

Getting the Most From Your CV

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There is a tremendous amount of pressure placed on this single sheet of paper that can affect how quickly you begin your profession. Most residents become extremely anxious and nervous when thinking about writing a professional CV. Instead of being intimidated by a blank sheet of paper, a CV should be envisioned as a marketing tool to promote yourself. With the power of words, you can shape and create how others will perceive you, your professional abilities and your work ethic.

Overall, a CV is a way to present relevant facts about yourself in an easy to read format for potential employers. The purpose of a CV is not to get a job; instead it is intended to draw interest and invoke curiosity in you and your abilities, and to schedule a meeting. This all important first impression should be prepared with the greatest detail and consideration. At this point in your career, you are most likely aware of the primary information that should appear in a CV, and have completed a basic draft. Let's discuss some tips to better your CV.



Many websites provide free CV templates, but these should generally be avoided. These pre-formatted CVs should only be used for informational and illustrative purposes, rather than to copy and paste personal information into one. Templates typically appear bland, perhaps sending an impression to a reader that a candidate is average or possibly even lacking motivation. Use these free templates to build upon and to collect ideas. Aim to be original by adding personality to your CV. Keep in mind that free CV templates are free for a reason.

There is a myth that CVs should be one page with no exceptions. This, however, is only a myth, as CVs come in all shapes and sizes, depending on one's education and personal and professional experiences. However, the first page of the document will receive the most attention, so carefully select what you would like to appear on page one. It is a good idea to keep a CV brief and relevant; some sources recommend a three page maximum. If you believe three pages is not enough space for your most important information, consider including some of the information in a wellwritten cover letter.

Make sure all information is clearly presented and well-structured rather than a simple bullet point list. Throughout the CV, impress the reader by appearing professional and energetic, and by demonstrating excellent communication skills. Express past experiences, skills, knowledge and potential in a logically outlined manner. Arrange experiences in chronological order (beginning with the most recent) under each heading/section. Any significant gaps in a CV can trigger speculation that you may be hiding something from a potential employer or had a lull in your career.

The overall layout and design of your CV should be given considerable attention. Once all the personal information is organized on the page, take a moment to ensure the layout is visually appealing and the information is organized and easy to read. Including headings with logical section and page breaks will insure that the

information does not appear cluttered or disorganized, which can reflect on you. Take notice in setting all margins at approximately one inch; smaller margins tend to make the document look overloaded and unprofessional. Using only one font throughout the entire document can boost the readability rate for the document. Times New Roman, font size between 10 and 12 points, is highly suggested because it appears professional and has a high readability rate. Using all caps, all italics or all bold letters within the document, are particular elements that can cause the document readability to decrease; use them sparingly if needed. Other elements to generally avoid include unnecessary lines, borders or text boxes; they can become overwhelming or distracting to the reader.

Some residents choose to include a photograph of themselves on their CV. Whether or not to include a photograph is completely up to you because there is no set rule suggesting that it is required or prohibited. There are a few straightforward rules to follow if one chooses to include a photograph. Be sure the photograph is cropped symmetrically, is of high quality and is not grainy. Do not stretch the photograph in an attempt to force it onto the document, as disrupting the dimensions and resizing it can distort the image.

The last steps in completing a well-written CV are to carefully review and proofread the document, being sure to run the standard spell and grammar checks (nearly all standard Word-like programs offer these functions). It is not guaranteed that your computer will find all your mistakes, so read over it several times. It is generally helpful to write the document and then to wait several days to proofread after it is no longer fresh in your mind. This process will help reveal many unnoticed errors. Allow friends and partners to proofread your CV; they may easily catch an error that was overlooked. Ask for their feedback or ways to improve your CV.

This all-important first impression should not be a difficult task. With a little planning and motivation your CV will land the position you have always wanted. Mold your CV based on your experiences and education while allowing your personality to flow into the document. A CV with character and charm is more appealing than a boring and bland CV. Knowing the tricks of the trade will help you create a winning CV and will allow you to get the most out of the document.

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