

GUIDELINE

Your CV must make the right impact before you have the chance to do so in person. It must catch the reader's eye and hold attention. It must do justice to your experience; be comprehensive in scope yet concise in detail. Too often CVs are presented which fall down on the basics, they may be out of date, unfashionable or poorly presented. These days, the life history is out – and almost a certain contender for the reject letter. A concise career summary suggests a candidate who is fit for the modern business environment. Today's potential employer is looking for:

- Clarity
- Indications that you and the job were made for each other
- Comprehensive and sustainable business experience

You do not have to say it all. Just enough to grab interest and get you an interview. Your CV can be the barrier to that sought after position, or the open door. If yours is the former, then it's time to stop, think and read on

HOW TO PRESENT YOUR CV

You have one chance to impress the reader and sell your skills and experience, so make your CV work for you.

- Your CV should cover no more than 2 sides of A4 paper, printed portrait.
- Use lots of white space.
- Line up all margins and any tabs you use.
- Choose a font, which is easy to read. Arial, Palatino may be common, but are ideal.
- Use upper and lower case. Do not write whole sentences or headings in capitals – it is difficult to read.
- When you have finished, check the layout, style, spelling and punctuation, consistency and general readability.
- Print on good quality plain paper, either white or cream.
- Send an original – not a photocopy.

WHAT NOT TO DO

- Do not exceed 2 pages. A potential employer will give up long before you do.
- Do not include illustrations, or Clipart.
- Photographs too are out, unless specifically requested. If so, make sure it's a good quality portrait.
- Avoid binding your CV with sliders or ring-combs. These are annoying on a thin presentation, and will probably end up in the bin long before getting to a recruiting manager.

HOW TO WRITE YOUR CV

Your CV should demonstrate that you have a track record, which is irresistible to the potential employer. Write intelligently. Be punchy and concise.

- Start your work experience with your current or most recent role; this entry is likely to be the largest. Then list your jobs in reverse chronological order.
- Be clear in presenting your skills, experience and achievements,
- Ensure that start and finish dates are sequential, and any career gaps are clearly explained. Employers want honesty.
- Detail only months and years. Exact employment dates are not necessary.
- List only relevant skills training courses. Be concise. If you cover a whole page with training courses, the prospective employer may begin to question when you were actually at work!
- Include membership of relevant professional associations.
- Include details of foreign languages.

WHAT TO LEAVE OUT

- Your age in years; use only your date of birth.
- Grades of all qualifications back to O level, unless you are a recent graduate with no work experience.
- Salary or financial package details in the body text. This, if requested, should be in the covering letter; otherwise it should be left out and discussed later.
- Details of references. The space can be better used. You can give these details when you are made an offer.
- Hobbies and interests. Only include a note of any pastimes, which are relevant or will enhance the application.
- Reasons for leaving a job. These are far better discussed and justified at interview; in print they are open to misinterpretation. However, reasons such as redundancy or site closure may be mentioned to avoid misunderstanding.
- The date your CV was prepared. It will soon be out of date, and you may forget to change it.

MAKING IT SPECIAL

- CVs are difficult to compile from memory. Vital information can be left out. Keep a note of achievements, skills development and other relevant information as it happens. This enables you to create a CV, adjust and update it to reflect your current situation.
- Consider your 'standard' CV for each job application. Ask yourself whether it needs to be customised to match the job role. Sometimes you may have to make adjustments to support your case.
- If you include a personal profile statement you may be asked to justify certain points at interview. Be honest about your key attributes and prepared to substantiate your words.
- Respond quickly to an advertisement. Enclose a covering letter describing why the role is of interest to you, and briefly highlight where your own skills fit with the job requirements.

**YOUR CV – THE GATEWAY TO
YOUR CAREER CHANGE**

