



Your search for a new job will involve several steps and any one of them can be a potential stumbling block. We've prepared an essential guide to help you through the vital stages of job hunting. So, if you want a great CV – read on.

This could be a life changing opportunity for you and good preparation is essential. Here's our guide to help you make the most of your chances.

Until you get to the interview stage in your job search, you are only as good as your paperwork. This makes your CV and covering letter crucial. They are essentials in most job markets. Like any marketing document a CV should help you sell yourself.

Here's our Top Ten Tips for a Killer CV

1. Keep it simple

A CV is nothing more than a shorthand sketch of your academic and professional history. Use it to draw attention to your strengths without cramming in too much irrelevance. You can always explain to an employer the intricacies once they invite you for an interview. Include a profile at the top of the CV. This should be a very general summary of your skills, experience and attributes. Call us for some examples.

2. Lead with achievements

Make frequent use of active verbs, such as ***achieved, set up, managed, attained, responsible for, led***. Use bullet points to emphasise the key successes in your life. Don't write lengths of prose for job descriptions.

3. List your career work in reverse, chronologically

Start with your current employment and work backwards, remembering to include the name and country of your employer, start and end dates, your job title and a brief description, plus your accomplishments. If you are looking for your first job, list any RELEVANT work experience first, paid or unpaid.

4. Tailor your CV to the individual company

Employers can spot a mass mailing a mile off. So if you are applying for a job in Information Technology make sure that aspect of all your jobs is emphasised.

5. Be honest

Lying on your CV is a waste of your time and that of your prospective employer. Adding six months to your time in a job can seem like a good idea, but if you are caught out you will have lost the job for sure. But don't sell yourself short. If you think the three summers you spent working for a charity in France shows your knowledge of the country and its culture - then say so.

6. Education

Give equal attention to achievements while at University - but not if you have been in the job market for more than two years. Captain of the debating team, student union rep, set designer for the university play all show you to be enthusiastic, a self-starter and full of initiative.

7. Don't overcrowd your CV

Try to keep it to 2/3 pages with a separate sheet for references. If it doesn't all fit, don't keep reducing the font size until it does. If your prospective employer has to work hard to read your CV, they will quickly lose interest. If you are one of many applicants, an employer may short-list candidates just from an initial 'glance' over the CVs. So keep it simple, but relevant.

8. Spelling

Typos and grammatical errors mean your CV goes straight in the bin. No employer will want to hire someone who can't be bothered to check their own work. Don't rely on the spell check to pick up any mistakes, read it over thoroughly.

9. Two pairs of eyes

A fresh eye is useful to spot mistakes or offer suggestions. Once you've read your CV three or four times, it's difficult to stand back and look at it objectively. Never try and finish your CV in one sitting - always go back to it after a couple of days. And remember, the employer is almost certainly going to receive a lot of CVs. Imagine yourself as that employer reading your CV. How does yours read?

10. References

Check with referees before you use their names. There's nothing worse than using someone who has either moved on or holds a grudge against you. The best people to use for references are your current employer or a professor or teacher at your college/university - someone who knows how you react in a working environment. Your referees should also be people that you can rely on to respond to the employer promptly. Remember, your success in securing the job may depend on satisfactory references being received by a certain deadline. Don't let someone else ruin your opportunities.

If your CV does its job, you'll need to prepare for the interview. Refer to our Interview Hints & Tips Document for advice on interview techniques.