- This review, on average, takes between 1 and 2 hours, but could be less. It depends on the number of criteria, how complicated they are, and the quality of the statement. In some cases, identifying the appropriate alternative wording that would elevate the quality of responses can take time.

- On receipt of my suggestions you can ring or email to obtain clarification of anything that is unclear in the suggestions. The number to call on is 02 6254 5023. If additional help is sought, such as examples to illustrate points, the time for this work will be treated as further review work.
- Some people revise their application and seek further comment. This work will be treated as further review work and added to the cumulative total of review time.
- Some people apply for more than one role and wish to have each one reviewed. Each role is treated as a separate review.
- There is no guarantee that your application will be short listed. Factors outside your control will determine the result, such as the focus of selection panel members and how many apply for the job.
- You exercise judgement as to which suggestions you adopt or adapt, based on your knowledge of the job context and what you feel comfortable with.
- If, at the outset, I consider your application to be as strong as it can be, I will let you know and refund your payment.

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Interview coaching

- First you decide if my service is the appropriate one for you. You then secure coaching by pre-paying 50% of the coaching fee. You will be invoiced post-coaching. The remaining 50% is paid at this time, within 5 days.
- To gain the most value from the coaching you need to allow at least five days before any scheduled interview, preferably longer.
- You email me the full job description (unedited), information about the role, your application and resume, and your specific goals for the coaching session (I will send a document to help with goal selection). It may also be appropriate to send information about feedback received from, and questions asked at, previous interviews. This gives me the context of the job, knowledge of where you are coming from, and a basis for preparation.
- I read this material and if necessary conduct research in order to understand the job context.

- I may ask you further questions about the job context. If you haven't spoken to the Contact Person you may be unaware of vital information about the role. This contact should have been made prior to writing the application.
- We will establish a time and method (phone or Skype) for the coaching session. Phone coaching works well with a quality connection. I give you the Canberra-based number to ring at the agreed time. Skype works well if you have a good connection (i.e. not wireless). It is your responsibility to set up the Skype link and connect at the agreed time. The session can be during or outside business hours. (A premium fee may apply to weekend or short notice requests.)
- Usually one hour is sufficient time. You may choose a longer session if you wish.
- Based on your goals and the job description/recruitment round information, I send to you comprehensive material for you to prepare in advance of the coaching session. There is no guarantee that any of the questions explored will be asked. The coaching is designed to place you in the appropriate mental and verbal space to respond effectively using appropriate language and evidence.
- You will then prepare for the coaching session based on what I send. Preparation means reading in full the documents sent, then working through all the questions provided and developing a response to each question. You may also need to conduct further research. Even if the response is rough or incomplete, it is better to have given it some thought and have something to work with. What you gain from the coaching session will largely depend on your preparation.
- The coaching session can include discussion, role play, general exploration of responses. I will likely ask lots of questions and provide ideas on how to prepare and present your case. The session will be informal, (unless you want it to be more formal), conversational, and supportive.
- The coaching session focuses on your actual responses so you need to be prepared to say your responses out loud. Talking about what you would say is unsatisfactory as it does not capture the actual content, structure and language of your response.
- During the coaching session you may receive suggestions about, depending on your goals:
 - How to manage nervousness.
 - Shifting language to reflect complexity, strategic thinking, a results focus, seniority.
 - How to promote yourself effectively.
 - How to engage with the panel.
 - How to structure responses so you sound coherent and succinct.
- To gain maximum value from the coaching session you need to capture these suggestions by taking notes or audio recording the session.
- Based on the suggestions you receive you will then further prepare for your interview by practicing and refining your responses post-session. You will receive a summary of the key points you need to focus on post-coaching.

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Time frame

Selection Criteria Review Service

Working back from the application deadline, you will need to check my availability, then allow enough time to send the material to me and make any changes. I can usually turn a review around in 24 hours or less once the service is secured (see section on fees) and I receive the documents.

Interview coaching

If you have a scheduled interview you need to check my availability, then allow enough time for preparation before the coaching session and revision after the session.

If you wait until an interview is confirmed you may not have enough time for coaching.

What are the fees for these services?

Selection Criteria Review Service

- An hourly fee applies to this service. The rate depends on the level/salary of the job and whether you are funding the service yourself or receiving corporate support. Individuals receive a discounted rate on the corporate fee.
- To secure my service a one hour fee is paid in advance, preferably by electronic transfer.
- As I am usually asked to turn the application around quickly, I similarly ask that any balance is paid within 5 days of receipt of my review by electronic transfer. Alternatively I refund any difference.
- I work to complete the review as quickly as possible.
- The fee covers my preparation, research, and review comments.

Interview coaching

- The fee depends on the level/salary of the job, and whether you are funding the service yourself or receiving corporate support. Individuals receive a discounted rate. The fee includes one hour of coaching. A longer session can be arranged at an additional fee.

- To secure my service 50% of the fee is paid in advance, by electronic transfer. The remaining 50% is paid immediately post-coaching.
- A premium rate may apply to weekend and short notice requests.
- The fee covers my preparation, research, coaching session, and any travel expenses.

