

How to write a CV that gets you to interview

Your CV or curriculum vitae is the one vital 'must-have' weapon in every job hunter's armoury.

IDEALLY if you can fit your career history, education and achievements onto one side of an A4 sheet of paper it will endear you to the recipient. If it looks cramped, then spread to two pages – in which case stapling them together is a good move: to neglect this simple task is to run the risk of those precious pages becoming separated and lost. Albert Einstein may never have applied for a sales job but if he had, a professional sales recruitment company would most certainly have advised him to edit even that most glittering of CVs down to two pages – before stapling it.

If you are coming at this anew it won't hurt to take a peek at someone else's CV before you begin. Most of them nowadays follow a standard layout and this is something that Human Resource departments are accustomed to running through. So why try to re-invent the wheel? This 'traditional' approach of neat headings and compact information is expected – and it works, universally.

Start off at the top of the page

with your name, address and contact details. This will include your full name and address, 'title', telephone details (including a mobile number if you are likely to be difficult to track down in a working day) as well as a postal and email address if you have one.

Then type in the heading CURRICULUM VITAE – which is worth underlining or putting in the bold version of the typeface you have decided to use.

Follow this with a personal profile including a summary of your skills, experience to date as well as your career aims: and try to keep the recipient organization and its field of operation in focus as you construct those important few words about your goals.

Then list your career history – in reverse date order over the past 10 years – with brief descriptions of responsibilities and achievements

In date order include your education, training and achievements, clearly and prominently so that the prospective employer doesn't have to hunt back and forth. And

do remember to keep your CV as up-to-date as possible.

Finally you may wish to list those of your 'interests', which will be of interest to a would-be employer. You should certainly list them if they are relevant to the application. Just be mindful of the fact that 'watching television and reading' are things which occupy part of the leisure time of many of us and may well prompt further questions at interview: but don't confuse a string of pastimes with a list of interests – because interests will serve you better if they also give the reader some insight into your character and the type of person you are.

Conclude with references – remembering that what you say on your CV will be used as the main source for the subsequent question and answer session at a resulting interview. So make sure that what you write is in all respects honest and truthful.

Make sure you follow the instructions on the job advertisement – and get it in on time. If you have been sent to interview as a potential placement by a sales recruitment business, be sure to touch base with them on your return – win or lose.