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How to write a CV & Cover letter

*That showcases your
qualities, skills &
achievements*



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RESUME

Career Objective:

I am seeking a competitive and challenging environment where I can use my ability to communicate with people and take advantage of my knowledge of English.

Accomplished secretary seeking to leverage skills in personnel management and recruitment in an entry-level human resources position.

Professional Experience:

- *Preparing business plans*
- *Planning investment activities and budget*
- *Analyzing data sets collected through all departments*
- *Preparing financial forecasts*
- *Preparing reports for the board of management*
- *good at establishing rapport with people from diverse backgrounds*
- *highly organized and detail-oriented*
- *engineer with over three years IT industry experience*
- *five years of project management experience*
- *ability to find innovative solutions*

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INTRODUCTION

Most employers spend just a few seconds scanning each CV before sticking it in the 'Yes' or 'No' pile...

SO MAKE YOURS COUNT.

Your CV and Cover Letter are what stands between you, the job of your dreams and the recycle bin. A beautifully-presented, well executed CV could help you to get a role even if you don't meet some of its requirements. A badly written one could undersell your desirability as a candidate, making it difficult to get an interview for a job which you should be qualified for.

It's worth bearing in mind that no CV is the same.

There are good practices to follow, but each application will have its own specific requirements. For this reason we have produced this guide to be as general as possible.

No one enjoys writing CVs, but if you do yours properly, you'll have a much better understanding of what makes your experience, skills and achievements unique. This will give you an edge in today's competitive job market, and hopefully some confidence in your ability.

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BEFORE YOU START...

There are some golden rules for getting a CV correct, not least accuracy, spelling and grammar.



Make it brief...

Hiring managers want to be able to see what they are looking for quickly. If important information is hidden in lots of wordy paragraphs, they'll switch off. Be extremely critical over what you choose to include. You may have an impressive achievement that you want to shout about which isn't relevant to the job you are applying for. Save this for another application, or include it on your LinkedIn page/blog.

Give examples...

It's not enough just to say you're a great team player. You need to demonstrate this with an example – such as when you worked with your colleagues to achieve a specific target. If you managed to achieve growth or savings for the last company you worked for, indicate this with precise figures. This will ensure your accomplishments get the attention they deserve.

Adapt...

any transferable skills that could relate. Employers want adaptable people who can think on their feet

Tell the truth...

Don't start telling fibs on your CV. Not only is it against the law, but it could lead to some fairly awkward moments if it gets raised in an interview!.

WARNING:

Out of 2,500 hiring managers, **56%** have caught job candidates lying on their resumes.

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PRESENTATION

How you choose to structure your CV will have a great influence on how an employer regards you. Use this to your advantage. If you have skills or education which you feel are relevant or impressive, emphasise them rather than burying them in a block of text.



Layout

Depending on your chosen industry, you may want to experiment with a more creative layout. At the very least, it's always worth breaking up your text with basic styling tools such as columns, bullet points, lines and bold text.



File type

Avoid saving your CV as an unusual file type. Word is fine, but PDF better as it will preserve any fonts or styling which might otherwise get lost in translation.



Fonts

You should always use a readable, non-distracting fonts at a readable size (between 10-12). Sans-serif fonts like Verdana and Calibri are easy on the eye and far more interesting than Times New Roman.



Spell Check

Above all, don't forget to spell check. Unless you are using a typewriter, the software which are using to write your CV will highlight misspellings for you, so there's really no excuse.

A huge number of modern CV templates for Word are available here:

<http://www.hloom.com/download-professional-resume-templates/>

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ANALYSIS OF A CV

Below is a typical example of an effective one-page CV.

Ensure that your name and contact details are easy to find.

Your profile section should briefly introduce you, using focused language without resorting to meaningless adjectives.

Use this section to draw attention to your most impressive achievements.

Clear headings and sections make your information easy to digest.

Emphasising your skills including software and languages will help a recruiter to quickly assess your suitability for a role.

Be sure to include clear dates of employment – this avoids any suspicion about gaps in your CV.

