

Do's and Don'ts for developing a CV

A Curriculum Vitae is a self-marketing tool and getting an interview can depend on how good your CV is. Your CV is your chance to show an employer you have the skills and experience needed, and that you are the right person for the job. However, the way you present your CV can have an overwhelming influence over whether your CV is even read, let alone get you that all important interview. You will need to consider what to include, how much detail is needed and how to make your CV stand out from all the others.

Do...

- **Construct your CV with your prospective employer in mind.** Look at the job advert or specification and think about what the job involves, and what the employer needs. Find out about the main activities of the employer.
- **Tailor your CV to the job.** Your CV shouldn't be your life story but should be tailored for the job you're applying for, focusing on the parts that are important for that particular job.
- **Make your CV clear, neat and tidy.** Get somebody to check your spelling and grammar. No-one wants to read a CV that is squashed together and includes too much information. Your CV should be easy to read with space between each section and plenty of white space. Use left-justified text as it's easiest to read, using black text on good quality white or cream paper.
- **View your experience in a positive light.** Try to look objectively at your experiences (even the bad ones) and identify what you learned or what skills you developed in the process. This is the picture you should present to the employer.
- **Place the important information up-front.** Put experience and education achievements in reverse chronological order.
- Include experience and interests that might be of use to the employer: IT skills, voluntary work, foreign language competency, driving skills, leisure interests that demonstrate team skills and organization/leadership skills.
- **Put your name and email address on every page** - in case the pages of your CV get separated.
- **Use positive language.** when describing your work achievements use power words such as 'launched', 'managed', 'co-ordinated', 'motivated', 'supervised', and 'achieved'.
- **Quote concrete outcomes to support your claims.** For example, 'This reduced the development time from 7 to 3 days' or 'This revolutionized the company's internal structure, and led to a reduction in overheads from £23,000 to £17,000 per year'.
- **Make use of the internet for sample CVs and CV templates** - to help maximize the impact of your CV and to get inspiration for layout and tone.

Don't...

- **Hand-write or type your CV.** This looks unprofessional and old fashioned.
- **Include information which may be viewed negatively** – failed exams, divorces, failed business ventures, reasons for leaving a job, points on your driving license. Don't lie, but

just don't include this kind of information. Don't give the interviewer any reason to discard you at this stage.

- **Include anything that might discriminate against you** – such as date of birth, marital status, race, gender or disability.
- **Include salary information and expectations.** Leave this for negotiations after your interview, when the employers are convinced how much they want to employ you.
- **Make your CV more than two pages long.** You can free up space by leaving out or editing information that is less important. For example, you do not need to include referees – just state they are available on request. Don't include all of the jobs you have had since school, just the relevant ones. Add details about your most recent qualifications, which are more relevant, but summarize the rest.
- **Dilute your important messages.** Don't bother with a list of schools you attended with grades and addresses, don't include a long list of hobbies, or a long work history. Concentrate on demonstrating that the skills they need, what you have achieved by applying the skills you have and what benefits your clients have gained from your work.
- **Use jargon, acronyms, technical terms** - unless essential.
- **Lie** - employers have ways of checking what you put is true, and may sack you if they take you on and find out you've lied to them.
- **Include a photo unless requested.**