

Helpful Hints - Writing a Curriculum Vitae

Employers examine large numbers of job applications when looking for the right candidate and those who get selected for an interview have well written and presented CVs. Hence, to even have a potential chance of being considered for your desired employment, you must have a CV which is accurate and will reflect you in the best possible light for the job.

Hints on how to write a CV:

Preparation: Think about what attributes you have which make you well suited to the job. Make a list of the skills you intend to 'sell'. Plan what you want to write: jot an outline of the CV by hand as different positions may require different versions of your CV.

Content: The CV should be divided into identifiable sections including personal details, educational background, employment history and interests and achievements. If you are applying for a particular job, make your CV reflect the job description. You are likely to have a higher success rate if you send out a few tailored CVs which reflect the skills the employer is looking for rather than sending out hundreds of general ones. Make everything positive, make yourself sound dynamic and use phrases that make you sound active rather than passive. Don't say: "I attended training". Say: "I took part in extra training".

1. *Personal details* Put all your personal details on the first page, many employers are under time pressure when compiling short lists for interviews and will have a slight preference for a candidate who makes their task easier.

Always include:

- *Name and full postal address*
- *Day time phone number*
- *Evening phone number*
- *Date of birth*
- *Nationality*

Sometimes you may need to include:

- *Driving License - if you have a full clean driving license then state it.*
- *Marital status*
- *Health status*

2. *Education background*-Put down your Highest level of qualification first and unless you are starting your career you really don't need to put down your school. Name your university, college and school with location. List exams passed, with dates and results. List specialist courses attended that are relevant to the job

3. *Employment history*-Try to avoid gaps in your CV. If you were unemployed or travelling for a few months, then say so. This is important if you don't want to raise unanswered questions in your CV that could make your interviewers feel uncomfortable or anxious about your gaps. List all employment with the most recent first. State start and finish dates for each employment. State job title, employer's name, industry, company size. Bullet point key responsibilities, achievements and results for each job

4. *Additional information - interests and achievements* Don't leave out useful skills which can potentially be transferred to the job. If you speak an additional language state how fluent you are. If you are IT literate state how competent you are. Hobbies and interests should be brief and reflect your personality in some way. Try to show how the skills you use in your hobbies can be transferred to your job, e.g. if you are captain of a netball team it shows leadership, if you teach dance to children it shows you have patience, if you enjoy keep fit it shows you are conscious about health and fitness.

5. *References*- References are not generally required - only include them if you are specifically asked to do so.

Presentation: Your CV should look clean and sharp. Use black ink on white A4 paper, as the employer may want to photocopy it. Clearly mark each section with a section heading. Avoid different fonts, stick to one simple font. Avoid decorations and photographs; it is the content that is important.

Length matters, don't make it too lengthy, usually about 2 A4 pages are best. Use a word processor to produce it on high quality paper.

Writing style: Write in the first person and stick to the point. Use plain English, make it easy and interesting to read.

Getting a second opinion: Show your CV to a variety of people for a number of different responses and constructive criticism. This will help you understand what others see rather than it being perfect in the view of just one person (yourself). Remember: if your CV is going to be successful in getting you your dream job, it needs to appeal to different people as it will probably be seen by a number of people

with varying views and opinions.

Always accompany your CV with a Covering Letter: Before you start, ring up the company and speak to the person who is dealing with the application. Talk to them about the job, and let them know what skills you have.

When you send the letter address it to the person you spoke to, this personal touch is good to indicate that you are really interested in the post with them.

This should also be of high standard. Always type it - unless asked for specifically as hand written. Ensure you use high quality paper, keep to one page and remember you still have to sell yourself through the letter in the first paragraph. State which position you are applying for, and if you spoke to the person earlier, mention it. Think about the advert and the qualities the employer is looking for, identify which of those qualities you have and state them briefly and clearly.

Make a point which will encourage the reader look more closely at your CV. For example: " As you can see from my CV, I devised a language strategy for children with English as a second language which increased the children's learning and classroom participation."

Finish your CV off with just a simple 'Yours sincerely'

Sending your CV: Always send the original, not a photocopy. Put the letter on top of the CV. Do not fold more than twice as this makes it difficult to photocopy and looks messy. Address it to the person you spoke to. Put it in a good quality envelope with the employer's address typed. Always send it first class- this shows that your career is important to you.

If your employer has a preference to a CV via email, then try to email it. [www.1ststep.co.uk](#)