



CONSTRUCTING A WINNING CV

What is the purpose of your CV. Ultimately its aim is to ensure that you secure an interview with the client that you wish to join and for positions that you wish to be considered for. It is a selling document designed to give the best possible impression of you and your career. It is important that you highlight your skills, experience, education and achievements to ensure clients get a favourable first impression.

WHAT A CLIENT IS LOOKING FOR

Put yourself in the shoes of the client. What are they looking for, how do they decide who to interview?

Your CV should be tailored so that you have:

- The specific skills needed for the job
- The right sort and length of experience
- The right personal attributes

But you must also keep it simple. It should be:

- Short- ideally no more than two / three pages
- Clear- type written and laid out with wide margins, section headings and information in logical order.
- Accurate- correct dates and job titles, no spelling mistakes.

CREATING AN IMPRESSION

The look of a CV is important. If in doubt keep it simple. Go for plain white or cream, good quality (100 gsm weight), A4 paper. Choose a clear typeface and don't be tempted to choose anything but black ink! A clear binder and well written covering letter are the final touches to ensure you create a good first impression.

POSITIVE PERSONALITY TRAITS TO INCORPORATE

These words are examples of personal attributes often seen as positive and useful.

Dynamic Confident
Enthusiastic Innovative
Positive Resilient

PROBLEMS TO OVERCOME

Often, you can overcome problems by emphasising certain areas of your CV and playing down others. These are some of the more common problems and how to tackle them:

My CV would fill four pages, at least

Highlight the skills most relevant to the job you are applying for. Detail your recent experience and summarise everything else- your recent activities are more interesting to an employer than what you did years ago.

I've had a lot of jobs

Condense your employment record and focus on the skills you have achieved through your experience. Only give details of your most recent and most relevant positions and lump together jobs done 10 or 15 years ago, or in a period when you changed job frequently, as 'various'.

I've had gaps between jobs

If the gaps include voluntary work, training or relevant experience- travel, for example- put these down as part of your skills, qualifications and experience. Otherwise, giving the year of employment only rather than month and year, will cover short gaps.

Most jobs I've done have been very much the same

Solution: Concentrate on your key skills and achievements and simply summarise your actual career history. Pay particular attention to the key skills section on your CV as a place to bring together all of the achievements and abilities learned over the course of your career.

I don't have many qualifications

Concentrate on what you do have. Emphasise your practical skills and experience: these are often more valuable to an employer than academic knowledge anyway.

CV CHECKLIST

When you have written your CV, check the following points:

- Is the layout clear?
- Do the relevant points stand out?
- Free from spelling mistakes?
- Is the language clear and understandable?
- Are your skills and achievements emphasised?
- Can the employer see the key points at a glance, or does the information have to be searched for and guessed at?
- Is the document free of qualifying words such as fairly, usually and hopefully?
- Is it well presented, smart and professional looking?

Your CV is a selling tool for you. The better it is the better the chance you have got for succeeding. Be sure to communicate exactly what you've got to offer and what extra skills you can bring to employers. A good CV will highlight your experience and professionalism and finding a suitable position will be made that bit easier.