MATT SMYTH
Business Development Manager
077***** | Matt.Smyth88@emailprovider.com
3 Bredbury Avenue, Manchester, M20

HIGHLIGHTS

- 98% Customer Experience Score in previous role
- Won a number of high profile accounts including Northwest Newspaper Group, University of North West
- Account Manager of the Month Award 3 times in 2015

SKILLS

- Google Certified Professional
- Competent Salesforce user
- Proficient with MS Office
- Fluent French Speaker

HOBBIES

- Keen marathon runner (recently ran London and New York marathon)
- President of Bredbury Lacrosse Club

PROFILE

An experienced and credible Business Development Manager with an obsession for all things digital. Able to demonstrate a proven track record of success, through a commitment to exceeding targets, staying on top of industry trends and building relationships across the Manchester business network.

EXPERIENCE

LOGOZ • BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER • MAY 2015-PRESENT

- Delivering Online Marketing solutions to a variety of Companies using a structured consultative sales approach
- UK wide coverage, selling marketing services to a huge variety of clients from SME to Blue Chip level
- Closing ratio of over 40% consistently

EXEMPLAR • JUNIOR ACCOUNT MANAGER • JULY 2013-MAY 2015

- Monitoring the day to day commercial performance of each account within a portfolio
- Proactively managed own time, balancing office-based lead generating with extensive UK-wide networking.

EDUCATION

BA (HONS) BUSINESS MANAGEMENT & SOCIAL STUDIES • UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER • 2010-2013

Focused on Marketing. A consultancy project provided invaluable experience delivering a live project marketing consultancy project.

Make your education relevant to the role you are applying for.

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PERSONAL DETAILS & PROFILE

Personal details

Make sure your personal details are clearly visible at the top of your CV. Fail to do this and you may be putting off time-stretched recruiters from contacting you.

Include the most-up-to-date contact details including:

- *Your name in large letters*
- *Mobile telephone number*
- *Location (e.g. North Manchester)*
- *Email Address*



You may choose to include links to your LinkedIn profile, Twitter or blog. We recommend that you do this if you are confident everything on there is something you would like an employer to see.

Research shows that 8.8 seconds is spent studying a person's CV. ¹



Profile

A Profile or Personal Statement isn't always necessary, but it's a great opportunity to give some meaning and relevance to the list of dates, facts and figures which follow. It should summarise who you are, why your skills and experience are right for the job you are applying for and your career goals.

Keep it succinct, and use the third person:

“ Achieved an exemplary record of sales growth, through a commitment to exceeding targets, staying on top of industry trends and developing valuable relationships across the Manchester business community. ”

You may choose to include links to your LinkedIn profile, Twitter or blog. Only do this if you are confident that everything on there is something you would like an employer to see.

¹ <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/employers-sifting-through-applications-likened-to-swiping-through-tinder-as-research-shows-people-9988512.html>

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WORK EXPERIENCE

This is where you can really show employers why you're qualified for the role. Remember to keep this section relevant – there's no need to include your paper round here.

Work experience

Write about your work experience in reverse chronological order. This will allow the hiring manager to see your most recent experience first, and how your career has progressed.

Avoid gaps - Employers can be suspicious about unexplained periods of time on your CV, so it's best to declare them unless you have personal or sensitive reasons for not doing so.

For each role you must include:

- *The name of the organisation where you were employed*
- *The city where they are based*
- *Your position there*
- *The dates of your employment – make sure you include the month.*
- *Your key responsibilities there*

Follow the same proactive style which you used in your profile. Don't simply list your responsibilities. Highlight how you made an impact in your workplace or how you developed professionally, using facts and figures to quantify these achievements. See example below:

LOGOZ • Manchester • Business Development Manager • May 2015-present

- **Delivering Online Marketing solutions to a variety of Companies using a structured, consultative sales approach.**
- **Achieved a closing ratio of over 40% consistently...**

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EDUCATION

Your education section should showcase the parts of your education which are most relevant to the job you are applying for.

If you are fresh out of University without much work experience, you could emphasise the degree modules which taught you valuable business skills. If you haven't been in education for many years but have recently achieved some relevant professional qualifications, then you should draw attention to these instead.

