

How to improve your C.V.

The aim of the C.V. is to position you in such a manner that you will secure the all-important interview, setting you on the road to success in your job application. While there are many different formats candidates can employ, there are simple strategies candidates can make use of to improve the quality of what is essentially a marketing document.

Scrutinize your Spelling

First and foremost, ensure that your document is free from grammatical errors. There is nothing worse than a senior IT professional producing a document that indicates they can't even spell the technologies they are meant to be experts in. Grammatical and spelling errors demonstrate a lack of attention to detail so be sure to carefully review your document or ask a friend to proof-read it for you if you don't have an eye for detail.

Appearance Matters

As many employers can receive hundreds of C.V.s, it's important to make yours as reader friendly and visually appealing as possible. There are several do's and don'ts when it comes to the layout and the formatting of C.V.s.

Do

- Type it on A4 white paper and use black ink
- Use basic fonts such as Arial or Times New Roman
- Employ bullet points when appropriate
- Use bold headings can attract attention

Don't

- Use fancy fonts, typefaces or backgrounds
- Clutter the C.V., use spaces to avoid this

Target the Position you are applying for

Be sure that your C.V. is formulated in such a manner that it tailors to the specific position as well as the prospective employer. This can be accomplished by scrutinising the job description and researching the organisation to best understand their culture and values.

Effective means of customizing your C.V. are:

- Apply job descriptions that correspond to the positions you are applying for so that if a prospective employer just skims your C.V., these titles will attract their attention.
- Make use of keywords which again are relevant to the type of type of jobs you wish to secure. This is vital in the IT industry as many employers search for very specific technological capabilities. Furthermore, it's important to note that even if you aren't successful in your application, your C.V. will be saved on the database and if a different, similar position arises requiring the same core skills, your C.V. will appear a match.

- To appeal to specific organisations, aim to cater your personal qualities (e.g. interests) to the culture of the organisation in order to demonstrate that should you be successful, you would be a seamless fit.

Sell yourself through your career history

Firstly, it is advisable for this to be written in reverse chronological order rather than using a functional format. For each position, be sure to include what company you worked for, the position you held and the length of service held. Outline all the projects you worked on (include technical along with commercial details), illustrate how you contributed and the commercial value added as a result.

Furthermore, to market yourself effectively, you should start each sentence with sentence with a dynamic verb and employ strong adverbs when outlining your contribution to projects e.g. 'I successfully implemented a new strategy'.

Finally, it is important to avoid gaps in your career history as it can make employers suspicious, so always account for exactly what you were doing even if it was job-seeking.

Interests

It is best to include only genuine interests and try to keep them to a maximum of three. Your interests can be a means of demonstrating how you would be a fit for the organisation and position you hope to secure. An example of this would be including captain of local football team as an interest if you are applying to a manager type role in an organisation who place emphasis on teamwork as this indicates you possess both the necessary leadership and teamwork qualities.