

How To Write An Impressive CV

Objective

It's sounds obvious, but the objective of your CV and application letter is purely to secure a meeting, or interview, with your prospective employer. It's their first impression of you and so needs to be a positive one if you are to progress further. Here at iMPART, we'll take the time to look at your CV and can offer you advice on how best to present yourself. It's important you take the time to get this right; many executives don't have the luxury of time and simply spend 10-15 seconds looking for reasons NOT to consider you further. And if they can't find what they are looking for in your resume they will not consider interviewing you.

So, think about the following:

- Where am I now and where do I want my next job to get me?
- Do I have the right skills / experience to get there? How do I best sell it?
- What are my strengths and weaknesses?
- What are my biggest achievements? How do I make sure I'm asked about them?
- The clearer you are in your own mind on the above, the more confident and credible you will be.

The CV itself

This is a vital component in your job search and the hurdle you have to clear. A well written CV can sometimes even secure you a job by itself, especially if you're looking for temporary work. But at the very least it will help you promote yourself and secure the interviews in which you can sell yourself. Here's how to make sure you do it.

Things to include and things not to include

Do include:

Your personal details: By these we mean your name, address, contact information (postal address, telephone number and email address), and your nationality (with reference to appropriate HSMV if relevant). You do not need to include your date of birth on your CV should you not wish to.

Your education and qualifications: List all the qualifications you have including subjects / grades and the name of the institution where you gained them. List them in reverse chronological order; it makes your strongest qualification easiest to spot. Avoid the temptation to lie or exaggerate, more and more employers are starting to check up on this information.

Work Experience: Most people list their experience in chronological order, starting with their most recent job first. Achievements should be separated from responsibilities and where possible, for finance vacancies, refer to figures of costs saved or profits / sales increased and how you've helped to cause these. More emphasis should be put on your recent role(s); they're more likely to help you get the next one.

Other Skills: Include (genuine) language and computer skills and any other training that's relevant to the role for which you're applying. Again, don't lie or exaggerate, it's very easy for an employer to assess your real skills, occasionally even in the interview itself.

Hobbies & Interests: List everything you enjoy – they can be good ice-breakers and you never know what you may have in common with anyone who may interview you!

Referees: If you're not comfortable naming these, simply state that they're 'Available on Request'

Don't include:

Anything Untrue: Prospective employers are checking up more and more on potential new staff and anything you write can be easily checked. So keep it honest and don't ruin the chance of losing your dream job for a spurious claim.

Superfluous Details: There's no need to include your marital status, sexual orientation, religious affiliation or any children's names; they're not relevant to your chances of securing your dream job.

Filly Borders & Photographs: Whilst it's important to make your CV neat and presentable, going over the top detracts from what you're trying to say. By all means use bolds and underlines but let the words sell you and nothing else.

Salary & Package Information: By all means add this to a covering letter or email, but it's best to leave it off your CV and allow your iMPART consultant to negotiate the best package possible for you.

Other tips

If you're emailing your CV, make it in Microsoft Word format. As a finance person you need to be good on Excel, but it shouldn't be used to write your CV on! If you're posting or presenting it, it should be laser-printed in black ink and in a plain typeface.

Try and keep it under three pages if you can – think of what you'd be happy to read if you were recruiting. Anything more than that and you risk your strengths being obscured by irrelevance. Using bullet points rather than sentences can help you save space as well.

Check the completed version for grammatical errors and spelling mistakes and make sure it makes sense. Get someone independent to check it for you.

The information in your CV will be used by interviewers to form the basis of their questions. So make sure you're able to 'guide' the interviewer to question you about your biggest achievements and have well prepared answers for anything you could be asked.

Make the CV clear and easy to read. If you have a gap in your CV, be prepared to explain it. Likewise, don't leave out any periods of employment either. Also, if you include your reasons for leaving previous roles, be prepared to explain them.