

# Get hired

Looking to land your dream job? Don't let a poorly written CV be your downfall. Here's how to nail it. *Words: Iris Goldsztajn*

An excellent CV is the cornerstone of a successful job search, at least that's the opinion of Neil Rogers, head of content & editorial recruitment at RedCat Digital. "Your CV is an introduction and an employer's first impression of you," he says. Therefore, the first rule of a CV? Never submit the same one for every job.

It's something that every single one of us does again and again throughout our career, and yet, despite the amount of time we devote to CV writing, it's something we all continue to struggle with. Wouldn't it be great to learn how to craft the perfect CV from the very people you're sending it to?

"Attention to detail is key — triple check for spelling mistakes and poor grammar," says Rogers. "The CV needs to look clean, consistent and demonstrate to an employer that thought and effort has gone into its construction."

## KEEP IT TIDY

While content is crucial, Rogers also argues that formatting is key to a good CV. "The choice of font

and layout can instantly draw or detract a potential employer from your experience. Bullet points are much more impactful than large paragraphs of text." He goes on to say that a two-page CV with clear evidence of your career is much better than a five-page description of each and every role.

## SELL YOURSELF SUCCINCTLY

Ultimately, your CV isn't intended to say much about you as a person or about your potential. As such, don't be tempted to include a long bio or mission statement. "Instead, list your field of experiences: bookkeeping, budgeting, forecasting, etc," says Rebecca Leppard, strategist at *GirlBranding.com*. "And write one thing that you're the best at. For example: 'At work, I'm best at building relationships and connecting the dots on how two parties can benefit from a professional partnership.'"

## MAKE IT AI-FRIENDLY

Did you know that more often than not, the first time your CV will be read, it will be by a computer? According to a 2018 report by

Jobscan, over 98% of Fortune 500 companies use an applicant tracking system (ATS). Therefore, it's important to check you're using the right keywords (i.e. the ones that are used on the job listing).

"These days, job titles are way too creative for bots to understand," says Leppard. She suggests modifying your job titles in a way that makes them match the listing. "For example, if you're a general manager applying for a chief of staff position, change it."

This rings true for former full-time freelancer Jennifer McShane, whose decision to change the word 'freelance' to 'consultant' on her CV more than paid off. "When I made the change, I would apply for maybe five or six jobs and get three responses," she says.

## LOOK BEYOND THE CV

While your CV is extremely important, it's only a first step in your application journey. "CVs, interviews and references have notoriously low predictive validity, which means that they consistently fail to predict high job performance," says Michelle



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Minnikin, a chartered organisational psychologist and co-founder at Work Pirates. Psychometric testing (a means of assessing a candidate's cognitive ability and their personality) is therefore used to add more information into the selection decision. A good tip is to familiarise yourself with the kinds of questions it tends to ask online beforehand.

Bottom line: you should optimise your CV according to what recruiters want, to maximise your chances of moving on to the next stages of the process, and eventually landing your dream job.

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