

## CV WRITING

Your CV is your marketing tool, and your one shot at getting the attention of our recruiters. Before you start writing, put yourself in the shoes of the recruiter and think about the skills they will be looking for – your strengths backed up with facts.



### WRITING A GOOD CV MEANS

1. Including information that matches the type and level of job you are applying for to get the recruiter's interest.
2. Prioritising your information so that the important facts catch attention first with the detail left for the recruiter to ask at your interview.
3. Including enough evidence of your key achievements, supported by measurable outcomes.
4. Stretching yourself in terms of the way you write and the words you use. A CV has its own grammar that need not use sentences and paragraphs.
5. Including a detailed summary of your knowledge, training, skills and education (after your career summary).
6. Testing and checking your CV. Have at least one person proof-read it. There is no room for errors and spell-checkers do not find every mistake. Switch off your grammar checker because it does not apply to CVs.
7. Ideally your CV should be two pages long with an introductory personal profile that outlines briefly yours skills and a career summary that positions you and catches attention.
8. The first element that a recruiter will take notice of in your CV should not be the trivia about where you live, how old you are and what schools you went to. Far better to create a brief sketch that directly positions you as the right candidate for the job. Your main message should be clear and targeted. Done well, you will probably be able to use it for various applications.
9. When you come to describing your jobs, try to build a story of your career, stating the strongest, most recent experience first and listing the rest going back in time.

## WRITING YOUR PERSONAL PROFILE

Instead of telling them you are enthusiastic, tenacious and good at teamwork, provide information on work related experiences and achievements.

***I want to tell them that I am such a good sales manager that my team has consistently over-performed despite the industry downturn and adverse factors such as a delay in new product launches.***

Remove any personalisation in the above example such as 'I', 'my', 'our' and 'we'. Then try to think like a journalist and ask yourself: What might be a good headline to advertise my skills?

***Accomplished sales professional, with a track record of year-on-year over target, achieved even against a climate of sector decline...***

Once you have isolated a core message you can substantiate it, either in bullet points straight away if this is the main introduction to your CV, or when you come to describe your most important, most recent job.

***A General Manager with 20 years' project management, implementation, operations and business development experience in the Logistics and Transport industry.***

- 3 times promoted within 5 years; national award winner 4 times.***
- Turned around loss-making warehouse and transport operation to £10k weekly profit.***
- Overhauled maintenance and record-keeping activities to meet operator license needs resulting in the Road Haulage Association's nomination. Awarded Transport Manager of the Year 2010.***

In the above example, a strong claim is made and immediately backed up with evidence. This could be the opening summary for a sales professional, applying for a role in senior management.

## TOP CV TIPS



1. A CV is a sales document. Keep it short and precise – no more than two pages.
2. Don't use coloured paper or coloured writing.
3. Add in some dimensions and scale
4. Update the details of your last job – are you still working there and will you be immediately available for the job you are applying for?
5. Remember to give your full contact details
6. Don't use capital letters – it looks as though you are shouting
7. Don't use too many fonts or all italics
8. Condense and summarise your information
9. Give an overview of your key achievements, and how they benefited the company, team or line manager. Try to quantify your achievements...improved absence from 5% to 2.6% which saved the company £0.5m pa.
10. Don't add a photo unless specifically requested, and then only use a professional business photo
11. You don't need to include written references at this stage. These will be required after a successful interview.
12. Avoid including testimonials – it makes you look too desperate.
13. Exclude your date of birth, age, marital status, nationality etc – this shouldn't be used as selection criteria.
14. Leave out details about family. it's usually not relevant.
15. Follow up after sending your CV – make sure it got there.
16. Make an upfront call in advance of sending your CV to let the recruiter know you're interested.
17. Identify where you are going to add value to the company.
18. Never have spelling mistakes or incorrect punctuation.
19. Use a professional email address.
20. Back up statements with quality facts.