



Guide to CV Writing

What is a CV?

A CV (which stands for Curriculum Vitae) is a document which records your skills, qualifications and employment history. It is also an opportunity to sell yourself to an employer by highlighting your transferrable skills and what you can offer an employer.

What is the Purpose of the CV?

To get a Candidate selected to an Interview – nothing else.

Is there a Perfect CV Format or Style?

No – everybody is different and everybody will respond to a CV format / style differently.

So if you don't know personally who will be reading the CV and their preferred style, then you can't foretell what style they will favour – it is best to focus on clarity of information and presentation.

What should be included?

Include the information necessary to allow a Reviewer to include the Candidate on the interview short-list – make it easy for them to see why the Candidate is worthy of further consideration and an interview.

Examples:

- Basic contact details – Phone, Email, Home Postcode;
- **Personal Profile/Statement – make it personal not generic (!!), explain the story in 3 sentences (remember the 7 second rule);**
- Basic work experience history – focus on what you achieved / delivered not what the role demanded (for example everybody knows that a cleaner pushes a brush and uses cleaning products – but if you cleaned to a standard that your boss complemented then that is an achievement) – **remember to explain any large gaps between roles or the Reviewer will assume the worst;**
- Basic Educational achievements – nobody needs to know what school you went to 35 years ago but if you won some qualifications then that is useful;
- Basic Job-related Training completed – will help a prospective employer determine how immediate a fit you are to their role;
- Anything relevant or helpful – eg DBS clearance, immigration status, voluntary work experience.

Above all else be truthful and honest – anything kept hidden will most probably come out later in the appointment process or when in the role – and the likely consequences will be more harmful.

What should not be included?

Don't include anything that distracts a Reviewer from including the Candidate on the interview short-list or is illegal or unwise to include.

Examples:

- Age
- Spent Convictions (although some may need to be disclosed later for DBS etc checks)
- Disabilities – unless directly relevant to the job (eg having only one leg and arm may be relevant if seeking a job as a driver's mate);
- Personal financial details (eg bank details);
- Political statements or beliefs;
- Religious statements or beliefs (unless relevant to the role eg church minister!);

Common Misunderstandings about Recruitment

- The Recruiter knows who / what they want;
- Recruitment Agents are genuinely interested in Candidates and building long-term relationships with them;
- The Job description is an accurate statement of requirements;
- The Candidate must possess all of the Requirements to get an Interview / be Appointed;
- The Recruiter is emotionally detached from the decision;
- The Manager will be doing all parts of the recruitment process themselves;
- Recruitment is always decent, honest and fair;
- The Recruiter is / is not interested in the person (ie hobbies etc.) – there is no hard and fast rule here as it depends on the personal tastes of the Recruiter and the role being recruited for. Generally personality information is relevant for roles where interpersonal skills are more relevant and irrelevant for others;
- You should customise your CV for every job you apply for – generally true for white collar high wage roles and generally less true for blue collar low wage jobs – take each case on its merits and judge if customising is likely to be sufficiently helpful in getting selected for interview to be worth the effort;
- You should always send cover letter – again generally true for white collar high wage roles and less so for blue collar low wage jobs – if you do send one then make sure it adds to the CV and not just repeats what is in the Personal Profile / Statement.