

CV preparation

Get the basics right

There is no right or wrong way to write a CV but there are some common sections you should cover. These include: personal and contact information; education and qualifications; work history and/or experience; relevant skills to the job in question; own interests, achievements or hobbies; and some references. Check for spelling errors and always be truthful.

Presentation is key

A successful CV is always carefully and clearly presented, and printed on clean, crisp white paper. The layout should always be clean and well-structured. Avoid any unnecessary clutter such as frilly page borders (rather avoid page borders altogether), and meaningless graphics.

Always remember the CV hotspot – the upper middle area of the first page is where the recruiter's eye will naturally fall, so make sure you include your most important information there.

Stick to no more than two pages of A4

A good CV is clear, concise and makes every point necessary without waffling. You don't need pages and pages of paper – you just keep things short and sweet. A CV is a reassurance to a potential employer, it's a chance to tick the right boxes. And if everything is satisfied, there's a better chance of a job interview. Also, employers receive dozens of CVs all the time so it's unlikely they'll read each one cover to cover. Most will make a judgment about a CV within sections, so stick to a maximum of two pages of A4 paper.

Keep the content relevant

If you're applying for your first job a big portion of your CV will focus on your school and university life. At this stage your grades, leadership roles and extra murals are relevant. As you gain more experience the importance of these fall away to the point where you no longer mention the school you went to and your university life becomes a one-liner.

Understand the job description

The clues are in the job application, so read the details from start to finish. Take notes and create bullet points, highlighting everything you can satisfy and all the bits you can't. With the areas where you're lacking, fill in the blanks by adapting the skills you do have. For example, if the job in question requires someone with sales experience, there's nothing stopping you from using any retail work you've undertaken – even if it was something to help pay the bills through university. It will demonstrate the skills you do have and show how they're transferable.

Tailor the CV to the role

When you've established what the job entails and how you can match each requirement, create a CV specifically for that role. Remember, there is no such thing as a generic CV. Every CV you send to a

potential employee should be tailored to that role so don't be lazy and hope that a general CV will work because it won't.

Create a unique CV for every job you apply for. You don't have to re-write the whole thing, just adapt the details so they're relevant.

Making the most of skills

Under the skills section of your CV don't forget to mention key skills that can help you to stand out from the crowd. These could include: communication skills; computer skills; team working; problem solving or even speaking a foreign language. Skills can come out of the most unlikely places, so really think about what you've done to grow your own skills, even if you take examples from being in a local sports team or joining a voluntary group – it's all relevant.

Making the most of interests

Under interests, highlight the things that show off skills you've gained and employers look for. Describe any examples of positions of responsibility, working in a team or anything that shows you can use your own initiative. For example, if you ran your university's newspaper or if you started a weekend league football team that became a success.

Include anything that shows how diverse, interested and skilled you are. Don't include passive interests like watching TV, solitary hobbies that can be perceived as you lacking in people skills. Make yourself sound really interesting.

Making the most of experience

Use assertive and positive language under the work history and experience sections, such as "developed", "organised" or "achieved". Try to relate the skills you have learned to the job role you're applying for. For example: "The work experience involved working in a team," or "This position involved planning, organisation and leadership as I was responsible for a team of people".

Really get to grips with the valuable skills and experience you have gained from past work positions, even if it was just working in a restaurant – every little helps.

Including references

References should be from someone who has employed you in the past and can vouch for your skills and experience. If you've never worked before you're OK to use a teacher or tutor as a referee. Try to include two if you can.

Keep your CV updated

It's crucial to review your CV on a regular basis and add any new skills or experience that's missing. For example, if you've just done some volunteering or worked on a new project, make sure they're on there – potential employers are always impressed with candidates who go the extra mile to boost their own skills and experience.

CV's The Good and the Bad

the Bad

Anna Burke
300 Left Street, Richmond, Victoria, 3121 anna_cutiebear@hotmail.com 0419 555 886

Education
1994-2000 Left Street Primary School
2001-2006 Richmond Secondary College
2007 Certificate III Business Administration (Accounting)

Employment
2008 to 2010: Receptionist at Braybrook Accountants

Responsibilities

- Answering the telephone
- Assisting staff with administrative needs
- Doing the banking

2011 to current: Administrative assistant to underwriting team at West Insurance

This was my 1st role at an insurance company and I assisted the underwriting team with preparing schedules and also checking proposal forms and payments from brokers.

Interests
I enjoy playing online games such as EVE, Minecraft, and Clash of Clans. I also enjoy playing Xbox 360 and PlayStation games. I have been involved in historical re-enactments.

References
Hamish Clarke - 0406 777 000
Kevin Smith - 0435 888 444

the Good

Only list education that is relevant to the role being applied for

Use a professional email address

Explain your achievements and responsibilities, use examples where applicable

Never use shorthand or text language in a CV

If including your interests, choose activities that illustrate passions that assist in career development such as volunteering or team sports

a few extra tips

1. Your CV must be clear and easy to read
2. Only relevant information should be included
3. Double check your spelling and contact details

Check your spelling!

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Use this space as an opportunity to introduce and sell yourself

Use easy to read fonts, bullet points and clean formatting to help draw the readers eye to key information

List your most recent position first to showcase your skills and knowledge

Including references is optional

PROFESSIONAL PROFILE
I am keen to further my career within the insurance underwriting sphere. In my current role I have built up both knowledge and experience of the industry and feel I have more to offer an insurance company. I have begun studying for the Australian Institute of Insurance and Finance Certificate in General Insurance.

KEY SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

- **Underwriting administration**
My current role involves supporting the underwriters. As I developed my knowledge the role evolved to include checking insurance proposals to ensure the underwriters had all the information necessary
- **Knowledge of Microsoft Excel**
I established a number of Excel spreadsheets to automate a series of tasks previously carried out manually by the underwriters
- **Broad experience in clerical tasks, such as typing, filing and the preparation of documents**
I am highly organised with strong attention to detail, which helps to minimise errors in the underwriting process

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE
Administrative Assistant - Underwriting, West Insurance
January 2011 - Current
Key achievements

- Implemented a number of general administrative systems and Excel spreadsheet, removing repetitive manual tasks from the underwriters. I also learned how to pre-screen calls, reducing the time underwriters needed to spend on the telephone with brokers. My attention to detail was particularly useful in this team.

Key responsibilities

- Assisted the underwriters with a wide variety of administrative tasks. Over time I found ways to streamline the work of the team.

Receptionist, Braybrook Accountants
January 2008 - July 2010
Key responsibilities

- Main responsibilities included welcoming and assisting visitors, as well as answering the switchboard. I also co-ordinated mail and courier deliveries.
- I left in the middle of 2010 for a six month OE around Europe.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING
Australian Institute of Insurance and Finance, February 2012 - Current
Studying for the Australian and New Zealand Institute of Insurance and Finance Certificate in General Insurance
I have completed sections 1, 2 and 3, and am studying sections 4 and 5 this year.

CAE, May 2007 - November 2007
Certificate III Business Administration (Accounting)

Richmond Secondary College, February 2001 - December 2006
In Year 12 I completed VCE Accounting, Geography and Spanish. At the end of Year 12 I spent 6 months in Chile volunteering in an orphanage.

References available upon request

seek

Useful internet resources:

<https://www.kent.ac.uk/careers/cv/goodbadCV.htm>

<https://jobs.theguardian.com/article/cv-advice-top-tips-from-our-experts/>

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/jacquelynsmith/2012/10/03/what-to-do-when-your-resume-looks-like-bad-news/#49655ae8624a>