

Preparing a CV

As Consultants we can see several hundred CVs a week. It would be impossible for us to meet every person that submits a CV so it's essential that thought and effort is put into the document that will represent you. An advert on the internet can generate anywhere from 25 – 150 applications.

Your CV may be seen by several people from Recruitment Consultants to HR Directors and from Line Managers to Chief Executives so it's essential that you take into consideration who may be reading it.

Don't forget that not every person who sees your CV is a marketer, so don't assume that they will know what you do as part of your job and how you do it.

THE BASICS

- **DO** make sure your CV is a Word document. Some people cannot open zipped documents or PDF formats. Word ensures that everyone can read it.
- **DO** keep it concise. 3 page CVs are acceptable these days, 10 page CVs are not
- **DO** keep it simple, black text on a white background is easy to read, there's no need to demonstrate your ability to use creative packages to create graphics or boxes
- **DON'T** write your CV purely in capital letters. Did you know that the eye cannot distinguish the shapes of letters making it harder to read?
- **DO** keep your experience in chronological order with the most recent first. Employers want to know what you are doing now.
- **DO** list grades for qualifications. If you don't grade your degree, employers will assume you got a 2:2 or lower. It is not necessary to put your dates of qualifications. Due to Age Discrimination legislation you no longer have to state this.
- **DO** spell check your CV. Word contains this function for a reason. Many employers will bin your CV for errors in grammar and spelling. One simple thing – we frequently see Curriculum Vitae spelt incorrectly.
- **DO** read the application criteria. For example if you are asked to fill in an application form in black ink, do this
- **DON'T** assume your CV will suffice instead of a completed application form. Many organisations disregard applications from those who fail to complete the task.

THE LAYOUT

There are many ways to create a CV. Microsoft Word has standard templates and these are great to use.

- Don't get carried away with text boxes and graphics, these are unnecessary and detract from what you do
- Don't lay it out like a press release or magazine. It's not creative and it doesn't give you a better chance
- Photographs. The jury's out on this one although we would recommend that you don't use them. The employer will select you for your skills, not what you look like.
- Contact numbers are a must. Don't list your office number if other people are able to pick up your calls.
- Typical layout would start with your personal details, personal profile followed by qualifications and employment finishing off with IT skills.

PROFILE

Our favourite is to start your CV with a personal profile. Most people find this part the hardest as you're trying to sell yourself without sounding big headed.

All that's required is just one to two paragraphs about what you're looking to achieve in your next move and a summary about the type of person you are.

This is your chance to shine. Don't forget that a CV is a 2D piece of paper. Make yourself become 3D.

- **DO** use colourful, descriptive words.
- **DON'T** use clichés. Hardworking, dedicated and reliable should be a given. You need to do better than that.
- **DON'T** use the word "bubbly". You're not auditioning for Blind Date
- **DO** think about what your colleagues or boss might say about you, what have you got to offer?

QUALIFICATIONS

- **DO** list them in chronological order with the most recent first.
- GCSE or O Level grades aren't always required, degrees certainly are.
- **DON'T** lie. Many employers now utilise referencing companies so will find out in the end. You may also be required to provide proof of qualifications and recruitment consultancies are now required to check these when it is necessary for the job
- **DO** List professional qualifications or accreditations

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY:

This is the part that will get you an interview. After all, the employer has a requirement for specific skills, knowledge or experience. This is your chance to demonstrate you can do it.

We always recommend that you think about each position you have held in three parts.

1. What was the purpose of your job?

It's surprising how many people can't sum this up in one sentence. What were you paid to do? Was it to increase customer acquisition through direct marketing? Was it to raise community awareness through articles published in the newspaper?

If the reader doesn't understand what you were employed to do, how are they going to know how well you did it?

2. What skills did you need to fulfil that purpose?

Just because you may report into a Marketing Director, it doesn't mean that they will be reading your CV. Even if they are, don't assume they will know what you did.

Think about what you did on a daily basis. If 80% of your position was copywriting, tell them. If you coordinated all the external marketing agencies list this.

3. What did you achieve?

Everyone strives for success. What are you most proud of during your time with the company? List figures and statistics. Don't just say you contributed to sales, what percentage was this?

The more senior you are the more you will be expected to demonstrate your commerciality.

Did you win any awards? This is a great topic of conversation if you have been nominated for best marketing campaign/employee of the month tell them.

And finally.....

Hobbies and interests

Just as a jovial story forms the last article on the news bulletin, your hobbies and interests should be the literary equivalent on your CV. A little light relieve from all the detail you have provided.

It also lets the employer have a little insight into what makes you tick and that you have interests outside of work.

This one again causes much debate in our office. Some clients don't read this section whilst others dive to it first. It doesn't matter if you are into dressmaking or dog walking, charity work or cycling tell them something about you.

During our combined 30 years in recruitment we have seen our fair share of gym goers and avid readers as much as we've seen skydivers and keen cooks but it's still the honest ones we like – the telly addicts!