

## CV Guide:

Your CV is your personal Shop window. You only get one chance to create the right first impression and it is your CV that needs to do this for you. It must be a sales tool, not just a summary of the roles and companies you have worked in. It needs to demonstrate what you could bring to your next role, not just experience, but what could differentiate you or make you the obvious choice versus other candidates.

People only make a recruitment decision for one of 2 reasons: To gain a reward or to avoid a penalty. If they can't see quickly what the gain would be from hiring you, or what they might be missing out on if they didn't hire you, then they won't make a decision in your favor.

The following structure is ideal for either a recruiter or the employer direct to glance over and be drawn in, but it is the content that is key:

1. Name and Contact details: name, address, country, email, phone numbers (especially your mobile as recruiters can't reach you at home when they are at work).
2. Personal summary. (See below)
3. Core Competencies / Key skills / Attributes e.g.: IT Infrastructure, Enterprise Sales, Business Development, Mergers & Acquisitions, Transaction Services, IT Project Management.
4. Companies and roles in reverse chronological order with your most recent role first, including date started and finished unless you are still employed, job title, name of company, location(s) of company. If you have had more than one role or location, then include each.
5. 3-4 points summarizing your Responsibilities in each role and 3-4 key Achievements for each role (important for every job you list). (see below)
6. It is important to include all your roles and explain any gaps unless you are going back over 10 years or more than 5 jobs, and then you can just list the job title, dates to and from and the company. The most relevant are the most recent so make sure you emphasize these in content and the amount you write.
7. Don't include reasons for leaving as whilst these make sense to you they can be interpreted more negatively by the recruiter.
8. Education, (Senior school – dates to and from, college – dates to and from, University (if applicable) dates to and from. More senior candidates can place less emphasis on the lower qualifications.
9. Professional Qualifications if any (most recent first, detailing grades and dates).
10. Language skills, Accreditations / Certifications / Training / Key IT skills if appropriate
11. Outside Interests / Hobbies. It is good to have some as it makes the candidate look more human to have outside interests but only list a few and ensure the ones you use show you in a positive light. Memberships and sports are good but avoid "socializing", drinking habits or anything that could possibly be construed as political or socially inappropriate.

### **Personal summaries / Personal Profiles**

When writing your personal summary or summary profile you need to be thinking of yourself as the valuable commodity you are selling. If you were selling a car, you wouldn't just say it is a car and leave it to chance that the potential buyer knows how good it is! You would list the complete benefits of that car; it is only 2 years old therefore is still under warranty. It comes with a full service history showing its reliability and low service costs. It has a full executive pack of air conditioning, automatic gearbox and iPod/MP3 compatible 6 speaker stereo system for your comfort. Parking sensors, Airbags and ABS braking also give you peace of mind for your safety and that of your family. Every product has multiple Unique Selling Points (USP's), and the recruiter may well be using such USPs as part of their selection criteria so you need to sell yours or they may not spot them buried in the depth of your roles. These are key aspects that any new employer may well be looking for when they are going through the recruitment process and frequently will be the only part that the recruiter reads. A good check list is to ask of yourself is:

- Are you able to work on your own initiative or prefer only to work in a team or either?
- Do you work well under instruction or on your own initiative?
- What core industries and markets do you have knowledge of?
- If you only had one line to define you as a business person what would it be?
- Do you motivate and support a team effectively?
- How action orientated are you?
- Do you have an entrepreneurial outlook?
- Are you an excellent project manager with an ability to see a task through to the end?
- Are you solutions focused when problem solving?
- What are your interpersonal and communication skills like?
- Can you work effectively under pressure?
- Do you have a broad skill set, if so what are these?
- What does your perfect role expect of you and are you able to clearly demonstrate that you meet these requirements?
- What are your core strengths?
- How do you promote best practice in your working environment?
- Does your summary sell you and really explain who you are and what you do?

### **Summary of Achievements**

For each previous position you have held, whether you were employed or self employed, it is important to bullet point 3-4 specific achievements you reached in EACH role, with the most recent job listed in date order, after you list your duties in that job. Some of the following are indicators of a valuable employee / leader:

- Any type of promotion
- Increased Sales or Profitability
- Named key clients or Account responsibilities
- Implementing new systems or programs that improved productivity

- Successful completion of projects, time, budget, size, region
- Developed new businesses, clients or services
- Teams managed, hired or grown
- Challenges overcome

Most importantly, don't exaggerate your CV to the point that it is not believable or you cannot back it up with specific examples of your achievements. If you are highlighting that you increased productivity for your company, the interviewer is very likely going to ask you how you did this and you should prepare fuller explanations to expand on at interview stage.

### **Stay Business Professional**

As much as we like to make our CV's stand out, recruiters tend to dislike gimmicks when reading CV's. Stick to plain black fonts (Arial or Times Roman) and use 11 or 12 font size and ensure, whenever possible, that they have an email copy. Dropping it down to font 9 just so you can fit it on fewer pages is counterproductive, likewise having too much in bold or using a pretty binder for the hard copy, just means the recruiter has to take it apart to scan it. You don't have to include your age; an employer can easily work out your age range by looking at when you were educated and left school, college and university. There is no reason either to include marital status or children.

### **Overseas employment**

If you are applying for a position out of your homeland, remember to state whether you have visas to work in that particular region and mobile. If you are particularly keen on a location because you have ties to it, family or history there, then explain why.

### **Keywords**

Research the keywords for your industry and profession, most Recruiters, either internal or agency use databases and have scanning and searching software to review CV's to narrow down the selection of the most ideal candidates before they even see your CV.

### **Formatting content**

If you are sending a hard copy of your CV it should be printed on A4 sheets and secured to a likewise printed cover letter with a paper clip. Don't put it in binders or folders as it just makes it difficult for the recruiter to read it or copy it.

### **How long should it be?**

The guideline should be that a CV should be no longer than 2-3pages but this is tricky when someone is of a certain age or the detail required explaining many projects and extensive experience in their career is extensive. Remember you have a cover letter to add further information you want to highlight and you can have an additional document e.g. Project details.

### **The cover letter**

These can vary depending on whether it is a speculative letter to an agent or for a specific job. An ideal length is no more one page and in the same font as your CV. If you are applying for a specific role or ideally have the job description ensures that you take their criteria into account. You may want to amend your CV to emphasize the most relevant points. Be sure to note in your personal records that you have amended your base CV so that you don't take along an irrelevant one when you interview.

The first sentence or short paragraph should detail the position or type of role you are applying for.

- State why you are applying (not just because you need a job!) Give the recruiter a brief overview of why you are ideal for this position, what you can bring to the role, not just what you want from them, why you are interested in their company. In short, detail your professional attributes
- Include brief info on your personal attributes (i.e. good communicator, excellent interpersonal skills, ability to engage with people of all levels etc)
- Last line of the letter body should indicate that you would welcome the opportunity of discussing this role in further detail at their convenience.

Finally both your CV and cover letter should be **PROOF READ CAREFULLY**. It's amazing how many people enthuse about their attention to detail and then send an application littered with spelling and grammatical errors. Spell check is available on all word processing packages so there is no excuse.