

Back to Basics – Writing a CV that will get you noticed



Candidates, we've got your back. Right? We help you through the recruitment process from start to finish, we give advice, feedback, make suggestions all of it to enable you to have the very best opportunity to win the position you are going for. That dream job, that next step that key to your future success....

There's a huge amount you can do for yourself and it starts with writing a cracking CV and we are going to share with you our guidelines to get it just right.

Professionalism

It goes without saying that you want to look professional in the eyes of the prospective employer, doesn't it? All the smart suits and winning smiles won't cut it if there's a different story on the page in front of them.

A logical structure with clearly defined sections and bold headings are essential, as is a succinct writing style and wide vocabulary. And of course, typos and grammar mistakes should definitely be eradicated before a CV is considered ready for sending. At Aspire we are happy to check through a CV and give some feedback, but really you should have this nailed from the outset.

Make an Impact!

If you want to impress then your CV must create a big impact upon opening. Ensure it includes a punchy profile that sells your in-demand talents, and that it is heavily tailored to the role you are going for. We're happy to help you tweak.

Avoid buzzwords. Or if you must use them, link them to specific experience. For instance, don't say, 'A results-oriented, dynamic team player with a proven track record in sales.' That sentence could describe everyone and anyone. It's so generic, it's meaningless, and believe me – every recruiter will have seen those words a thousand times over! If you want to use these words, make them specific to you, use facts and figures to make the statements more tangible. Make sure you stand out from the competition.

"I am an expert in CV Writing and interview training. I have a degree in Law, a Masters in Writing and years of experience in recruitment, human resources and general management."

"I am a Marketing Product Manager with experience in the food industry and have worked for numerous well-known brands across Europe. I am looking to grow my career into a new marketing role, working for an affirmed market leader in the food industry where I can contribute to the promotion of new initiatives and markets."

Easy Reading

Busy hiring managers (and recruiters!) don't have the time to wade through big chunks of text and hunt down the details they need. You need to break the information on your CV up into small bite-size chunks and make good use of bullet points. Put your contact details at the top and make sure you start with your most recent role. A month and year against each job is essential.

Is it under 2 pages long?

Keep your CV short, sharp and to-the-point. If it's more than two pages consider cutting down on older roles and remove any irrelevant details. Leave them wanting more!

Does it reflect the requirements of the job role on offer?

One size doesn't fit all and so you must also ensure that your suitability for the key requirements highlighted in the job role are made prominent throughout. You may end up with multiple versions of your CV. If you can't meet the expectations of the hirer, you won't get an interview. We will ask you for a re-write, if we don't think your CV reflects the experience we discuss on the phone or face to face.

Are your previous job roles well structured?

Poorly structured roles will irritate hiring managers and will often fail to display your true impact. Ideally, you should start with a brief summary of your current role that gives a high-level overview, followed by a bullet-point list of responsibilities that delve deeper into your work and showcase your skills and knowledge. When you're writing these, read back over the job advert to ensure you have included as many of the main requirements as possible.

Does it prove the candidate's value?

Employers want to hire people, who will make a big positive impact to their organisation. In order to demonstrate that you can do this, you need to make sure you show how your work contributes to your current employer's wider goals. So, when relaying your responsibilities, try to show exactly how they benefit the organisation and its clients. For example, instead of writing:

"Delivered complete re-design of company website"

expand on this and write:

"Delivered complete re-design of company website in order to improve visitor experience and increase product sales."

The second sentence has a lot more context and meaning than the first, so it will show the value you can add.

Quantify your achievements

You should ideally be including some impressive achievements in your CV to show the kind of results you've achieved for both yourself and your employers. But you need to make sure that you use facts and figures to back up your claims and show recruiters exactly what level you work at. For example, a sales executive shouldn't simply write that they've exceeded their monthly targets; they should state precisely what the targets were (in monetary or unit terms) and exactly how much they exceeded them by in percentage terms. Hiring decisions can often be a struggle for employers, so quantifying your value like this gives them factual evidence to push the decision your way.