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Pioneering Business Transformation

CV TOP TIPS

Here are our “top tips” for creating a compelling CV which focuses on your strongest and most salient points. Key points are: be clear, concise and consistent.

1. **Start with your name and contact details.** This may sound obvious but it is remarkable how many candidates leave these off. In our industry we often work on rapid turnaround times, and a contact telephone number can be crucial when we need to speak to candidates quickly.
2. **Follow with an opening paragraph summarising your key skill set.** Many people title this section ‘Profile’, and it should be just this: a short profile outlining who you are, what you have to offer and what your most pertinent achievements are. Don’t be too general, don’t be too subjective and don’t try to cover everything. You have the rest of your CV to provide greater detail. Concentrate on summarising what you can offer the market.
3. **Display your career history in reverse chronological order,** concentrating on your latest roles (those within the last 10 years). Make three things immediately clear: the name of the company you worked for, the dates you worked there, and what your job title was in that role. If a company you have worked for is not particularly well-known, it is useful to indicate sector, for example: Vodafone (Telecoms). As you will no doubt have a long career history to cover, a summary outlining your key role deliverables, followed by a few bullet points highlighting what you achieved, is a suitable layout.
4. **Do show metrics,** including size of teams, budgets, savings and any other relevant figures you can supply that demonstrate the scale and breadth of your experience.
5. **Do include dates on your CV.** It is better to account for a long period of time off than to ignore it. Candidates often pursue other interests outside of work, and a good recruiter will be aware of a downturn in the market and should understand if there is work gap on a CV.

6. **Keep it simple and in Word format.** You may think lots of tables, logos and colours grab attention, but they will never exceed the impact of strong content. In fact, plainer CVs often end up looking far more professional – your time is much better spent working on the text itself. Furthermore, it makes it very difficult for us to format CVs for presentation to clients when the words are locked in tables or pdfs. Top-and-tailing CVs with a cover sheet is common practise in our industry, and you can rest assured that we never alter the content of CVs, nor do we present them to clients without the explicit permission of their owner.

7. **Ensure you go back over your CV every time you complete a new role.** A common issue we find is that people change their layout and style of writing from role to role. This interrupts the flow and makes the CV appear jolting and disjointed, which is not how you should want to represent your career. You should be able to scan the page and easily pick out where you have worked, when, and with what job title. The easiest way to achieve this is to place this information clearly and consistently for each role.

8. **Try to keep it to three or four pages.** We often get asked whether CVs should be kept to two pages. At an executive level, having achieved so much throughout your career, we think this will be almost impossible without you sacrificing the necessary degree of detail. However, at the opposite end of the spectrum we have received CVs that are 15+ pages long. In all honesty, we stop reading after the first few pages, and the feedback we have received from clients indicates that they do the same. Also note that widening the document margins may mean you can fit more on a page, but be wary that it can also result in your CV looking busy, cramped and uninviting.

9. **Finish with your education** including any relevant training courses you have undertaken or qualifications you have gained. Many candidates choose to end their CV with hobbies and personal interests. Personally, we think leave them out. If you do feel compelled to include them, we recommend you think carefully about what you write and what impact this may have on people's perception of you.

10. **Finally, run a spellcheck** on the entire document. You would be surprised how many people fail to do this, resulting in silly errors. Attention to detail is vital to conveying an organised and meticulous personality and work ethic. This is a client's first impression of you as a professional; there is no excuse for sloppiness in this respect. Ensure that your spell check is set to English (UK) as opposed to English (US) - we have had clients remark on this in the past, particularly on any inconsistencies in use of language within a CV.

We hope you have found this helpful in writing a [STELLAR CV](#)

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