

Top Tips for a Successful CV

Don't use a standard computer CV template Many templates are American in style, lack originality and employers can spot them a mile off! Take the time and trouble to create your own CV, keep it up-to-date and have it ready to use for when you need to send it off quickly.

Research the job role Find out as much as you can about the organisation and the job role before you send your CV. Note any specific qualifications, skills or experience required. Unless they are essential to the job, don't be put off applying.

Adapt your CV to a specific job You may need to modify your CV to a specific job so that the employer can match your skills and experience to the job advertised. Before you write your CV, take a good look at the job advert, and highlight your relevant key skills, knowledge and experience.

Structure your CV so it is clear An employer will initially scan a CV and will want to pick out relevant skills and experience. Make sure your content is clearly divided under the following headings: Personal details, Personal profile, Key skills, Employment history, Professional qualifications, Education and qualifications, Hobbies and interests and References.

Make your CV stand out There is no set format for a CV, however an employer will be looking for a CV that is well laid out, easy to read, has clear and complete information and grabs their attention. A CV should be in font size 10-12 and in the same typeface throughout and has no more than 3 A4 pages. Use bold to highlight headings and print it on nice quality paper.

Use accurate and positive phrases and words It is important to think about how you will phrase the content of your CV. Words should be strong, positive and uplifting ensuring that all content is honest and interesting. Try to avoid repeating phrases such as 'I did this' and 'I used to be'.

Sell your skills and achievements Differentiate yourself from the competition by focusing on your skills and achievements. Highlight the ones you are particularly good at and explain how you have used them, and if possible include evidence.

Check your presentation and layout First impressions count so it is vital that you check your CV before you send it out. As well as checking your spelling and grammar, make sure that your contact details are correct, that it flows and there are no odd or unexplained gaps in your employment history, and also that it makes sense and is easy to read.

Make sure you get it right. Your CV is a marketing tool selling you! Spend as much time as you can to get your CV right, it might take a couple of attempts until you are completely happy with it. Even when you have finished your CV, put it to one side and come back to it, read it through very carefully one last time.