

How to write a knockout CV



5-7 seconds
The average time a recruiter spends looking at your CV



76%
of CVs ignored if email address is unprofessional



1
spelling or grammar mistake will result in your CV being tossed*

The Basics:

CVs should always be tailored to each specific job application but there are a few things to include as standard:

Formatting:

The most important thing is to make your CV concise and as easy for the reader to scan through as possible. Choose a clear, legible font no smaller than size 10 and make sure there's plenty of white space. It's fine to use bullet points in some areas but also demonstrate your writing and include long form text as well. Keep it to a maximum of two pages of A4 and, unless you are in a creative or design industry, photographs and graphics are unnecessary.

Personal details:

You'd be surprised how many people forget to include the basics on their CV especially when submitting them online. You don't need to include every contact detail but your name, email, main contact number and address presented clearly at the top of your CV are pretty non-negotiable.

Personal statement:

We know it's difficult to sum your professional life up in one short, punchy paragraph but remember your personal statement is a hook. With recruiters spending less than 10 seconds reading each CV you need something punchy to draw the reader in and encourage them to read further. Try not to go over the top with positive adjectives, everyone is 'hard working and enthusiastic', use clear simple language to demonstrate your top key skills and experience for this particular job.

Work experience:

Starting with your most recent experience first and working backwards include all relevant work experience with job title, name of organisation, time in post and key responsibilities for each. There is no need to include every job you've ever had going back to your paper round when you were 14 especially if you are struggling for space.

Education and Professional Qualifications:

Exactly what is included here will depend on your industry and specific job but relevant educational experience and professional qualifications should be listed here starting with the most recent. If you have more professional qualifications than work experience, for example if you are a recent graduate, you may want to put this section above work experience to draw attention to it.

Achievements:

Use this section to hone in on the exact skills and experience you have that make you the perfect fit for the particular job you are applying for. Read through the job description and pull out specific examples of achievements from your experience which fit. For example, if the job description requires someone who works well in a team use a specific example of a project you have had to work as a team on and how you overcame any challenges.

Hobbies and interests:

This is always controversial – to include hobbies and interests or not. Don't feel like you have to include them for the sake of it especially if space is tight. If you do want to include some hobbies and interests make sure they are actually interesting and relevant, if the job requires writing copy for example you could talk about the food blog you write in your spare time. This is a chance to add a bit of personality and so if you are going to include it make it interesting, instead of writing that you enjoy walking talk about how you climbed a local mountain with your dog last weekend, make it human.

*<http://theundercoverrecruiter.com/infographic-recruiters-spend-5-7-seconds-reading-your-cv/>

For more specific help on writing your CV get in touch with our specialists:

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