

Devonshire Tips

Writing the Perfect CV

A CV is a means of introducing yourself to a prospective employer and documenting the qualities you have to offer. The basic principles of writing a CV may seem obvious, yet they are often overlooked. Your CV is a mini self-marketing document, so should be aimed at persuading an employer to invite you for interview. The interviewer will probably only scan your CV once (usually for no longer than 30 seconds), so if it does not market your capabilities successfully it will end up in the reject pile. There are some golden rules to keep in mind when creating your CV:

Keep it simple!

- Keep it short – try to limit your CV to no more than 2 pages of succinct, relevant information. The aim is to make the reader instantly feel you are right for the job.
- Don't over-elaborate – use one simple font such as Arial or Verdana and don't bother with fancy borders or pictures
- Less is more - An uncluttered layout with plenty of white space on the page will draw the reader's eye to the information.

Proof, proof and proof again!

- Never send out your CV without scouring it for typos, grammar mistakes and generally ensuring it reads correctly.
- If you use an electronic spellchecker, make sure it is set to UK English and not American English but don't rely exclusively on it.
- Get someone else to read your CV before you send it. It's very easy to miss mistakes when you have read a document a number of times – sometimes a fresh pair of eyes are what's needed.

Structure is everything

- There are two main types of structure to choose from, depending on your situation – either **functional** or **chronological**:
 - o A **functional** CV makes more of your skills than your job history and allows you to emphasise the transferable skills that you have developed and used in other settings. This type of CV can be useful if you've spent a long time in one organisation or, conversely, if you've moved around many employers.
 - o A **chronological** CV lists jobs by date, starting with the most recent and focuses on job titles and dates. This type of CV is good for demonstrating steady career progression.
- You should start your CV with an objective: what you would like to do next. Just a sentence or so outlining what it is you want to do, and the reader can see at a glance what you are looking for. Follow this with a personal profile outlining how you work to help the reader understand how you would fit into their organisation.
- Next up is select achievements. Consider three or four key things that you rank as an achievement. Explain not only what you did and how you did it, but also the benefits to the company. Quantify your statements wherever possible.
- Now add your career history. The point of this section is to tell the reader your key responsibilities in each role, and so establish your credibility.
- Follow this with education and professional qualifications to establish your credentials. Also list any useful (and relevant!) training so that the reader is made aware of your capabilities.
- Finally, finish off with a little information about yourself. You don't need to say too much – save something for the interview!

(cont'd over...)

