

Writing a CV that sells

More often than not, people write their CV as a statement of fact – a bland synopsis of their career that provides no real insight to the person that it represents.

Don't be mistaken, we are not advocating putting anything but facts on your CV, but we want to provide some advice as to how your CV can sell you in general, and specifically in relation to the job that you are applying for.

Your “Shop Window”

Retailers frequently change their shop windows to reflect many factors – from the season or time of year to a particular sale that they are promoting. They use their shop window to showcase their wares and to attract customers through their doors.

Your CV is your shop window – it is your opportunity to display your wares to potential employers.

Just like customers on the high street, employers have differing requirements depending on the role they are recruiting for at any particular time. Just like the savvy retailer then, you should be able to adapt your CV to meet those differing requirements. This is how you do it:

Step 1: Keep it simple

If you assume that the person reading your CV has 200 other CV's to read that morning, has a to-do list as long as your arm and hasn't got time to delve into great detail to ascertain your suitability for the position in question, then you won't go far wrong.

In fact, we take it one step further and tell Jobseekers to assume that the person reading your CV knows little about very much at all. Once you have made this assumption, you realise the importance of spoon feeding information to the reader (Step 3).

Step 2: Build some lists

In order to quickly tailor your CV to the requirements of the job that you are applying for, you need to build comprehensive lists of your responsibilities and your achievements in each of the positions you have worked in.

Start by writing a bullet pointed list of your key job responsibilities as if you were writing your own job description. Then move on to a list of everything that you have achieved in that role. Make sure you use statistics where possible in your achievements – employers love statistics!!

In general we think that these lists should begin with an impactful verb – but without the subjective pronoun (don't worry, we had to look it up too!!). What we mean by that is that each bullet point should start with a verb (Responsible for, Managed, Lead, Delivered etc.) but don't use the prefix “I”.

Once you have built these lists, you are now in a position to start spoon feeding.

Step 3: Spoon Feeding

Remembering the premise that we want to keep things simple, you can now start spoon feeding information:

Employer information: For each of your employers, both current and past, you *must* assume that the reader has never heard of the company. Provide a very concise synopsis of the company, their size and what they do. Whilst this may appear obvious for well known companies, it is essential for smaller businesses and providing this information consistently across your CV is deemed best practice.

Responsibilities and Achievements: From your list of responsibilities created in Step 2, select the most relevant responsibilities in relation to the requirements outlined in the advertisement. Ditto for your achievements. Some employers will provide a detailed Person Specification prior to your application, either in the advertisement or on their website. This provides you with ample opportunity to match your experience to their requirements.

Step 4: Write the Summary Last

Love 'em or hate 'em, everyone uses Personal Statements nowadays – we always question how much value they really add as they are ultra subjective. If you are going to use one, write it for the specific job you are applying for by summarising the critical bullet points from the lists you have created in Step 2. Don't worry about being too salesy – it is a sales document after all!

Step 5: Your Covering Letter

In our experience, hiring managers only read the covering letters that accompany the CV's they like. If you assume this to be the case then you will see how important it is that this document is tailored specifically to the position you are applying for at that point in time – there is nothing more off putting than reading a covering letter that isn't meant for you, and you would be surprised by how often we receive covering letters actually addressed to other people and dated some weeks previous to the current application. Lazy, lazy, lazy.

Use your covering letter to tell the reader why you are suitable for the role (again, cherry pick your most relevant responsibilities and achievements) and don't be afraid to list them in the letter. We also believe that you should be as upbeat as you believe you can be whilst still being yourself – we love getting covering letters written for a specific role that say how excited the applicant is by the opportunity.

That's it!

Please feel free you copy and paste the template below – and email the finished product to us for our input. It's all part of the service!!

CV Template:

Name

Personal Details

Address h) 0123 456 789
 Address w) 0198 765 432
 Address m) 07712 345 678
 Address
 Address email: name@domain.co.uk

Personal Statement

A short, snappy summary of suitability for the role in question based on bullet points below. Keep as factual as possible and try not to base it on your opinion of yourself. 3 to 4 lines maximum.

Career History

Date – Date **COMPANY NAME A**

In no more than two lines, provide a brief overview of the company – regardless of how well known it is. Keep it punchy and concise.

Date – Date **Job Title 1**

- Responsibilities:
- Key Purpose of role – Don't use the pronoun "I" – start each bullet with a verb i.e. Responsible, Managed, Lead, Delivered, etc. Provide metrics on size of operations etc.
 - Responsibility 1
 - Responsibility 2
 - Responsibility 3
- Achievements:
- Achievement 1 – Again start with an impactful verb – i.e. Achieved, Delivered, Transformed etc. Use statistics to support statements i.e. Reduced attrition by 37% in 12 months through the implementation of an employee incentive scheme
 - Achievement 2
 - Achievement 3
 - Achievement 4

Date – Date **Job Title 2**

- Responsibilities:
- Key Purpose of role
 - Responsibility 1
 - Responsibility 2
 - Responsibility 3

- Achievements:
- Achievement 1
 - Achievement 2
 - Achievement 3
 - Achievement 4

Date – Date **COMPANY NAME B**

In no more than two lines, provide a brief overview of the company – regardless of how well known it is. Keep it punchy.

Date – Date **Job Title 1**

- Responsibilities:
- Key Purpose of role
 - Responsibility 1
 - Responsibility 2
- Achievements:
- Achievement 1
 - Achievement 2
 - Achievement 3

Date – Date **Job Title 2**

- Responsibilities:
- Key Purpose of role
 - Responsibility 1
 - Responsibility 2
- Achievements:
- Achievement 1
 - Achievement 2
 - Achievement 3

Date – Date **COMPANY NAME C**

In no more than two lines, provide a brief overview of the company – regardless of how well known it is. Keep it punchy.

Date – Date **Job Title 1**

- Responsibilities:
- Key Purpose of role
 - Responsibility 1
 - Responsibility 2
- Achievements:
- Achievement 1
 - Achievement 2
 - Achievement 3

Date – Date **Job Title 2**

- Responsibilities:
- Key Purpose of role
 - Responsibility 1
 - Responsibility 2

- Achievements:
- Achievement 1
 - Achievement 2
 - Achievement 3

Qualifications

Date	Establishment / Body	Name of Qualification
Date	Establishment / Body	Name of Qualification
Date	Establishment / Body	Name of Qualification