

## CV WRITING GUIDE

Presenting a professional and relevant CV to a prospective employer is the starting point of your next career move. Time should be allocated to ensure you stand out from the crowd and determine that you secure a first interview, the first step towards your next career move. Prosperous opportunities are infrequent, so it's important to get it right first time.

Managers and Directors have limited time to read through the minor details on a CV and often take an overview. It is vital to make your CV relevant to the role you are applying for, with the required key skills, experience, qualifications and attributes highly visible.

Heidi Wright Recruitment will work with you to ensure your CV is ready to present and ultimately secure you that first interview. We believe that it is also vital that your individual style and personality comes across, making your CV unique and ensuring it truly represents you – it should not be a 'one style fits all', Please find below a guide to get you started.

### Layout & Styling

- Less is more – professional, attractive layout, using the same font throughout.
- Headings, underlining, spacing and bullet points – NO fancy borders, photos or colourful text
- Your current job title, employer, core responsibilities, and in most cases relevant qualifications (such as ACA, ACCA, CIMA) are the most important details to a potential employer and should be visual as soon as possible in your CV.
- State job title, start & finish dates (month + year) and employer name. Followed with 5-10 bullet points of your key responsibilities.
- Achievements, special projects and secondments can add great richness to your CV. You work hard to get these results, so talk about them. Again, keep it concise and where possible back up each point with numerical evidence, such as "Negotiated the utilities and rental contracts in 2017, resulting in an overall saving of £126,000".
- TIP: The upper middle area on the front page is often referred to as the CV hotspot and a natural point that the readers eye goes to first – useful to remember for key information and a suggested area for the personal profile which will summarise your experience for the role.

### Length of CV

- It is often advised to keep it to two pages, which is entirely feasible for a graduate but more challenging for someone 10-15 years into their career. Most importantly the priority is to concentrate on relevant, clear and concise information. Ideally aiming for 2-3 pages, but do not fear if slightly longer.

### Personalisation

- Many struggle with the idea of writing a personal profile, this however is key information for the reader and a perfect opportunity to summarise why you should be on their shortlist.
- Keep your profile short and concise, include relevant skills, experience, qualifications, and attributes sought by the recruiter. It should be 3-4 lines long, written in the third person and be located at the top of page 1, just below your name and personal details (the CV Hotspot).

### Wording

- Be honest: CVs are not legal documents, and you can't be held liable for anything within, but if a recruiter picks up on false information you will be rapidly rejected.
- The clues are in the job description, so carefully read through the full document, working out what qualifications, experience and skills are required for the role you are considering (highlight/underline the key words) and think of what you have done that match these.
- Every CV you send to a potential employer should be tailored to the role. Don't assume a generic CV will work. It is advisable to use and reflect the same language the recruiter uses in their advert/job description. This will immediately grab their attention and give them confidence you are a strong contender for the role, offering you an interview.
- Be specific and provide details and evidence to justify your claims.
- Write your CV in third person and use the past tense when describing your career 'Analysed weekly KPI's...' but present tense when highlighting your key attributes and skills 'offers experience in a variety of ...'

- Use assertive and positive language, these can be referred to as 'action verbs' and should be used throughout your CV, particularly to promote your achievements as they help make a strong impression. Examples include "developed", "achieved" and "organised"
- Sector specifics: each industry is individual when it comes to IT systems, relevant legislations and reporting standards. If you have worked within the sector previously it is crucial to highlight your knowledge in your CV.
- Ensure you have no unexplained gaps in dates. If this is due to a period of travel or relocation, then include a line stating this.
- TIP: See the list of action verbs provided on the resources page of our website.

## Professional Qualifications/Education

- If applying for a role, specifically stating a formal qualification/degree, for example 'must be fully CCAB qualified, ACA, ACCA or CIMA', then evidence of this on the front page of your CV is important.
- When demonstrating academic qualification, university/college/school, they should be in order of most recent at the top and clearly state the name of the institute, date achieved and grades as relevant.
- Outstanding academic achievements: first time passes, Institute awards, first class honours degree – what's not to like, these are a must see.
- Likewise recent and relevant training courses should be included.

## Information Technology

- All accountancy roles involve using accounts software packages and Microsoft Excel. Although often people fail to mention either on their CV. With so many different software packages available, we recommend these are stated in your CV, under the heading IT, following Career History.
- TIP: If you are an Advanced user of Microsoft Excel, provide details of the functions you use regularly and effectively, i.e. Macros, V look ups.
- Find out which system the company use that your applying to and if you have used it, ensure this is highlighted in your CV.

## References

- Two x referee names, addresses, emails and telephone numbers can take up valuable space. Such detail is not required until offer letter stage, so if anything, we recommend writing 'References – available upon request' at the bottom of your CV. This also ensures you are in control and informing your current employer and they are not contacted directly without you being informed.

## Proof reading

- There is no excuse nowadays for poor grammar or spelling mistakes – your computer will do this for you.
- Check and have it double checked – Heidi Wright Recruitment are here to assist with all aspects of your CV document, providing constructive feedback and advice.

## Keep your CV updated

- It is recommended that you review and update your CV on a regular basis, regardless of whether you are applying for a new role. This will ensure you don't miss important information, dates, specific achievements, and projects you accomplished. Often a role will arise when you're least expecting so don't get caught out, miss an application deadline or feel compromised in rushing together an average CV, then later questioning why you didn't get invited to interview.
- TIP: Keep your CV document accessible on your desktop and regularly review and question any skill gaps. What would you like to see listed in your recent achievements? .....set yourself personal goals then add them to your CV once done.