Where you position your education is dependent on whether or not it's your strongest selling point. If you have a solid degree, went to a good University or studied in a field that's directly relevant to the job,

You will want to place this section straight after your Personal Statement. Otherwise, you may want to foreground your work experience, which will present your skills in a more quantifiable way.

Remember that employers have limited time when reading applications, and don't need to see every single one of your GCSE's! Summarising your qualifications, highlighting the relevant skills (e.g. English, Maths) will demonstrate that you understand the core competencies of the role you are applying for.

Be sure to keep this section brief, in bullet points and in reverse chronological order:

BA (HONS) Business Management & Social Studies • University of Manchester • 2010-2013

- A live consultancy project provided invaluable experience of managing the branding requirements of three local start-up businesses.

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SKILLS, ACHIEVEMENTS, INTERESTS & REFERENCES

Skills

Listing your skills is a neat way of demonstrating how your suitability for a role. The majority of today's employers will be seeking IT knowledge for a role, such as Microsoft Excel for an accounts assistant, or Adobe software knowledge for a creative job.

Speaking a foreign language is always impressive, but you should use your judgement as it may not be worth mentioning unless you have a good level of proficiency.

You should combine these 'hard' skills with 'soft' skills, such as flexibility and leadership, provided you can support these claims with examples from your work experience.

Achievements

Drawing attention to your most eye-catching achievements will instantly give employers an idea of your value as an employee. You could highlight revenue generated, savings made or other positive changes such as new ideas which you have implemented.

Equally, you might have qualifications or prizes which you are proud of gaining – include these if they are relevant.

Interests

Employers are not solely interested in your qualifications or grades and will often favour an individual for being well rounded just as much. Positions of responsibility, team sports, or anything that demonstrates your ability to use your initiative and work with others will impress. Avoid non-descript hobbies like shopping/ hanging out with friends – they say nothing about you, and the point of this section is to make you stand out.

References...

If you can get a reference that highlights how great you are then don't wait for the prospective employer to apply for your references, add it to your application. Having someone champion your cause can only aid you.

“ *Matt was a delight to work with, helping us with a wide variety of tasks such as increasing individual staff social accounts and having multiple articles published by UK-wide press outlets.* **”**

James, CEO, B2B Recruiting Company

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COVER LETTER

The first thing a potential employer sees in your job application is the cover letter. This doesn't isn't just a wrapper for your CV.

It's also an opportunity to offer more information about why you are the right candidate for the job you are applying for, while demonstrating your knowledge about the organisation to which you are applying.

What to include

The key to writing a good cover letter is to weave your skills and achievements into a concise argument about why you are right for the job you are applying for.

Begin by briefly introducing yourself, focusing upon your achievements to date. Explain why the job appeals to you and what you like about the company, include a few interesting facts which demonstrates that you've researched them well. Conclude with a concise explanation as to why your experience, skills and aptitude make you right for the job.

Try to go beyond the company website marketing spiel, LinkedIn, Twitter and even Instagram offer information about most organisations and their role in the wider business community.

How it should read

A cover letter should be 3-5 paragraphs long, typed in a legible font and addressed to a hiring manager. It's possible to look up most people in a company using Social Media, so there's no excuse for not being able to find a contact.

Some positions may still require an application submitted by post, or you may choose to send a speculative letter, if so, you should follow a traditional business letter format, with your contact information followed by the employer's details.

Alternatively, you may need to email your cover letter, remember to state your name along with the role you are applying for in the subject line, for example:

Subject: Matt Smyth, Business Development Manager Position

The majority of companies use online application systems, whether on their own website or using online job boards. Many of these websites have 'character' limits and attachment options. Draft your cover letter in a word processor as this will prove easier to edit, spell check and proof read before you paste it in to the required field.

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COVER LETTER EXAMPLE

Below is a typical example of an effective application covering letter .

Start with a positive opening statement expressing interest in the role.

Use facts and figures to support your argument.

