

# Creating a winning CV



### Creating a winning CV

#### What is a CV for?

- Providing prospective employers a summary of you as a potential employee, your skills, experience and qualifications
- A means of applying for a particular job position or future opportunities
- To persuade an employer to offer you an interview

#### CV Do's:

- Keep your CV to a maximum of two pages
- Keep your CV current and up to date
- Use positive language – suggest what you can do and what you have the potential to develop
- Create a CV which is easy to read, logical and well word-processed
- Always check for spelling and punctuation mistakes – get at least three different people to read it
- You do not need to be good at everything - show what you are specifically good at
- Stick to white or cream paper, a font size between 10 and 12, clear font type with pages stapled together – presentation is the number one reason employers may bin your CV
- Tailor your CV to the job role – this does not mean making things up, but highlighting key skills, personal qualities and experiences that the employer/ job role is looking for

#### CV Don'ts

- Never make things up
- Provide every small detail of your life so far - the average employer will take 30 seconds reading your CV
- Use too formal language or jargon words
- Avoid saying what you do not have experience of
- Never send a CV to an employer without a cover letter (see cover letter section)
- Try not to use a CV wizard or builder – create your own document

#### Typical CV format

- Contact details
- Personal profile
- Key skills and achievements
- Education and qualifications including training courses
- Employment history including work experience and voluntary experience
- Personal/ Interests
- References

Each of these sections are explored in more detail in this booklet but first let's look at developing the content of your CV.

### **The essence of what you want to communicate with your CV**

The following three areas are crucial to creating your CV, but also form the essence of what you will want to communicate in an interview in order to successfully achieve the job:

- Your skills
- Your experience of work/ or transferable experience
- Your personality

### **Your Skills**

Include:

- Communication skills – being able to talk, listen and present information
- Interpersonal skills – being able to relate to other people, mix well, interested in people
- Numerical skills – being confident with numbers, basic arithmetic, maths etc
- Analytical skills – being able to analyse information and make sense of it
- Problem solving skills – being able to offer solutions to problems, being able to work through tasks
- Team work skills – the ability to work with others to achieve something
- Leadership skills – being willing to take responsibility, and encourage others
- Information technology skills – the ability to use computers at basic or advanced levels
- Initiative skills – the ability to work on your own without constant supervision
- Organisational skills – the ability to organise your time and work to deadlines

Rather than listing that you have any or all of these skills it is important to do the following

1. Think of examples where you have used these skills and work this into your CV content
2. Identify the main two or three relevant skills that you possess and that are also most relevant for the job role

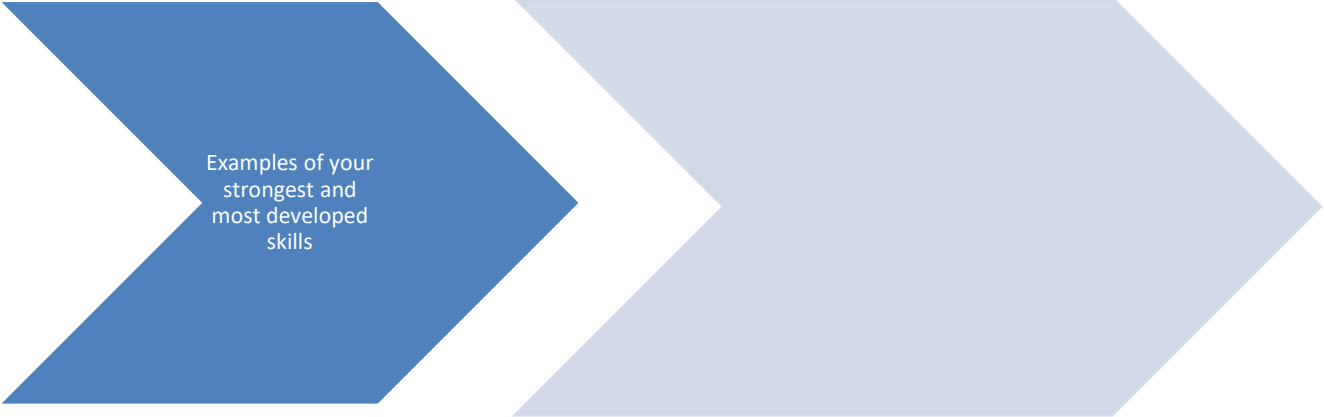
### **Your experience of work/ or transferable experience**

Think about the work related experience you have had and if you feel you have very little, consider transferable experience such as helping out at a school fete, organizing a charity event or having to present in your lessons to the rest of your class. Even being a captain for a sports team provides experience of leadership, communication and responsibility. Dealing with a difficult customer during your Saturday or summer job is good transferable experience and equals customer service experience.

### **Your personality**

It can be quite challenging to talk about and sell yourself. Some people feel they are being boastful and proud. However, you have to allow yourself to shine. Besides if you do not, others will and they will get the job! To help you on your way, ask a few friends and family members to list words or describe how you are as a person. Ask them to be honest and not suggest you are anything you are not.

