

CVs

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Agenda

What are you trying to achieve with your CV?

How will you achieve it?

How do you sell yourself?

Is it relevant?

Cover letters

Do's and don'ts

What are you trying to achieve?

- You are generating interest in you- putting yourself in the shop window
- CV is a snapshot of your career, not an in depth story
- Your CV should prompt questions at interview- that way you know the answers
- You want the reader to engage with your CV quickly and be left wanting to find out more about you
- Ultimately it is an advert for your skills and needs to generate interviews for you

How will you achieve a successful CV?

Know your audience

- amend your CV appropriately for your target audience

Keep it brief;

- ideally 2 sides
- definitely not more than 4 (make the margins bigger)

Keep it clear

- not too much jargon, your initial reviewer probably won't be technical
- Simple fonts, no colour, clear paragraphs

Focus on achievements;

- CV reviewers are likely to know what your current job entails anyway
- what you've achieved will be more interesting

How do you sell yourself?

Focus on achievements

- Facts and figures
- things you can quantify and use as evidence

Keep in mind 'features and benefits'

You need to sell yourself

- no one will do it for you- don't be embarrassed

Focus on your keys skills

- eg, team player, enthusiastic, adaptable, organised, hard working, reliable, good time management, proactive, initiative

Send direct applications in the post

- 90% go via email, paper ones are read more and are more personal/memorable

Is your CV relevant?

Remember tailor it to your audience

CV on Jobsite

- have a section in your CV on key skills and list them
- searches will find your CV

CV for employer

- include a cover letter telling them why you are interested in the job
- why you like the company
- what you know about them etc

Don't include lots of irrelevant information

- no one wants to wade through O Level/GCSE subjects and results
- nor are they interested in the fact you like walking and cooking

Cover Letters

Really important when sending direct applications to employers

Chance to personalise your application and do more of a 'sell' on you as a person

- companies hire people primarily
- the skills come with them

Do's and Don'ts

Do:

- Check, check, re-check and ask someone else to check before sending
- Keep it interesting
- Keep it clear
- Learn it

Don't:

- Do the opposite to the above

The Biggest Mistakes I See on Resumes



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POSTED SEP 17 2014

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/article/20140917045901-24454816-the-5-biggest-mistakes-i-see-on-resumes-and-how-to-correct-them>

Mistake 1: Typos

This one seems obvious, but it happens again and again.

- A 2013 CareerBuilder survey found that 58% of resumes have typos.
- In fact, people who tweak their resumes the most carefully can be especially vulnerable to this kind of error, because they often result from going back again and again to fine tune their resumes just one last time. And in doing so, a subject and verb suddenly don't match up, or a period is left in the wrong place, or a set of dates gets knocked out of alignment.
- I see this in MBA resumes all the time.

Typos are deadly because employers interpret them as a lack of detail-orientation, as a failure to care about quality.

FIX: Read your resume from bottom to top

- Reversing the normal order helps you focus on each line in isolation.
- Or have someone else proofread closely for you.

Mistake 2: Length

A good rule of thumb is one page of resume for every ten years of work experience.

- Hard to fit it all in, right?
- But a three or four or ten page resume simply won't get read closely.
- As Blaise Pascal wrote, "I would have written you a shorter letter, but I did not have the time." A crisp, focused resume demonstrates an ability to synthesize, prioritize, and convey the most important information about you.

Think about it this way: the **sole** purpose of a resume is to get you an interview.

- That's it.
- It's not to convince a hiring manager to say "yes" to you (that's what the interview is for)
- or to tell your life's story (that's what a patient spouse is for).
- Your resume is a tool that gets you to that first interview.
- Once you're in the room, the resume doesn't matter much. So cut back your resume. It's too long.

Mistake 3: Formatting

Unless you're applying for a job such as a designer or artist, your focus should be on making your resume clean and legible

- At least ten point font
- At least half-inch margins
- White paper, black ink
- Consistent spacing between lines
- columns aligned
- your name and contact information on every page.

Formatting can get garbled when moving across platforms.

- If you can, look at it in both Google Docs and Word, and then attach it to an email and open it as a preview
- Saving it as a PDF is a good way to go

Mistake 4: Confidential information

I once received a resume from an applicant working at a top-three consulting firm.

- This firm had a strict confidentiality policy: client names were never to be shared.
- On the resume, the candidate wrote: "Consulted to a major software company in Redmond, Washington."
Rejected!

There's an inherent conflict between your employer's needs (keep business secrets confidential) and your needs (show how awesome I am so I can get a better job).

- So candidates often find ways to honor the letter of their confidentiality agreements but not the spirit. It's a mistake.
- While this candidate didn't mention Microsoft specifically, any reviewer knew that's what he meant.
- In a very rough audit, we found that at least 5-10% of resumes reveal confidential information.
- Which tells me, as an employer, that I should never hire those candidates ... unless I want my own trade secrets emailed to my competitors.

The *New York Times* test is helpful here: if you wouldn't want to see it on the home page of the *NYT* with your name attached (or if your boss wouldn't!), don't put it on your resume.

Mistake 5: Lies

Putting a lie on your resume is never, ever, ever, worth it.

- Everyone, up to and including CEOs, gets fired for this. (Google "CEO fired for lying on resume" and see.)
- People lie about their degrees (three credits shy of a college degree is not a degree),
- GPAs (I've seen hundreds of people "accidentally" round their GPAs up, but never have I seen one accidentally rounded down -- never), and where they went to school (sorry, but employers don't view a degree granted online for "life experience" as the same as UCLA or Seton Hall).
- People lie about how long they were at companies, how big their teams were, and their sales results, always goofing in their favour.

There are three big problems with lying:

(1) You can easily get busted.

- The Internet, reference checks, and people who worked at your company in the past can all reveal your fraud.

(2) Lies follow you forever.

- Fib on your resume and 15 years later get a big promotion and are discovered? Fired. And try explaining that in your next interview.

(3) Our Moms taught us better.

- Seriously.