Dear Mr. Wallace,

I was excited to read about the Senior Business Development Manager position advertised on your website. As Business Development Manager at *Logoz*, an award-winning digital marketing and branding agency, I have acquired considerable experience in the delivery of sales and account management in a constantly evolving digital environment.

Your advertisement for this role is directed at candidates with a flexible, research-driven approach to understanding the specific needs of your clients. I have developed a tailored, consultative approach to sales, succeeding in highly competitive areas such as Manchester's higher education sector.

One high-profile account I secured was the recently merged *University of The North West*, which required a cohesive branding exercise to unify the organisation's several distinct institutions. In addition to an end to end website design for the University worth £270,000, I negotiated a 6-month PPC strategy and SEO strategy which grew their website traffic by 3000%.

The opportunity to recruit, lead and develop a team which the Senior Business Development Manager position offers greatly appeals to me. My present role has involved mentoring and supervision a junior business development team, allowing individuals to exceed their sales targets through effective management of our marketing automation tools.

My interest in *AzureSky* stems from your company's ground-breaking approach to using data – such as the recent campaign for *FlyEasy* which used customer information to create a personalised journey, generating £103 million in revenue. I recognise that this kind of campaign is where our industry is heading, and would relish the opportunity to join an agency at the forefront of the trend.

I'm excited to offer my strategic insight and a highly motivational approach to team development at your agency, and hope to have the opportunity to discuss how I contribute to your organisation.

Sincerely,

Matt Smyth

Mobile Phone Number

Matt.Smyth88@emailprovider.com

Finish strong. This indicates your enthusiasm for the role you are applying for without excessively exaggerating.

Describe how your experience matches the job.

Demonstrate that the role offers potential for you to develop.

Carefully researched facts about the company which demonstrate your appreciation of what makes them unique.

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CHECKLIST

CV

1. Make sure your CV is as relevant as possible to the job you are applying for, discarding any information that isn't essential.
2. Present the CV clearly in a readable font, sized between 10-12. Use basic style tools such as headings, columns, bold text and bullet points to make the information easier to digest.
3. Create an effective, concise personal statement which neatly summarises who you are and why you are right for the role.
4. List your Work Experience in reverse chronological order, including the organisation you worked for, where they are based, your position there and your key responsibilities there.
5. Highlight how you made an impact on the company you worked for, rather than listing every responsibility you had while working there.
6. Ensure that any gaps in employment are accounted for, e.g. when you were traveling or caring for a relative.
7. Give prominence to the parts of your education which are most relevant to what you are applying for. This could be university modules, professional qualifications or courses you have attended.
8. Use Skills and Achievements sections to help a hiring manager understand your value as an employee – using facts and figures to support your claims.
9. Include an Interests section if you have space – this will demonstrate that you are a well-rounded individual.

10 CHECKLIST

Cover Letter

1. Combine your skills and achievements into an argument to convince an employer that you are right for the job you are applying for.
2. Research some interesting facts about the company you are applying for, using social media and company blogs – this will help you stand out.
3. Finish strong with a short, punchy conclusion that conveys your enthusiasm for the role and reiterates what you are going to contribute to the company you are writing to.
4. Address your letter to an actual hiring manager rather than 'Dear Sir/ Madam' – you should be able to find the relevant contact using the company website or LinkedIn.
5. Format a physical cover letter like a traditional business letter with your contact details in a header and the employers Address below it.
6. If you are emailing your cover letter, ensure that you include your name and the role you are applying for in the subject line.
7. Write your cover letter on a Word Processor before you paste it into an online application form – this will ensure that it is properly edited and spell-checked.

11 CONTACT LIST

WHY NOT GET IN TOUCH...

CONNECTIONS RECRUITMENT OFFICES

Sale

182-186 Cross Street,
Sale,
Cheshire
M33 7AG.

t: 0161 962 9711
e: headoffice@connections.gb.com

Manchester

Suite B,
19-23 King Street,
Manchester
M2 6AW.

t: 0161 832 0303
e: manchester@connections.gb.com

London

Garden Studios,
71-75 Shelton Street,
Covent Garden,
WC2H 9JQ.

t: 0207 866 8123
e: london@connections.gb.com

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