

How to make your CV shine

✦ How should I layout my CV?

- Keep it simple and to the point. Most will make a judgement about a CV within seconds, so make sure you stick to a maximum of two pages of A4 paper.
- Keep the layout simple and uncluttered - using graphics and clip-art may demonstrate your IT know-how but it is a real turn off for the reader.
- Use a simple typeface and a standard font size – remember this CV may be emailed, faxed or posted.
- Make sure that you double check your spelling and grammar. Make use of spell check and ask one or two people to proof read it for you just to be sure, as spell check won't pick up on grammatical mistakes!
- You may think that you deserve a modelling contract but do not include photographs unless specifically asked for them.
- Always remember the CV 'hotspot' – the upper middle area of the first page is where the reader's eye will naturally fall, so make sure you include your most important information there.

✦ What should it contain? And what should I exclude?

- Include full contact details, address, all your phone numbers, email, etc.
- Include brief details about your personal life (marital status, etc) - remember most people will not be interested in the names of your pets!
- Give details about your driving licence including details of bans and endorsements.
- Education and qualifications – include the details of the highest levels achieved. If you're a graduate, it does not matter if you once did a GCSE in woodwork. Also the names and addresses of educational establishments may not always be relevant – consider how long ago it was or is it one with an enviable reputation.
- Be specific about the training you have received - provide details of the training provider or even the actual trainer, if well known.
- Similarly be very specific about qualifications you have which will be relevant to employers in your industry.
- Include details about your entire job history, obviously if you are more experienced give details about the last ten years and simply list the jobs from your early career in bullet/list form.
- Personal Profile - some people love them, others hate them, so you will have to decide for yourself. If you do wish to write one make sure it says something about you which is unique – there are literally thousands of "energetic, ambitious people" out there!

✦ What should I write?

- Never lie on your CV. It will come back and bite you at some point. Employers will check on qualifications, achievements, training and take references.
- For each job give your title, main responsibilities, name and brief description of the company (not everyone will have heard of Acme Widgets Ltd).
- Briefly describe your main responsibilities, giving examples of what you achieved, how you performed against targets, etc. Remember it is your successes and achievements that will interest people.
- Make sure you use assertive and positive language under the work history and experience sections, such as “developed”, “organised” or “achieved”.
- Don't leave gaps! It immediately makes an employer suspicious. They won't give you the benefit of the doubt.

If you've been out of work it can be a concern but try to show how you filled the time away from work positively. Perhaps you did a training course, undertook some charity or voluntary work, or developed your soft skills in communication, teamwork or project management?

✦ What order should I put it in?

- Name, address and contact information
- Personal and driving licence details
- Education and qualifications
- Career history - giving the most recent job first, remembering to highlight key successes and achievements.

- Remember to always list any personal or leisure interests last - these are not the most important thing to the potential employer but shows you do have a life outside of your work. However you should list any major sporting or personal achievements if you think they demonstrate relevant skills or personal qualities. Like “ran the London Marathon” (personal discipline and dedication to regular training) or captain of local football team (leadership and good team skills).

✦ Using online networking sites as your CV

- Remember if you use websites like LinkedIn, that the information you put there is visible to everyone and should be consistent to your 'paper' or other offline CVs! Inconsistencies create suspicion and may even stop you getting an interview.
- Employers will often look on LinkedIn first, so this needs to be fully up-to-date, accurate and consistent (as per above).
- These sites can be useful resources to supplement your job search.
- Be careful what you put on social media sites like Facebook – your employer might see some information about you not in your 'official' CV!

✦ CV templates

To help you we have some useful links on our website, including a CV creation tool website which can assist you with required content, layout and formatting. Some of these websites charge for the service but they can save you valuable time and create a more polished final CV, so they are worth considering.