

Guide to Writing a Successful CV

Your CV is your sales document – you never get a 2nd chance to make that all important 1st impression. It has to capture the reader's interest in the first few paragraphs as well as being relevant to the job you are applying for – you may need more than 1 copy of your CV, or to be able to tailor it to different jobs that you are applying for.

Therefore, it is crucial to include appropriate information in the early part of the CV. It is realistic that you will be approaching different types of companies, so tailor the style of CV to suit e.g. *large or small companies*.

Remember, your CV is a tool to use to get interviews; it is unlikely that you will be offered a job on the back of your CV. Therefore, it is vital to only include important information, leaving the reader feeling that they should interview you to find out more.



Your CV should be no more than two (possibly three) pages long, and needs to be clear & concise, printed on quality paper (not photocopied). Always remember to spell check it! An ideal template would be as follows:

Personal Details: Name, Address, Contact Number, Email Address

Put all forms of communication that someone may use to contact you. Think carefully before using your current employer's email address as you may not wish them to know you are job seeking.

Profile

Be sensible and at the same time general. Avoid committed words such as **hate**, **don't** and **only** which are too overpowering and may make you sound inflexible. Use words such as **find**, **enjoy**, **challenge** i.e. *I find working on my own enjoyable, but take the challenge of teamwork in my stride*. Rather than *I like working on my own and only work in a team when I have to*.

Education

Most recent qualifications first, then finish with additional/vocational qualifications. These should be things like a Customer Care Courses and NOT Swimming Awards, Music Qualifications etc.

Employment History

In reverse chronological order (giving the month and year that you started /finished), if you have not had a job before, include any work experience. If you have had periods of work through an agency, include the name of the agency and the type of work you were doing and the names of the companies you were assigned to. Be sure to cover any gaps in your career history with the truth, i.e. re-training, travel, long term illness, etc.



Hobbies & Interests

It is important that you indicate that you have a life outside of work, include any sporting activities, clubs and society memberships. Try to think of what really interests you and how it may enhance your application. If possible avoid interests such as socialising because everyone socialises, just like everyone breathes in and out all day!

References

Put available on request, you do not want to give away too much information to someone you do not yet know, especially if you are still working for a referee.

Covering Letter

The covering letter is just as important as your CV. If you are applying for a specific job then ensure you tailor the letter to highlight any specific skills that an advert asks for, that are not that evident from your CV. Also remember to look at how the advert has asked you to reply i.e. in writing or via email and use that method of responding.

Remember to tell the employer which role you are applying for and the job reference/code if there is one. Don't forget to mention where you saw the role advertised and also state when you are available for interview.

Avoid being too formal and using "long words" or complicated grammar in order to impress. Keep it simple and to the point.

Important Note

There are several opinions with regard to the style of a CV; some people believe that yellow paper and humorous fonts in funny letters will impress / make a difference. However, this is not always the case, so prudence says that a conservative CV will act as a good introduction. There is plenty of time to express your personality at interview.

Write to a specific person if you can get a name, if not, use Sir/Madam and do not start the letter *I am writing to you...* as this is obvious to the reader and is too fussy.

Type the letter where possible and send it on A4 paper remembering to check the postage weight if you have a large CV. Remember if you are asked to submit your CV and covering letter electronically or via the company's website the same principles apply.



I can give you advice on your CV, send it to me, you'll get an honest and credible response. It might just be the difference between winning an interview and not.

