

CV TIPS

The purpose of this page is to provide hints on how to best present a CV.

CV's are a written summary of your personal, professional, social qualities and attributes that you wish to highlight and secure employment from. A CV is a platform to impress and excite a potential employer about you, the content and detail of your CV is so important to help secure that interview. By compiling your CV correctly you can ensure you stand out from other applicants. Please find below a few do's and don'ts involved in a CV's construction to help you turn a bad CV into a good CV.

Your CV is designed to "sell" you to a potential employer. Therefore, it is paramount that you thorough and think carefully about what you want to emphasize. There is no such thing as a "perfect" CV but remember, a CV is an opportunity to demonstrate your creative flair and characteristics. A well formatted, concise and individual CV will say far more about your personality.

General rules

DO: ADD A CREATIVE EDGE AND PROFESSIONALISM TO STAND OUT

BE PRECISE, HONEST AND APPROPRIATE

TAILOR YOUR CV FOR THE SPECIFIC JOB OPPORTUNITY

REMEMBER, LESS IS MORE

INCLUDE ALL THE HEADINGS OUTLINED BELOW

DON'T: EXAGGERATE YOUR ABILITIES, QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERIENCE

MAKE THE CV MORE THAN 2 X A4 SIDES

USE IMAGES, NEGATIVE QUALITIES OR STYLISTED FONTS

SEND IT WITHOUT PROOF READING AND SPELL CHECKING

Format rules

Ideally 2 x A4. If the CV gets longer the reader might lose interest. Likewise, employers are known to only read a small proportion of the CV, normally the first and last fifth. If it is short and concise they may be tempted to read the entire document

Clear lay out and using normal font styles which are easily legible important (Times New Roman, Arial). Align straight margins and ensure perfect word processing.

The flow of the points should be logical.

Use white good quality paper if sending a paper application. If sending electronically make sure the text is easy to read and the background colour is white. No images!

First block of text should be a personal profile that the recruiter can see immediately.

Avoid putting your age, marital status and other details that are not relevant.

Use bold, underlined or highlighted headings to make it easy to see where each section starts.

Use the following categories in your CV as headings and sub headings: -

NAME – Always clear and at the top.

PERSONAL DETAILS – Only address, contact details, possibly mention if you have transport. Avoid putting the following information because they may be treated as a negative unless it's essential to outline, sex, nationality, marital status, dependants etc.

OVERVIEW / PERSONAL PROFILE / OBJECTIVE – A summary of your skills, personality and career direction. Short and precise.

CAREER HISTORY / EMPLOYMENT SUMMARY / WORK HISTORY – Always list your most recent job first and work your way back. Include employer, location, dates from and to, job title and overview of your duties and responsibilities. Worth mentioning reason/s for leaving (use common-sense).

SUMMARY OF SKILLS / RELEVANT EXPERIENCE / KEY ABILITIES – Pull from the above category the most relevant and important strengths and skills that will be of benefit to the recruiter and their position.

EDUCATION – Overview qualifications, up to higher education.

PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS – Any accreditations, professional membership, training passed etc.

INTERESTS / HOBBIES – Be truthful and interesting.

REFEREES – Provide two work related references, from previous employers that will verify the above qualities and attributes. Do not include personal references unless it is appropriate to your previous work history.

Content and substance rules

You could put a personal statement under the central block heading. This would tell the reader a bit more about who you are and what you want

Mention key skills and achievements to date.

Use lots of adjectives and positive, dynamic, precise and concise language.

Mistakes within your CV just make you look unprofessional. Always check this before sending your CV to anyone.

The order of the CV's content will vary from person to person. If you have work experience, then explain what you actually did, what you learnt and what impact you actually made

If you are a student you may lack work experience, more emphasis should be put on explaining your education and extracurricular activities and how they have shaped you as a person.

What do you write?

From the information supplied the recruiter will be able to ascertain whether or not you will fit the profile of the ideal candidate for the given role. This will not just be based on your ability to carry out the duties required, but your ability to fit in the team dynamics and working environment.

The point is that you have to make sure that each section shows your true potential. Make sure your points are clear and to the point to ensure the reader understands your points enabling you to really sell yourself. Make them believe that you will be a genuine asset to their organisation. Be confident in yourself and your skills, it will shine through but over confidence can go against you so be sure to avoid this.

Power words

Some companies and recruiters actually look for particular buzz words when carrying out initial screening of applicants. Examples of power words: -

Confident Professional Committed Methodical Team player

Skills and abilities to talk about

When writing your CV and Cover Letter you should use lots of examples. This shows how you really have behaved in work situations and what skills and abilities you utilised. Below are some skills you should address in your application. It is important to tailor and emphasise the most relevant attributes: -

- Attitude towards work
- Loyalty
- Reliability
- Motivation
- Teamwork
- Punctuality
- Communication skills (both spoken and written)
- Enthusiasm
- Ability to focus
- Being proactive
- Problem solving skills
- Analytical abilities
- Flexibility
- Initiative
- Ability to work under pressure
- Customer service skills

The Cover Letter

The Cover Letter is a chance to personalise your application. In addition to your CV a cover letter helps highlight key areas of your personality and skills, which may help you to stand out from other candidates applying. It is designed to compliment your CV.

The task of the covering letter is to: -

- Reinforce key points made in the CV or application form
- Keep it concise
- It needs a interesting beginning
- It should mention why you are a suitable candidate for that employer and job
- Finish the letter with a strong sentence to show you are interested and look forward to hearing from them.