

handle
recruitment

THE HANDLE GUIDE

to the perfect
CV



INTRODUCTION

to this guide

In a job search your CV can become your most important piece of content. As well as providing a first impression to hiring managers and recruitment professionals it must also support you throughout a recruitment process.

We have asked our consultants to share their top tips to help you secure your next role.



WHY A CV MATTERS

Everybody you meet during your job search will offer advice and insight into how to present your CV. Think about it as a working document to tailor and tweak depending on the role, company and type of application. You're not doing anything to mislead, your CV should highlight the best and most relevant bits about you based on the requirements of the role.

INTRODUCING... YOU

As an agency, we become your 'cover letter' but if you are applying directly to a company you need to focus on what makes you special and what will make you stand out. If your profile is not an 'exact match' to the job requirements explain why your experience and personality could make you the perfect candidate.



NAME

It may sound obvious but use your chosen name. If your full name is Claire Louise but you are known as Lou, use Lou! It is also a good idea to use the same name on your LinkedIn profile.

LOCATION

Unless you are applying for an international role, your location (or home address) is not important.

EDUCATION/ QUALIFICATIONS

Should this come at the beginning or end of the CV? If you've recently completed your formal education and have limited work experience, you may want to lead with your education.

If you're established in your career and the education is unrelated, you may want to shift it to after your work experience.

Either way, keep it in reverse date order and include dates, the institution and grades for your highest level of education alongside any specific industry skills training relevant to the role.



WORK HISTORY

Oct 10 to Present

Company Name

Current Position Held (Date to Present)

Previous Position Held (Dates)

Previous Position Held (Dates)

Use the full company name, location/ address is irrelevant. If you've been promoted during your time, list previous positions as above to illustrate your progression.

Create a summary that showcases your current employer (and former employers!) and the context of your role/ function. Even if you have worked for one of the world's biggest brands you should still guide your audience and not make assumptions.

WORK HISTORY (CONT.)

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Bullet point your key responsibilities and consider the following:
- Think about the adjectives and descriptive sentences that communicate the scale, scope and expertise of your role. What will set you apart from your peers?
- Keep this section punchy and relevant and specific.
- Avoid industry acronyms and specialist terminology that may not translate out of your organisation/ industry, especially if you're looking at different sectors.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Share tangible results (% increase, financial result, creative achievement, industry first, new process, awards etc.)
- Tailor this list to reflect the success factors of the role
- Think about the accomplishment. How was it measured and what did you do to achieve this? e.g. My 2019 Campaign
- Avoid 'we' – use 'I'
- Be conscious of sensitive company information.

TEMP & FREELANCE

Oct 10 to Present

Company Name

Current Position Held (Date to Present)

Previous Position Held (Dates)

Previous Position Held (Dates)

Open with a positive context, including a couple of sentences giving an overview of the type of work or background, highlighting key clients/ businesses or specific/ longer projects.

SKILLS

There is some debate over the contents of a skills section and they can be presented in different ways. Think about the following; avoid long lists of generic 'soft' skills such as 'organisation', 'communication' or 'teamwork' unless you're expanding with examples of how you've built them, how you use them and what sets you apart.

Hard skills and technical skills should be listed within this section, ideally with an indication of level or qualification e.g.

- Software proficiency - Word, Excel, PowerPoint to advanced level
- Google/ Social Media Analytics tools
- Photoshop / other Creative packages
- Bespoke systems or databases
- HTML/ Programming languages/ SQL (CSS Web Design - Beginners – Morley College 2017)
- Languages (Only include if at least business conversational)

WHAT ELSE?

Interests/Hobbies/ Personal Projects

Keep this brief. Think of relevance. If your 'non-work' demonstrates a genuine interest or passion in the industry you're working in or hoping to move into, demonstrate that here.

For entry and junior level opportunities, this can also be a chance to showcase project work which sits outside of traditional work experience – writing blogs, organising events are just a couple of examples.

References

We will remove these prior to sharing your CV with a client, but this can be useful if you have limited work experience and can provide a non-work reference to provide context.

YOUR CV CHECKLIST

- ☐ Ensure that your contact details and employment history is clear and concise
- ☐ Make your opening statement personal and targeted
- ☐ List qualifications and systems experience before your work history if they are vital for the role
- ☐ Avoid excessive formatting and use a professional font
- ☐ Use bullet points rather than large bodies of text
- ☐ Proofread and run a final spelling and grammar check