Guarantee and confidentiality

There is no guarantee that as a result of using these services your application will be short listed, questions covered will be asked at interview or you will be offered a job. The services are designed to strengthen how you present your case so that it matches as closely as possible the job context.

All material provided and discussed remains confidential. No information is passed on to another party.

If you feel you have not gained ideas for improving your application or interview performance, please raise your concerns.

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What are these services based on?

These services are based on more than two decades of demystifying selection criteria, coaching individuals across Commonwealth, state and territory jobs, and delivering training programs on job applications, staff selection skills, interpersonal skills, including confident communicating and influencing skills.

Dr Ann Villiers is a Professional Member of the Career Development Association of Australia (CDAA). She is bound by the Code of Ethics of CDAA. . In 2015 Ann was awarded the CDAA President's Award for Professional Leadership.

Qualifications: PhD (communication), BA (Hons), Dip Ed, Certificate IV in Training and Assessment, Graduate Certificate in Career Development. Graduate of Professor Martin Seligman's Positive Psychology program. NLP Practitioner.

Sense-making specialist, applying the *Mental Nutrition*® framework to build flexible thinking, confident speaking and quality interpersonal connections. (More information is available at www.mentalnutrition.com)

Author of *How to Write and Talk to Selection Criteria* (6th edn.), several audio resources and numerous articles on www.selectioncriteria.com.au and in the press.

Dedicated web site (www.selectioncriteria.com.au) offering free resources on staff selection, career management and applying for government jobs. Occasional writer for 'Public Sector Informant', *The Canberra Times*.

Past member of the National Executive Committee, CDAA. ACT Division President of the Career Development Association of Australia 2010-2012. Moderator for the *AIM Your Career* series, offered by the Australian Institute of Management 2008 - 2011. Presenter at professional forums and conferences on career management issues, including CDAA Conferences in 2017, 2015, 2014, 2013, 2011 and 2010.

Extensive one-on-one career coaching experience, assisting hundreds of applicants and potential applicants to strengthen their applications and interview performance. Coaching is based on a whole-person approach, a social construction perspective*, applying sense-making tools and mind and language practices to think flexibly and speak and write confidently.

More than a decade of executive level management experience in the APS working with teams of less than ten to more than 50 people, managing amalgamations, restructures, downsizing, recruitment and outsourcing processes.

Comprehensive knowledge of the APS framework, Integrated Leadership System and capability frameworks, and recruitment and selection policies and practices and their application to selection processes.

* Refers to a focus on the role language plays in constructing social reality.

Who has Ann helped?

Some of the programs and organisations Ann has helped applicants apply for:

Australian Public Service

Various Graduate programs including DFAT, Defence, AASB, PM&C

AusAID

Geoscience Australia

IP Australia

Australian Federal Police

Australian Bureau of Statistics

Comcare

Questacon, National Science and Technology Centre

Dept. of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Dept. of Regional Australia, Regional Development and Local Government

Dept. of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities

Dept. of Health and Ageing

Defence Materiel Organisation

Dept. of Human Services

Dept. of Defence

Dept. of Veterans' Affairs

Dept. of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
Dept. of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency
Dept. of Immigration and Citizenship
Dept. of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research, Tertiary Education
Dept. of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Dept. of Infrastructure
Dept. of Finance
Dept. of Parliamentary Services
Dept. of Social Services
Dept. of Communications
Dept. of Employment
Australian Securities & Investments Commission
Australian Taxation Office
Attorney-General's Dept.
National Library of Australia
National Archives of Australia
Australian War Memorial
Dept. of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
Commonwealth Ombudsman
Departmental Overseas Postings
Treasury
Bureau of Meteorology
Bureau of Communications Research
Austrac
Food Standards Australia and New Zealand
Museum of Australian Democracy
Therapeutic Goods Administration

State, Territory, Local Government

ACT Dept. of Territory and Municipal Services
ACT Dept. of Disability, Housing & Community Services
ACT Government Health Directorate
ACT Chief Minister and Treasury
Queensland Art Gallery
QLD Dept. of Environment and Heritage Protection
QLD Dept. of National Parks, Sport and Racing
QLD Dept. of Natural Resources and Mines
Training WA
Police Integrity Commission
Kempsey Shire Council
Pittwater Council
Victoria Police
Roads and Traffic Authority
Queensland Police Service
Dept. of Environment and Conservation, WA
WA Police
NSW Dept. of Transport
NSW Dept. of Trade and Investment

NSW Premier and Cabinet
NSW Police Integrity Commission
WA Dept. of Health

Education institutions

Australian National University
Australian Catholic University
TAFE NSW
University of Canberra
Monash University
Queensland Institute of Technology
James Cook University

Types of roles supported by these services:

Human Resources, ICT, senior academics, policy development, project management, program management, finance, administration, customer service, marketing, records management, curators, librarians, teachers, police, scientists, executive officer, pharmacist, departmental liaison officer, corporate communications, paralegal, business manager, policy analyst, statistical officer, regulatory scientist, personal assistant, client liaison officer

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This material is valid as at June 2018 and may be subject to change.