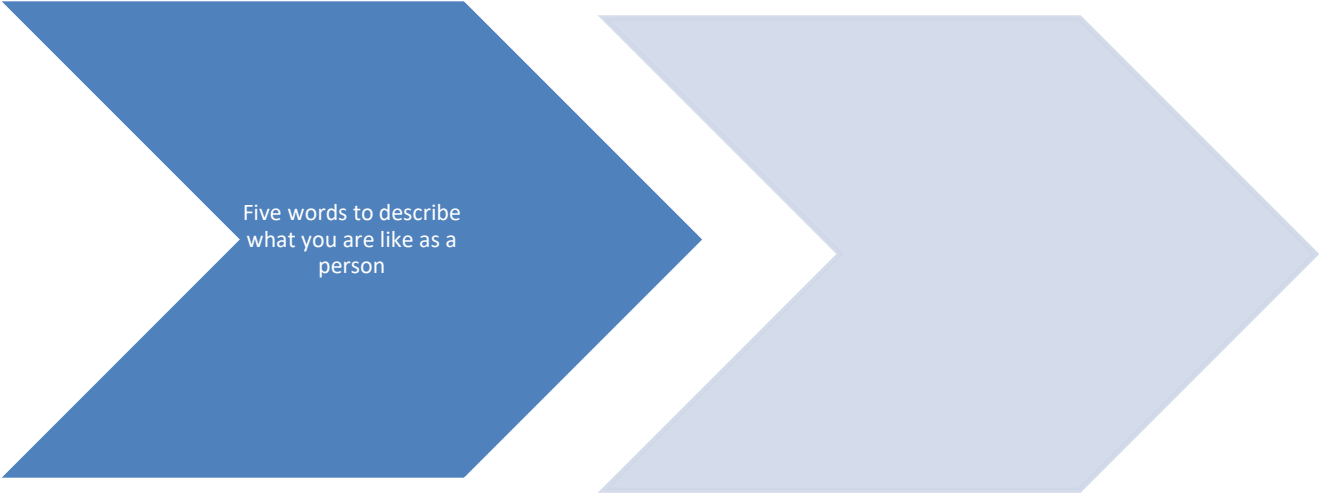
Use the following worksheet to help you develop the content of your CV:



Examples of your  
strongest and  
most developed  
skills



Examples of  
your  
experience  
in any work  
environment  
or  
transferable  
experience



Five words to describe  
what you are like as a  
person

## CV Template – putting the format and content together

### Section 1: Contact Details

This is a very necessary section otherwise how will the employer know how to contact you!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

(make this a slightly larger font size than the rest of the document)

Address including postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

(make sure you have an email address to put on a CV that is formal and professional sounding – for example [crazyrach@internet.com](mailto:crazyrach@internet.com) may put employers off!)

### Section 2: Personal Profile

Here is a mini template

“A \_\_\_\_\_ (add personal quality), \_\_\_\_\_ (add personal quality) and \_\_\_\_\_ (add personal quality) person \_\_\_\_\_ (describe your current situation, e.g. student, graduate, job title) with strong/ or excellent \_\_\_\_\_ (describe best skills), seeking \_\_\_\_\_ (state work you are looking for or eventual career aim)

Check out the next page for words to help you describe yourself and your skills

### Section 3: Key skills and achievements

Aim for three to four bullet points with your best skills or achievements and give evidence at the same time. Remember show how and why. E.g.:

- Organisational Skills, developed through college coursework and co-ordination of staff charity bake sale at my recent part-time job
- Chosen to represent my school at the Regional Science Awards where my team came 3<sup>rd</sup>.

## CV Power words

Accurate	Confident	Helpful	Reliable
Active	Consistent	Honest	Resourceful
Adaptable	Creative	Imaginative	Responsible
Analytical	Dedicated	Independent	Self-motivated
Ambitious	Dependable	Innovative	Sensitive
Articulate	Discreet	Keen	Skilled
Artistic	Dynamic	Logical	Successful
Bilingual	Efficient	Loyal	Systematic
Business minded	Energetic	Methodical	Tactful
Calm	Enterprising	Motivated	Tenacious
Capable	Enthusiastic	Observant	Thoughtful
Considerate	Experienced	Organised	Thorough
Commercially minded	Expert	Persistent	Trustworthy
Committed	Flexible	Perceptive	Versatile
Competent	Friendly	Proficient	Willing
Competitive	Hard-working	Practical	

## Skills

Remember to always have an example of when and how you have used your identified skill:

