Creating an effective CV

What is a CV?

Why do I need one?

'CV' is short for Curriculum Vitae, Latin for "story of Life" but an effective CV doesn't tell the story of your life, it documents your work related skills and experience.

It should list your work experience, training or education with dates, & highlight your relevant skills & experiences but there is no such thing as a 'one size fits all' CV. You should be prepared to make changes for different types of jobs. By looking at the job description you can tailor your CV to demonstrate how you meet the requirements & show that you have what the employer wants.

A up to date CV is important when looking for work to present yourself to an employer & CVs are still widely used especially where recruitment is via an agency but many employers will ask you to complete an application form instead. Having an up to date CV to copy from makes it much easier to transfer dates and details correctly .

A good CV should be clear, accurate, well presented, and easy to read to give you the best chance to stand out.

Having an up to date CV means you are ready if an opportunity comes up. You can take your CV to interviews to make sure the panel can check your details & you can use your CV when you are preparing for interviews too.

There are different opinions about the best way to create a CV but here are some basic guidelines

> Use plain white paper, typewritten with one simple typeface throughout to make sure it's easy to read.

> Only use bold print or underlines on headings and titles to make highlight different sections.

> Be realistic and sell your skills without making things up. It is never worth the risk!

> Be prepared to revise your CV for different jobs you apply or have different versions for different job roles

> Use bullets points to create brief concise sentences that define your skills and experience clearly

> Spell check your CV and double check the details. Ask others to read it & tell you what they think & consider what advice to take.

CV Do's

CV Dont's

> Don't create a CV that is more than two pages long – it is less likely an employer will read it all

> Don't type big blocks of text that look long and difficult to read: use paragraphs and bullet points for easy reading.

> Don't use vague and general terms to describe your experience, such as 'good team worker' without some context or example

> Don't include detailed information that has no relevance to work or the job you are going for.

> Don't present a scruffy CV or email without a polite note to say why you are sending it. Make a good first impression.

> Don't use colored or fancy paper or different font sizes, typefaces & borders that only add unnecessary decorations.

CVs should be clear & precise, show the facts about your experience with 'quantifiable' or measurable information.

A quantifiable skill is one that can be measured using a number, or a date or with an example of a specific experience. By providing accuracy & detail to back up your information, skills and experience you are giving an employer more confidence that what you are saying is accurate.

For example "I have an excellent record of attendance" is not a quantified skill. You might think 75% of attendance is excellent, while the employer might not agree with you.

Quantifiable examples
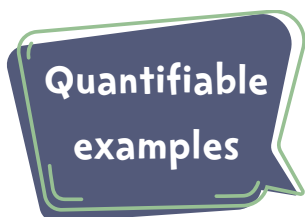
> Instead of just saying. 'Good Customer service' you could say, 'Excellent customer service skills developed through my two years experience in customer facing roles.'

> Instead of just saying , 'Quick learner', you could say, 'I am a quick learner; in my volunteer position I became fully competent in the use of their computer system within my first two weeks.'

> Instead of just saying, 'Team work skills', you could say, 'Good team working skills gained from Tesco job I was working as part of a team. We worked flexibly together, helping each other with tasks when we had finished our own

Make sure your dates are correct & include the month & year for accuracy.

Including the month & year makes it clearer how long you were at the job or placement

Customer Assistant
Apr 2022 to Mar 2023: Tesco, Hackney

Customer Assistant
2022 to 2023: Tesco

Contact us

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