

## How to prepare an interview winning CV

With the average number of applications for advertised jobs still on the increase, the competition to achieve an interview is greater than ever. In order to stand out from the crowd and obtain those all important interviews you need a compelling CV. Remember: **this is your first opportunity to create a really great impression.**

At Sandringham Wood we're happy to assist you in producing or refining your CV and can provide a template for you to work from. However, the following tips should help you...

### CV purpose

Your CV is there to provide a 'snapshot' of your career to date, to help employers determine whether or not they wish to interview you. The two key points to remember are:

1. By providing basic, factual information such as educational and professional qualifications, as well as a detailed employment history, you demonstrate your ability to perform the role for which you are applying.
2. By highlighting your past successes and professional achievements you help employers to gauge your future potential in terms of career development, promotion opportunities etc.

The aim of your CV is to get an interview for the specific position you are applying for. You may, therefore, need different versions tailored to particular types of roles. **Don't assume 'one size fits all'!**

### Overall CV presentation

- Your CV should be approximately one to three pages long. Anything shorter than a page will not provide enough information for a potential employer to make a decision on your suitability for the role. Any longer than three and you risk 'information overload', which could mean vital bits of information get missed.
- The layout should be simple, and consistent throughout.
- Nowadays more CVs than ever before tend to be forwarded via email so presentation is key. Ensure your CV is as easy to read electronically as it is on paper. Always prepare your CV in a word processing package as opposed to anything else.
- Compile a profile on yourself that will attract the reader's attention straightaway and highlight all your achievements and successes on the first page. Put your name on the first page but other contact details are best left to end of the CV. It's the profile that 'sells' you - not your address or telephone numbers!
- Within your career history information detail in your own words what you've actually done in your recent roles, along with any key achievements. **Don't just paste in a copy of your job description.**

## Structuring your CV

Ideally, your CV should be broadly structured as follows:

### Name

### Profile

This is designed to attract the reader's attention. It should be a concise summary highlighting your key achievements and successes in your career to date. Detail the qualities you feel you bring to a new position and where you believe you could add value. **This part of your CV you can easily tailor to suit the position for which you are applying.**

### Educational Qualifications

List all your qualifications in reverse chronological order (i.e. most recent first).

### Professional Qualifications

Again, list these in reverse chronological order. Remember to include details of any professional bodies or associations you may be a member of.

### IT Skills

Detail all IT packages (including any in-house systems used) that you are proficient in. You could also include any courses you've attended to confirm your proficiency.

### Career History

List your job history in reverse chronological order. Each position should include:

- Employer's name and location
- Job title
- Dates of employment – try to include accurate dates (e.g. January 2001 to present, rather than 2001 to present).
- Key duties and responsibilities – remember put this in your own words, do not just paste in your job specification.

### Contact Details

- Contact address
- Telephone numbers (home and mobile)
- Email address

Note: only provide work based contact details if it's okay for you to be contacted there.

### References

It is perfectly acceptable to just put 'available on request'. However, by providing specific referees it does show you've paid more attention to the overall thoroughness of the information you're providing.

If you do include referees, make sure the people named are aware that you've given their details and available to provide a reference on your behalf.

### What NOT to do

Now, a brief summary of what NOT to do:

- **Do not ever send your CV to anyone without thoroughly proof reading it first.** Spelling mistakes and/or grammatical errors will not impress potential employers. Use the 'spell check' function by all means but don't rely on it entirely. Read your CV thoroughly and ideally get someone else to read through it too. Bad spelling and grammatical errors really are one of the biggest 'turn offs' - both for recruiters and potential employers.
- **Do not lie or embellish anything on your CV.** It will only come back to haunt you if, and no doubt when, you're caught out.
- **Do not leave gaps in your career history.** If you do have gaps, explain them - detail what you were doing at the time i.e. career break, travelling, unemployed etc.
- **Do not use negative language with reference to previous employment.**
- **Do not attempt to make quips or inject humour into your CV.** This can be off-putting to a potential employer. You want to come across as professional and serious about the role you are applying for. There's always the opportunity to let your personality shine at interview.

Remember if you have any queries whatsoever, we're here to help.

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