



Writing a CV that Works

Writing a CV that works can be a daunting process when staring at a blank page but by following a few tried-and-tested rules and spending a little time on it can reap great rewards.

Whilst there is never such thing as a “one-CV-fits-all” one key point to remember is your CV’s goal is to attract the attention of the people advertising the opportunities you seek. If you receive a lot of call backs from employers and recruiters then congrats – your CV works!

If on the other hand you think yours could do better please have a read of our top 10 CV Writing Tips which will sharpen up the focus of your CV and tell the world all about you and secure that all important interview!

1. Its key to watch “Keywords”

Congratulations – you are reading this online which demonstrates your understanding that a lot of recruitment happens online. This lesson is (pardon the pun) **key** as online databases handle CV’s in a different way to people – they search for keywords! If at this point you are scratching your head, do not worry; it simply means that computers don’t have the intelligence to sort by relevance, but scan for words that match the advert then rank accordingly:

i.e. if someone is recruiting for an Accounts Clerk with “Sage Line 50”, “Excel” and “Word” it is important, if you have these skills, to duplicate this information on your CV which will then rank higher in the recruiters results

A great tip here is to search for jobs that are suitable for you and highlight the key words the recruiter is asking for. Now if you have these skills make sure they are incorporated into your CV – simples!

2. It’s no novel – make it punchy

It’s an unfortunate fact that on average employers spend as little as 8 seconds reviewing a CV. For this reason yours should be no more than two pages of A4 – and that’s with a clean font no smaller than 11 type face! Remember; you want to make reviewing your CV simple and it is often the more recent experience that is of immediate interest. Rest assured if we want to know more about your past we will ask on you on interview!

We also recommend setting your CV to the standard Word template as it makes it easier for us recruiters to tailor your experience into the format we know our clients wish to review making it all the more likely for them to view.

3. Make it personal

Include a personal statement that explains why you are suitable for the job. A good rule of thumb is; what you've done in the past, what you want to do in the future and to sum up the skills that bridge the two. Often employers can be presented with all-encompassing CV's that document every aspect of someone's life; but remember the person reading has another 100 to go! Your personal statement should be simple and specifically answer the needs of the opportunity.

4. Mind the gap!

It's a truism of human nature but when someone sees a gap on a CV it gives a pause for thought. If you have a gap in your CV try to put yourself in the recruiters' shoes and explain this period with a positive slant. Did you do any volunteer work, training or work on any of your soft skills such as communication – if so tell us about it!

5. Tell the truth and you won't have to remember anything!

There's enough pressure in an interview without having to worry about what you have claimed can and cannot do – always stick to the truth. Lying on your CV is always weeded out sooner than later through skills testing, referencing or the awful moment you cannot answer a question on interview - all this can all be avoided by not telling porkies.

6. Keep Current and Carry On

A CV will follow you through your work career and is an essential document to track your achievements. Hit a massive target at work or completed a project of great merit – why not quickly open your CV and note this down. When it comes to refreshing your CV on your next job hunt it makes it a lot easier to update!

7. Mistakes Happen!

One of the biggest bug-bears of any recruiter or employer is spelling mistakes on a CV. With tools such as spell-checkers there is simply no need for errors such as these and it can be reason enough for employers to discount your CV – why not when there are many spelt correctly. Make sure to read your document thoroughly, spell check it and then get someone else to read it.

8. Numbers Rule

When it comes to expressions of greatness over targets exceeded etc. back these statements up with hard numbers. Whilst being careful not to reveal what could be confidential information employers prefer to see by how much a target was overachieved or what was the cost saving percentage as a result of your new process. If you sold or saved it – break into onto a % and shout about it.

9. The Tailored Approach

I know it's easy – there are multiple jobs that are suitable so why not simply fire out the same old CV. Please, please, please – do not do this. You are not click-and-collecting a kettle; this could be the opportunity that shapes your life and future career for many years to come. It deserves some love and attention.

By following steps 2 and 3 this should be avoided but also try to do some research on the company and use the job advert to work out exactly the skills you need to emphasise. The effort will prove worthwhile – trust us!

10. Hey, good looking...

We buy with our eyes. There's a reason big business spends billions on the look and feel of their brand – image sells. Well your brand is your CV and time should be spent on making it look good. Design a layout that is both easy on the eye with lots of white space around text and tidy with concise bullet points where appropriate. This is your chance to get creative!

For more tips and advice ask one of our experienced team to review your CV today