**Gregor Howitt – Co-director and Financial Advisor**

Well the sky is pretty much the limit as they say. There are so many roles and variety of roles in the financial service industry. At Gregor Howitt Wealth Management there are four key roles: you have the financial advisors, which Billy and myself, the skill base you need for that are very specific and there is very specific exams that you need to go through, for example, through the Chartered Insurance Institute; the other role that we’ve got in our practice, we need a practice manager, somebody to actually oversee the day-to-day running of the practice and obviously having two offices that's a key role over two locations, they need to have managing of staff skills as well; another thing that we have quite unique to our industry is para-planning, para-planning is the individual who will assist me with complicated cases but they will also help write and draft very complicated client reports, to do that requires a great deal of attention to detail and very strong analytical skills; and obviously every business, we need administration staff and again we need staff who have got a great attention to detail and really good client servicing skills.

**Billy Elliot – Financial Advisor**

When we are recruiting, what someone has studied is not our primary focus for a candidate. Due to the nature of our industry there is a high level of training of somebody who wants to work in that industry that needs to happen, usually, within that industry. So it's unlikely that a new candidate will actually have learnt some of or all those skills at university. However people skills, aptitude, oral and written communication along with IT skills particularly Microsoft Office and administration experience are an added bonus.

**Gregor Howitt – Co-director and Financial Advisor**

We’ve got a really broad spectrum of personalities and skills within our team and that's been intentional. To do a para-planner role you need to be very analytic and maybe not so interpersonal skills important there. But someone who's actually involved in making client appointments or meeting our clients, then obviously being a very people friendly person is really important for that. We’ve got a very tight team here and anybody new coming in has got to slot in and work with all the rest of the team there. A key thing for me, that I empower all my staff to take initiative and work on their own but importantly if you are doing that need you need to take ownership of what you are working on as well.

**Billy Elliot – Financial Advisor**

Again this is a nice to have but it's not essential in our industry, experience and understanding of business functions will help you transition into the role and may be beneficial when undertaking study for professional development, but we, as a firm, we don't penalise somebody because they haven't worked in an office before. We're more focused on those skills that Gregor outlined, that they are actually going to be able to bring that to the firm when they start with us.

**Gregor Howitt – Co-director and Financial Advisor**

A relevant, tailored CV, I've looked at so many CVs over the years and people send out a very generic, or I’ve had CVs that are talking about another job altogether and I would say a very relevant, tailored CV with a very good covering letter is really important as well.

**Billy Elliot – Financial Advisor**

Yes, so providing a generic one-size-fits-all CV does not demonstrate that you are actively seeking a job with Gregor Howitt Wealth Management, this just shows the candidate is looking for a job, a place to be employed. I would say don’t over exaggerate your skills or abilities, be truthful because eventually you will be found out.

**Gregor Howitt – Co-director and Financial Advisor**

Yeah, also another thing list hobbies or interests, which kind of helps you stand out from the crowd. I mentioned earlier I am very much into volunteering so I often look for that when I'm looking at a CV. I've also had people telling me what the favourite food is in CVs, we’re not really interested in that. So try and keep your CV quite relevant. Another thing is spelling errors or poor grammar, it's amazing the amount of people that have applied to work in a company and they make lots of spelling mistakes in their CVs and grammatical errors. Because we, as I mentioned earlier, are very heavily regulated, you know, what we put out, you know, it needs to be very accurate. So that’s a key thing and always proof reading is important.

Also short periods of employment and multiple employers or large career gaps, I’ve seen that for a few people as well, make sure that you cover that in your letter because a lot of people looking at CVs will maybe just discard it if they see a gap. There can be a very good reason for a gap, but please just explain why it is there.

Yeah I've interviewed and I've employed dozens of staff over the years, the big thing I'm personally interested in is work experience. A lot of people come to us thinking that they haven't got experience in financial services but I look at the skills they’ve acquired in other roles or maybe through college and really look at them and see how they can be transferred over to working with myself. As I mentioned earlier, attention to detail is core and a lot of jobs require that. I think resilience is really important as well, the ability learn new skills and adapt. We work in an industry that is always changing, it’s very heavily regulated, and so somebody who can keep on top of that is really important.

**Billy Elliot – Financial Advisor**

So be prepared, look at the website and research the company in the industry in-depth, think of a couple of pertinent questions beyond the usual interview script. There's a lot of questions out there that universities will prep you for, employers are well versed in these. So what they're looking for is actual genuine interest in the industry and the firm.

So what we're looking for day-to-day is what you need to get out in the interview. So think outside the box, if a candidate doesn't have a specific experience in finance, it is likely they still have transferable skills they should be able to present during an interview. If we don’t know about that, we can’t mark you on that. Examples could also draw from personal experience in clubs, sports or volunteering for example. So myself and Gregor both played rugby so we know the benefits of team sports but there is benefits of individual sports or other extra-curricular activities.

**Gregor Howitt – Co-director and Financial Advisor**

Yeah, another one is make a good first impression. A lot of the people think that the first impression starts when you come into the office to be interviewed but, you know, I've spoken to the receptionists, often, to say, ‘How did the person come in and conduct themselves? What did they say? What did they do?’ So really as soon as you're entering that building, be prepared that somebody's maybe looking at you make to make an impression.

I think it's really important to dress appropriately and present yourself with good manners and enthusiasm. I once gave a job to someone coming for a receptionist’s job with us and I gave her the job basically before she even spoke a word. She just sat so well at the front of the office, she was cheery, she was smiley and before she even opened a word to me I just thought, she’s got qualities that would be really good. So yeah, just watch out for first impressions. They do last.