Secrets of a successful CV

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Starting with the obvious

- Tell the truth

- Adapt your generic CV to each vacancy you apply for – they are playing 'SNAP'

- Make sure all of your dates are correct

- Work out what qualifications/experience and skills you have that are relevant to the role

Length

- Keep your CV to between 1 and 3 pages and paragraphs to a maximum of 6 lines

- Maximum of 8 bullet points per job with bullets no more than 1 or 2 sentences

What not to include:

- Any negatives or anything critical
- Poor grades
- Full Address
- Date of birth
- References unless requested
- Photograph
- Marital status or number of children – a CV is a business document
- Political affiliations
- Salary
- Reasons for leaving

Formatting

- Do not use all caps

- Use bold and italics sparingly only for emphasis and easy navigation

- Do not use underlining

- Do not use complex/clever formatting

- No PDF's – Format your CV in word 97 – 2003

Structure

This will differ depending on where you are in your career and the type of work you are looking for

- Personal details – name/address/contact details
- Profile
- Employment – reverse chronological order
- Education & Qualifications
- Additional Information – professional training/achievements
- IT/Languages
- Interests

WOW Factor Profiles

When an recruitment agent or an employer reads your profile the reaction you want is:

'WOW this person looks perfect!'

- What are you
- Your Primary skills
- Name drop companies, industries, IT systems, qualifications etc
- Adapt your profile for every application to optimise your chances of getting an interview
- Avoid the 1st or 3rd person

Career History

- Employment – reverse chronological order
- Bold type your job title – don't use job title jargon
- Expertise – list the skills you have that **match** the vacancy you are applying for
- Achievements – backs up expertise and shows you can 'add value' – don't just list your duties
- Career History – Not work experience unless whilst studying

Education

- Don't include poor grades
- Include honours if awarded
- Give more detail on higher qualifications such as degrees and masters
- If you do not have a degree/A'levels or GCSE's include training such as seminars, night school, workshops
- If you have nothing to detail on qualifications then focus on the other sections of your CV highlighting your experience and skills and consider a school or college course that fits in with your work life

Additional Information

- Memberships of professional bodies/clubs or societies
- Awards

IT / Language Skills

- Languages – mother tongue/fluent/conversational/written/basic

- IT/software skills – MS Word/MS Excel/MS PowerPoint/ Databases – Advanced/Intermediate/Basic

Interests

Do I really need to list them?

Any Questions ?

Surviving the 'at a glance' filtering process

Understanding the process

- 100's of CV's per vacancy

- First screens are usually undertaken by Junior Staff – looking for 'Matches' – 'Snap'

- 70% of CV's are eliminated through the first 3 scanning exercises

- Always submit a CV adapted specifically for each role

Stage 1 – surviving the 10 second speed glance

- Any CV over 3 pages - will normally be rejected

- CV's not containing a profile - will normally be rejected

- Annoying or hard to read CV's - will be rejected

- CV's containing jargon irrelevant to the vacancy – will be rejected

Stage 2 – Surviving the first page 15 second glance

- The Screener will be looking for information that is specific and relevant to the vacancy

- Mirror language in the job description

- Don't use job title jargon

- Clearly highlight skills and achievements

Stage 3 – Short-listing for the Interview

At this stage the objective has changed from an exercise in elimination to searching for highly relevant matches.

Focusing on 2 things:

- What achievements/skills can the candidate demonstrate that are important to the role

- What makes the candidate stand out from the rest

Any Questions ?