

Why it pays to take the Time to Write a Great CV?

An individual needs to capture a potential employer's attention in the first 10 seconds. If written well, the flow and feel of the CV will keep the potential employer focussed on the CV presented to him/her for longer. Not surprisingly a CV can be seen as a vital marketing document, which will be used by employers to make the initial selection. Failing to impress at early selection stage will lead to rejection in landing an interview.

Writing a CV is a great way for an individual to celebrate his/her success and skills set. However, many people may feel slightly apprehensive in celebrating their career successes and therefore fail to mention their main achievements in the document. In doing so, they risk losing out on being selected for interview because the CV will be the main document which will help an employer decide whether to invite an individual for an interview or not.

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As the employment market becomes more competitive, a well written and informative CV will enable an individual to stand head and shoulders above the competition. Employers are also seeking individuals who can bring both skills and a strong employment track record to their organisation.

Attracting the right talent is more important now than ever especially as employers try to navigate through a challenging globalised working landscape. A well thought out and presented CV demonstrates that an individual has taken the time and effort in compiling his/her career history in a logical and informative manner.

How to write a Great CV

CV's are documents which gives an individual the opportunity to highlight his/her professional story. The choice of words and style can make all the difference between a dynamic CV and one which contains no real relevant information or achievements

If an individual seeks the help of a friend then the individual must ensure the CV is written in such a way which reflects his/her style and choice of words accurately. Permitting someone else to write a CV runs the risk that the choice of words and tone will be reflective of the writer and not the requester. However, there is no harm in seeking advice as and where necessary.

The following are helpful tips:

- Keeping to 2 pages unless an individual is a senior director where 3 pages are permissible
- Use of positive action words such as success, accomplished, initiated, articulated
- Highlighting any awards and commendations throughout the CV
- Ensuring the CV is applicable to the role being applied for. A simple "cut and paste" exercise is not desirable
- Ensuring the CV feels like its flowing smoothly
- Using spell check to correct incorrect spelling
- Getting a trusted friend or adviser to read over the CV.
- Going back to the last 10 years worth of relevant employment – prior to that an individual should question the relevance of inclusion
- Ensuring great layout which is easy on the eye
- Where an individual is trying to branch out by moving into a different career, the CV needs to succinctly demonstrate transferable skills
- A CV should always be accompanied by a succinct cover letter and written in the first person

Common Mistakes People make in CV Writing

The following are common mistakes made:

- Trying to include too much irrelevant information on 2 pages
- Telling lies, even little white lies can land an individual in deep trouble
- Making dates and employment up
- Spelling mistakes
- Poor use of grammar
- Omitting key achievements. A potential employer does not know what an individual has achieved if this has been omitted from the CV
- Incorrect use of tense
- Some people rarely update their CVs so historical employment history gets too much space and more recent employment is relegated to a few lines
- Use of borders and lines on a CV are great only if it enhances the CV.
- Highlighting any personal interests in more detail such as "reading". Here an individual can elaborate on what sort of reading is enjoyable
- Use of first person throughout the CV
- Listing all duties making the CV feel like a job description

A well written CV can make the difference in being selected, or not being selected for interview stage. It pays to get the mechanics right when writing a great CV by thinking logically and systematically. The individual can also benefit tremendously by ensuring s/he has included all the relevant and necessary information.

Many people make the mistake of seeing a CV as a document to bring out only when applying for a role. CVs are dynamic working documents and need updating and editing regularly. By failing to ensure correct etiquette, many people run the risk of losing out on that all important employment opportunity.