

10 Steps to Writing a Successful CV

Writing a good CV can be one of the toughest challenges of job hunting. Most employers spend just a few seconds scanning each CV before deciding whether or not to interview.

1 Keep it brief and to the point.

A CV should usually be no more than two A4 pages. Keep it factual and to the point.

2 Customise

Take the time to tailor your CV for each role that you apply for. Research the company and use the job advert to work out exactly what skills you should point out to them.

3 Personal statement

An employer may not necessarily see how your experience relates to their job. Instead, use a short personal statement to explain why you are the best person for the role. This should be reflected in your cover letter too.

4 Mind the gap!

Leaving obvious gaps on your CV can immediately make employers suspicious – and they may not give you the benefit of the doubt. If you've been out of work it can be a worry but just put a positive spin on it. Did you do a course, voluntary work or develop soft skills such as communication, teamwork or project management? If so, shout about it!

5 Keep it up to date

You should keep your CV up-to-date whether you're looking for a job or not. Everytime something significant occurs in your career (a course that you have attended or a promotion), record it so you don't miss out something that could be important.

6 Mistakes

Employers do look for mistakes on CVs and if they find them, it doesn't reflect well on you. With competition for jobs being tight, don't give employers the excuse to dismiss your CV because of avoidable mistakes. Use spellcheck and even ask a friend to look over what you've written.



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7 Honesty is the best policy

Lies on your CV can land you in trouble when it comes to employers checking your background and references. The last thing you want is to start work and then lose your new job for lying. You also may get caught out at the interview stage when you suddenly can't answer questions on what you claim to know. And that can be very awkward!

8 The facts and figures

This may sound dull but by backing up your achievements with figures it makes selling yourself much easier. When writing your work history, don't just say that you increased sales; tell them you increased sales by 60% over a twelve-month period.

9 Make it look good

We live in a world where image is everything and that also goes for your CV. Take some time to smarten it up. Use bullet points and tabs and keep sentences short. Leave plenty of white space around text and between categories to make the layout easy on the eye.

10 Take advantage of keywords

If you've uploaded your CV to a job site so recruiters can find you, keywords can be crucial. Job titles and keywords will help a search engine pick out your CV from the pile. Confused? Don't be. A marketing candidate might mention SEO (Search Engine Optimization), direct marketing and digital marketing among their experience and skills, for example. If you're not sure, have a search online and see what words are commonly mentioned when you input your job title.

What else to include?

Important information including your name and contact details are obvious, but you will also need to include your education and qualifications, career history, interests and hobbies and also details of any references.