- A good organiser
- Able to work unsupervised
- Flexible and receptive to new situations
- Effective under pressure
- Able to communicate with people at all levels
- Dependable team member
- Reliable and punctual
- Numerate/good head for figures
- Able to learn and apply new skills quickly
- Confident and concise communicator
- Able to maintain a high standard of work
- Good written communication skills
- Excellent attendance record
- Confident personality
- Ability to demonstrate initiative
- Good team leader
- Ability to maintain accuracy under pressure
- Organised and logical thinker
- Able to set and achieve personal goals
- Computer literate
- Excellent telephone manner
- Sound administrative skills
- Able to supervise others effectively
- Possess common sense
- Can solve problems and resolve queries
- Can work to tight deadlines and time tables
- Able to delegate effectively
- Innovative and imaginative
- Good listening skills and sensitivity to others needs
- Able to lead and motivate others
- Good practical skills
- Able to use hand tools/machinery
- Able to work from written instructions
- Good customer service skills

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### Section 4: Education and qualifications including training courses

Date \_\_\_\_\_ School/ College \_\_\_\_\_

Qualification \_\_\_\_\_

Subject/ Result \_\_\_\_\_

E.g

September 2010 – June 2015 Markendone School, Oxon

Achieved 5 GCSEs: English Literature (B), Maths (C), Science (B), Additional Science (C) and Drama (A)

As you obtain more qualifications, you will add these to this section. Your most recent qualifications or the qualifications you are working towards currently will always be at the top the section.

As a sub-section you can add any relevant training courses which are not nationally recognised qualifications.

### Section 5: Employment history including work experience and voluntary experience

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Employer \_\_\_\_\_ Job Role \_\_\_\_\_ State if part-time, work experience or summer work

Key tasks and responsibilities (as bullet points)

E.g

May 2011- September 2013 Big Fry Fish and Chip Shop Serving Assistant Part-time

Key tasks and responsibilities

- Serving customers, taking orders and dealing with queries
- Communicating orders and stock with kitchen staff
- Keeping surfaces clean and tidy during service
- Replenishing drinks and sundries in fridges
- Assisting with hot plate and kitchen after service

Voluntary work or experience can also be included as a sub-section. Again remember your most recent experience or work at the top of the section.

### Personal/ Interests:

This is an opportunity to include more about your personality and abilities, achievements and also your hobbies and interests.

Please remember that most people like socialising with friends or playing computer games and these type of pursuits are best left off the CV. Reading, sport, creative activities, charity involvement, DIY, voluntary, Duke of Edinburgh, extra-curricular activities are great examples of interests and hobbies.

"I am.... In my spare time I ....."

### References:

Make sure you have contacted two people to be your references. At this stage in your life, it is appropriate if one of those is a school or college teacher or member of staff and the other is either an employer you have worked for or a professional person/family friend that knows you very well and can provide a good character reference.

### Tailoring your CV

Never think that your CV is a finished article. Not only will you add to it as you gain experience, develop skills and qualifications, but you will want to change and tailor it depending on the job you are applying for. You may also have different purposes for your CV and therefore it will need to achieve different things for you:

- Speculative CVs – is one that you send to various employers or companies because you would like to work for them even though they are not advertising a vacancy.

You will need to consider and perhaps alter your CV to reflect the kind of possible employee they may look for. Check out their company values and if you are hoping to work for a particular department or team, consider what they would look for/ want.

- Requested/ targeted CVs – is one that has been requested in order to apply for a particular job role.

You will need to consider what the job role/ employer desires which is usually listed in the advert or in a job application pack. A tip here is to use some of the same language or wording when they specify what they are looking for. Employers are more likely to think you are the right fit and what they may be looking for.

### Cover letters

A cover letter introduces you to an employer and you should always include a cover letter with your CV. A cover letter enables you to focus the employer's attention on particular skills and experience that may be relevant for the job role. You can steer their attention to particular examples in more detail within your letter whereas your CV provides more of an overview.



### **Draft Covering Letter - Speculative**

(Employers address here)  
Gardening Services  
44 The Street Somewhere  
Surrey  
KT200PQ

Date

Dear Sir/ Madam,

I am writing to you to enquire whether or not you have any vacancies available in landscaping as I am currently searching for work in this area. I have experience of working on different landscaping and building projects and I am looking for the opportunity to develop my skills further.

I am a hardworking and conscientious individual who can work well in a team. I can work using my own initiative and I would consider myself to be reliable and responsible. I have enclosed a CV for your information. I am available for work immediately and can produce references at your request.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

(Your address here & phone number here)  
Mr A Somebody  
33 Somewhere  
Surrey  
KT205PU  
01372000000

### **Draft Covering Letter - Targeted**

(Employers address here)  
Gardening Services  
44 The Street Somewhere  
Surrey  
KT200PQ

Date

Dear Mr Employer,

I would like to apply for the position of Gardening Assistant as advertised in the Surrey Informer. I am a hardworking and conscientious individual who can work well in a team. I can work using my own initiative and I would consider myself to be reliable and responsible. (You may want to add more reasons why your skills and experience match the job role)

I have enclosed a CV for your information. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

(Your address here & phone number here)  
Mr A Somebody  
33 Somewhere  
Surrey  
KT205PU  
01372000000