

Top tips for CV's

Everything in your CV tells a potential new employer something about you. The only information available to the employer is in your application so it is worth considering targeting job applications with a tailor made CV.

The fundamental principles of targeting your CV are pretty simple:

- Make sure every part of your CV directly relates to the current job application.
- Use exactly the same descriptions for skills, experience, and qualifications as on the job ad or application guidelines.
- Always cover the essential job skills, qualifications, and experience in your CV.
- Ensure that everything in your work history is clearly relevant to the job application.

Always keep on file a basic CV with the correct and up to date facts, you then have the raw material available to adapt for any job that you are applying for.

Basic CV outline:

Objectives

The objectives part of your CV defines your motivations. You're telling the employer why you want the job. In your basic CV the objectives are a statement of a general career trajectory. When customizing it write the objectives section showing a direct link to the job that you are applying for.

Skills

Skills are keywords in job applications, such as essential or desirable criteria. Again your basic CV will have a list of your key skills – compare these with those asked for in job adverts and assess which ones are transferable. You may need slight rewording of your basic CV to match those used in the job description. Don't insert skills into your CV that you don't have – you will be found out!

Work History

Your work history needs particular care and good use of terminology, most recent history goes first. Explain briefly, but as clearly as possible, your job role and tasks. Where you are tailoring a CV for a job application; use the same/similar terminology as in the job requirements, particularly the essential skills. Don't put more than 20 years work history into your CV unless it shows a wide range of experience or has particular relevance to the application.

Use examples that link your skills development to work history, and if possible show how your skills developed through your work history, making clear your level of experience.

Achievements

Achievements added on to the work history as part of each job description are a real positive, particularly when you show obvious relevance and value to the employer. Use examples that are clearly related to the new job application where possible.

Qualifications

Many applications contain a set of required qualifications. You must provide a list of qualifications that meets those requirements. Difficulties sometimes arise when you have similar qualifications, but aren't sure if they match the requirements. Don't guess. Make sure they do, preferably by email, and get a definite yes or no.

Your qualifications also need to be spelled out in detail. Broad descriptions of qualifications aren't good enough, particularly when all the other applicants will have similar qualifications.

Photos and personal information

The employer wants a sense of the kind of person you are, as well as what you can do. Are you punctual, conscientious, or motivated? Do you rise to a challenge? With each point you write, ask yourself "What does this say about me?" If you want to include personal information – ensure that it reflects the job that you are applying for – for example if you are applying for a job which requires international travel and you are well traveled, add it.

As a general rule, a photo shouldn't be included if applying for jobs throughout the UK. The only times this rule would not apply is for candidates looking for a position where appearance is important or where a recruiter actually requests one.

Personal Information in a CV should be limited to the essential contact details. An employer cannot ask details such as age, gender, religion and race. How can you use personal information as an asset in your resume?

Make it look good

Ensure that your CV is uncluttered, with key points easy to spot. Use bullet points and keep the sentences relatively short. Use plenty of 'white space' around the borders and between each section keeps the document easier on the eye.

Run a spelling and grammar check and ask someone else to read it for you. Read it aloud to the dog, how does it sound?

Source for these tips:

<http://www.cvtips.com/resumes-and-cvs/targeting-your-cv.html>

<http://www.bradleycvs.co.uk/cv-writing-tips/cv-better-cv.htm>