

Successful CV writing

Key points to remember

- ✓ Remember the CV is to secure an interview, not to list everything you've ever done
- ✓ The appearance should be easy on the eye, put yourself in the readers position
- ✓ The right information, in the right quantity, in the right place
- ✓ A personal profile/ summary should pack a punch (relate it to the application)

Appearance

- Remember to check how it looks in printed version as well as on PC
- Use white space to make it easy for the reader to digest
- Make the text easy to follow, avoid long sentences/paragraphs/narrative
- Be cautious with creativity, make sure it stands out for the right reasons!

The right information, in the right quantity, in the right place

- Page 1 is essential to draw in the reader – make sure the key information features prominently
- Allocate detail to the role(s) most relevant to your application
- Avoid needless repetition
- Contextualise your roles if possible (e.g. scale of business operations, nature of industry)
- Show your contribution - achievements/facts/figures/tangible outcomes
- Include relevant information – education, qualifications, recognition, awards, promotions

Optional choices

- Personal interests, but keep it refined
- Explain significant gaps or reasons for leaving if you feel it could be detrimental not to do so
- Use a skills/experience based format rather than chronological (often better for interims)
- Written in third person (recommended)

Our recommended Do's and Don'ts

<u>DO</u>	<u>DON'T</u>
Spell check AND read it manually	Forget to add contact details
Ask someone to read it too	Make it stand out for the wrong reason
Make the 1 st page count	Write a novel
Give detail according to relevance	Duplicate experience unnecessarily
Show tangible/quantifiable results	Refer to skills too generally
Provide context	Give inappropriate corporate information

Advice for a successful interview

Five key areas to consider:

- ✓ *Preparation*
- ✓ *Striking rapport*
- ✓ *Listening to the questions & giving concise answers*
- ✓ *Demonstrating your value to the business*
- ✓ *Showing an interest*

Preparation: It's important to get a sense for a company's mission/strategic objectives, organisational priorities, and performance, both for you to know what you're getting into as well as helping you to present your answers in the best context. Keeping an eye out for organisational changes, business results and the markets in which they operate could give you a competitive advantage at the interview. Areas to explore:

- Company website (career site, media, mission, values, financial reports etc)
- Business/broadsheet media
- Personal contacts – previous or current employees

Striking rapport: First impressions and your ability to engage with the interviewers is critical. Technical expertise will get you so far, whereas organisational fit could be what drives the final decision. So, the personal connection could help swing things your way. Try to:

- Be positive to everyone you encounter, you don't know who may be asked for an opinion
- Make some general small talk when arriving at the interview to keep it light
- Make regular eye contact with all interviewers, not just the person asking the question
- Remember to sound enthusiastic and upbeat where appropriate – even if you're bored by what you're saying because you've heard it all before!
- Try to find out about them/their opinions or challenges if the chance arises, what attracted them to the company, about the company performance

Competency Based Interview

- Plan multiple examples of skills ensuring you're not repeating the same example as far as possible, try to use a person specification to identify likely competencies
- Rehearse (STAR) to keep your answer concise, specific, and ticking each STAR box
- Don't be afraid to check if you've answered to the interviewers' satisfaction

Answer the question

- Answer the question you've been asked, not the one you wanted to hear
- Don't be afraid to ask for clarification before answering the question
- If you've been talking for a long time without the interviewer speaking....it's time to make your point asap!

General pointers

- Evidence & outcome is more powerful than general commentary of your skills
- 'I' not 'we'
- Show the business reason behind your action, and the business outcome because of it
- Avoid jargon or technical terminology if speaking to non-technical people

Using Networks

LinkedIn

- Your profile – make it visible and attractive to the desired audience
- Building your network – connect to people you know, have been referred to, or see mutual value
- Applying for jobs – make yourself stand out, ask for a referral if you know someone at the company
- Join relevant groups – a source of jobs, insight and the chance to raise your profile
- Finding information - get useful contact names, get background information on people at companies you're applying for, how to use the search tools/ways round it
- Raise your profile – write insightful comments, articles, share items you like

Your current contacts

- Don't be shy to ask for help, a direct route into a business can be the most effective

Events/forums

- Plug in to opportunities for free networking or training events

Recruitment Consultants

- Use them as a source of insight, information and expertise
- Understand how they work and what to expect from them
- Build rapport – if they like working with you, and rate you it'll enhance your chances
- Think things through properly before entering a process, don't feel pressured into anything
- Know when & what to tell!

Some selected useful articles:

<https://business.linkedin.com/en-uk/marketing-solutions/blog/posts/content-marketing/2017/17-steps-to-a-better-LinkedIn-profile-in-2017>

<https://www.totaljobs.com/advice/how-to-handle-competency-based-interview-questions#star-interview-technique>

<https://www.interviewgold.com/advice/competency-based-interview-questions-and-answers/>

<https://www.cv-library.co.uk/career-advice/cv/how-to-write-a-cv-tips/>