

How to Write an Effective CV

The perfect CV is the CV that achieves the interview - no more, no less. If the CV gets your name on the interview shortlist it has done its job.

Please remember that your CV is the only part of the whole job selection process over which you have complete control. So it pays to make sure you get it right. The Consultants at Mission 4 Recruitment will be happy to provide constructive feedback on your CV and offer any suggestions if we feel it will improve your chances of obtaining an interview.

In the meantime we have put together a guide that will help you avoid the common pitfalls and ensure the right information is included in the right order. There are no hard and fast rules but from experience, we have found the following format works best:

CV Structure

Contact Details

The best place for your contact details is at the top of the first page in the middle or on the left. Make sure you include:

- Full Name
- Home Address
- Telephone Numbers (Home, Mobile and Work if you don't mind being contacted there)
- Email Address (So many candidates leave this off!)
- Professional Social Media details i.e. LinkedIn Profile

Personal Details

You no longer need to include your Date of Birth owing to age discrimination rules. Please state if you hold a full driving licence and own a car.

Personal Profile

Write a concise and punchy personal profile (aim for around 20-30 words). It must do two things; Firstly, it must encapsulate your career aspirations and secondly it must summarise what you have to offer your next employer.

Professional Qualifications

If you have any professional qualifications or are studying towards a professional qualification, provide details here.

Education

If you have finished your Education within the last 5 – 7 years, list the Education section on your CV before your Work History

List your educational history in reverse order (i.e. Degree or A-levels before GCSE's). It is not necessary to list every single exam result for GCSE's. In most cases it will suffice to put the number of A-C passes.

Work History

If you have been working for over 7 years, list your Work History before your Education details.

This is arguably the most important part of your CV. As with education, list your jobs in reverse order starting with your most recent or current job. Think carefully about what skills you have used and acquired during each job. If you have limited work experience remember that even the mundane jobs have taught you something.

For each job provide basic details including job title, company name and the start and finish dates of your employment. If any of your roles were 'temporary' – please state this on your CV. Always include a Reason for Leaving on each job.

Using bullet points, list your activities and achievements during that particular job.

Important: After each bullet point ask yourself "What does this mean to a potential employer?"

For example, suppose you used the following bullet point:

- Operated Till

Does this offer the employer any insight into what you learned from the experience that might benefit them if they were to take you on? No it doesn't.

It might be better to put something like this:

- Ran a busy checkout serving the general public, which improved my ability to work under pressure and gave me experience in dealing with a wide range of different people.

The above bullet point offers much more of an insight into what you gained from the experience that might be of use to your next employer.

Apply the above question to all your bullet points and that will help you to create a CV that sells you in a positive light.

Interests

Keep this section brief. Two or three interests are enough. Think about what you write here before you list them. Employers can learn a lot about a person from their interests.

Crosswords and software design for example would suggest that the job seeker is intellectually able. Squash and Badminton might suggest a competitive personality. TV and reading might suggest that the job seeker prefers his/her own company.

Think about the kind of impression your interests create and be prepared to answer questions around this.

CV Dos & Don'ts

Don'ts

- Don't leave gaps i.e. dates that are not accounted for.
- Don't use fancy fonts and borders.
- Don't try to be humorous (recruitment is serious).
- Don't list your salary requirements.
- Don't use the word "I" unless absolutely necessary.
- Don't use jargon.
- Don't use pictures or photos..... ever.

Do's

- Do check thoroughly for spelling mistakes and typos! Poor spelling or grammar, or using completely the wrong word is the quickest way of getting a rejection (see below)!
- Do use short sentences.
- Do use bullet points.
- Do try to stick to 2-3 pages.
- Do take the time to get it right. You only get one chance to make a good first impression

The Most Common Spelling Mistakes found on CV's

- You are responsible for ordering Stationery with an E, not Stationery with an A. Stationary with an A means you are standing still.
- You conduct yourself in a good manner, not manor. A manor is a big house.
- You are looking for a new job role, not job roll. A roll is something you eat i.e. cheese roll, or it's an action i.e. roll out of bed or roll down a hill
- Definitely NOT defiantly!!! The dictionary definition of **definitely** means '**without doubt**'. The dictionary definition of **defiantly** means '**acting in a manner that shows open resistance or bold disobedience**'

Lastly, please ensure you use the UK version of Word not the US version, as we don't want to see a Z where an S should be!

