



## HINTS AND TIPS ON WRITING YOUR CV

There is no magic formula to writing the best CV and there are plenty of web sites and businesses who can offer helpful advice and hints.

However, at Ten2Two we know how difficult it can be to write a CV – whether it's because you have had a career break, looking for a change in direction or just want to work for a different business. As a result, we have pulled together this guide to help give you the confidence and tools to create a winning CV that will get you one step closer to finding the perfect role for you.

### Why a CV?

The purpose of your CV or profile is not to get you the job. **Its purpose is to get you an interview**, and after your meeting, to remind the person you met with who you are.

The most important attribute of a successful CV is that it clearly explains to the employer what it is that you can do for them.

Your CV should be:

- A well-presented, selling document
- A source of interesting, relevant information
- A script for talking about yourself

### Where to Start?

Most of us have CV's that we look at every few years and then add on the latest job we've had - which not only results in a CV getting longer and longer but can also create a very dis-jointed read. We find the best CV's to be those where the individual has, in effect, started from scratch and created a new CV.

Below are a few tips as to how to start creating a 'winning CV'.

1. **Get yourself in the right state of mind** – positive, optimistic, focused. Think about successful periods in your career – how it felt, what people said about you.
2. **Think about your audience** – employers - you are not writing a CV for yourself, you are writing it for the employer. So, as you write your CV, put yourself in the shoes of the intended employer browsing through hundreds of CV's – looking for that 'one person'. You want your CV to be the one that is engaging, clear, concise and most importantly a true reflection of the value you can add to their business.
3. **Be clear on your 'work / career' objective** – this may be a short term goal or a long term aspiration. If you have changed career directions a number of times, or want to do so now – you must make it clear in your CV. The best place to do this is at the beginning in your Personal Profile (see 5. below).
4. **Header** - create a header for your CV which details your name, address, contact details and page number which will appear on each page.
5. **Personal Profile** - start with your profile – this 4/6 line personal profile is the teaser or hook to the employer who will then want to find out more. It needs to 'sell' your skills, experience and achievements whilst being honest and truthful. Use words that you feel confident that a friend or colleague would use to describe you - too many 'gushing adjectives' will switch people off - but not enough will mean that potential employers won't seek more information.



6. **Career History** – this should start with your most recent employment – detail the Job Title, the period you worked there (months only) and Company

e.g. Marketing Manager                      Jan 05 – Mar 07                      Whitbread Plc

For the last 3 roles, identify the key roles and responsibilities that were associated with the role and summarise this in an opening statement. Then pick out the 3/4 most significant achievements you were personally responsible for and describe them, qualifying them at all times with statistics (you may need to go back through previous annual reviews to get these figures). If you had staff and technical responsibilities try to show achievements in both areas.

For example:

- Accountable for defining long term brand strategy for Brand x; which contributes x% to Whitbread's profit, and leading a team of 5 marketing individuals to deliver this plan through maximizing brand awareness through integrated advertising, PR and promotional activity.
- Developed communication strategy for Brand x which grew consumer awareness from 25% to 35% over 2 years, compared to a target of 30%.
- Increased team job satisfaction from 75%-90% within 12 months (measured by internal survey).

For roles / jobs that are over 10 years ago – briefly summarise them in 1 or 2 lines

7. **Education, Training and Qualifications** - start with highest level of education obtained and work back - keep it brief. List any relevant training course
8. **Additional information** - Keep brief and factual. Use this as an opportunity to reflect your personality. Interests and hobbies can be positive. If you are sporty it suggests you are fit and healthy, Chairman of a society shows leadership qualities etc.
9. Check, and double check for spelling mistakes, typos and grammatical errors – you don't want someone to think you are a 'Senior Manger'!
10. Take a break, show someone you know who will give you honest, constructive feedback - listen and take on board. Go back, review and improve.

### What to avoid....

1. Never lie – interviews are stressful enough – remembering a lie that you wrote in your CV is far harder than talking about an achievement you were responsible for.
2. Only write achievements in your CV that you are confident talking about. If your memory is cloudy or you think you might stumble when questioned, leave it out.
3. Avoid using lots of management clichés – who isn't a 'team player' or doesn't have 'project management skills'.
4. Don't assume everyone understands long acronyms and 'company specific talk'. Where possible use language that someone outside your previous company would easily understand.



5. Avoid leaving long unexplained gaps and make sure your dates are accurate. Many Ten2Two members have had career breaks – don't hide behind this – use it as an opportunity to demonstrate how, in a non business environment, you have still developed / achieved things that are highly applicable in the work place; setting-up a new lunch club at your child's nursery shows you are enterprising, raising £25k when Chairman of the PTA shows leadership and commerciality. However, our experience also shows that many employers don't read in detail much past the first page of the CV – so don't spend too much time detailing everything you've done in your career break.

If you cannot think of any transferable skills gained during your career break then state it simply as a career break with the dates.

6. Avoid long CV's – a CV is not your personal biography – just the lever to get you to meeting your potential future employer.
7. Avoid too short a CV – whilst there is no upper limit – don't cut all the meat out – you need to give enough information to enable an employer to feel you have enough experience.
8. Avoid highlighting duties instead of achievements – it's very easy to detail everything you've done in a role, employers actually want to know what you have achieved
9. Avoid using phrases like "responsible for." Instead, use action verbs – generated, organised, increased, improved: "Resolved user questions as part of an IT help desk serving 4,000 students and staff."

### Other Options ...

In a small amount of instances a skill-based CV might be more appropriate than a chronological CV. This is generally the case if you are seeking a change of profession or a significant change in industry, having only worked in one specialised industry for a long time. It may also be of use if you are looking for a very senior role i.e. General Manager, or broader management consultancy role.

This is by no means a conclusive document – just a few pointers in the right direction.

If you have any other queries or questions, please feel free to get in touch with the team at Ten2Two on 01442 874247 or [info@ten2two.org](mailto:info@ten2two.org)