



How to create an interview winning C.V.

How to present your experience positively and effectively

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What is a CV for?

- A CV has one purpose and one purpose only – to get you an interview with a person who can give you a job
- There are no rules about what should be on a CV. Anything that gets you a job interview is OK
- You don't even have to have a CV to get a job. We will deal with how to use the CV later in the presentation.

What should be on a CV?

- Contact details. Use a private email
- A profile of yourself which explains to a potential employer what they get if they buy 'you'. If you are clear what type of job you are looking for you can include it in your profile
- Work history with no unexplained gaps
- Your achievements and significant responsibilities in chronological order. These should demonstrate the points you have put in the profile
- Key skills and courses attended
- Important qualifications – if relevant to the job you are going for
- Professional memberships – if relevant or significant

What should not be on a CV?

- Your age
- References
- Reason for leaving a job
- Your marital status
- Your residence status in the UK
- Whether you are willing to move
- Whether you are a car driver
- Address? Photo?
- Hobbies and interests?
- Anything that might raise a question mark in the eyes of a potential employer. If in doubt leave it out.

The most basic mistakes on CVs

- Writing a list of your responsibilities copied out of your job description
- Including on the CV roles or tasks that you would normally expect a person in that position to do. For example if you are the Group Accountant there is no point in saying you are responsible for drawing up the group accounts
- If you have significant responsibilities which add to the picture of you then by all means include them. For example:
 - Responsible for a team of 20
 - Responsible for a budget of £10m
 - Responsible for liaison with EEC on non competition rules

A typical CV

Name
Contact Details
Profile

Career History, Key Responsibilities and Achievements – most recent first. Use STAR format.

Skills – angled towards the job you are applying for if possible

Education and Qualifications - most recent or important first

How long should a CV be?

- There are no rules
- Many recruiters will read no further than the first page. So concentrate on making an impact there.
- If you are beginning your career probably aim for one to two pages
- If you are in the middle of your career aim for two pages
- If you are in the third stage of your career you might need three pages
- Whatever length you use make sure everything on the CV is relevant to the job you are applying for, don't pad it out and don't repeat points you have already made.

How to write a good CV

- Use 3rd person and not 'I' or 'my'
- Use past participle action words.
- Write in short sentences
- Keep points to a few sentences
- Use the STAR format
- Clear professional layout
- Use normal fonts
- No spelling or grammar mistakes. Important HINT – read your CV out loud to yourself.

Past Participle Action Words

- Technical active verbs
- analysed
- audited
- budgeted
- controlled
- delivered
- implemented
- instigated
- investigated
- negotiated
- re-structured
- Transferable active verbs
- budgeted
- cared for
- created
- generated
- learnt
- led
- managed
- negotiated
- organised
- taught

How to use the STAR format

- Star is an excellent format for showing achievements.
 - Situation
 - Task
 - Action
 - Result
- Once you have prepared your STARs for the CV they can also form the basis for answering questions in a formal interview. They are particularly useful for competency based interviews.

Situation

- What was the situation you had to deal with?
- Why was it an issue/need improving?
- If possible give some idea of the scale of the problem

Task

- What was your role in the situation?
- What were you being asked to do?

Action

- What actions did you take to achieve your goal?
- What skills did you use to achieve your goal?
- What difficulties did you have to overcome to achieve your goal?

Result

- What was the outcome of your efforts?
- Can it be quantified or qualified in some way?
 - “Saved £10,000 a year” “Reduced time scale from 10 to 3 days”
 - ‘Received commendation’
- Imagine a cynical recruiter looking at each point of your CV and asking “So what?” The result section should answer that question.
- Make sure you do not reveal confidential information.

Where to look for STARs

- When there was a big change at work and you were involved
- At times of disasters or emergencies
- When something was not working as well as it could should and you had a part in improving it
- When you were proud of something you achieved at work
- When you initiated something which improved a situation
- When you used your skills particularly effectively
- When other people said 'thank you'
- A STAR could involve others as well. You can use the phrase 'Part of a team..' and go on to specify your role.

The Original

Name

Address
Tel: ??????????
Mobile: ??????????
E-mail: ??????????@hotmail.com

Professional Profile:

Chartered Accountant.

Extensive experience in both practice and Industry. Willing and adaptable to new practices and procedures. Disciplined organiser and able to manage multiple assignments while under pressure to meet tight deadlines. Numerate and pays attention to detail. Approach to work is methodical and flexible, always using initiative to improve efficiency. Works well with colleagues and able to convey financial information in an easily understood formats. Computer literate experience of Dream and Sage accounts packages as well as advance knowledge of Excel and Word.

Career experience

????????? – Present ??????????????????????????????
Deputy Accountant

- Preparation of financial and management accounts to deadlines including commentaries
- Monthly Balance Sheet reconciliations including intercompany reconciliations
- Compilation of budgets
- Prepare and review daily cash flow forecasts
- Prepare VAT returns
- Meeting with internal budget holders to discuss their actual results compared to the budgets/forecasts
- Instrumental in co-ordination and preparation of the ???????? year end consolidated accounts
- Maintain fixed assets register
- Preparation and posting of all accruals for the monthly accounts
- Deal with audit and tax queries
- Prepare overseas subsidiary accounts and liaise with overseas accountants
- Review annual tax returns
- Authorise electronic UK and overseas payments

Achievements

- Effectively maintained the Dream accounts package
- Devised the method of importing journals from excel to Dream to improve efficiency
- Given the task of consolidating the year end group accounts
- Set up macros to improved the management accounts processes
- Reducing monthly management accounts time from 15 to 10 days
- Given the responsibility of maintaining the financial records and accounts for the overseas subsidiary

The Revised Version

NAME

Address

Contact details @hotmail.com

Chartered Accountant with extensive experience in both practice and industry. Able to manage multiple assignments while meeting tight deadlines. Excellent attention to detail, with a proven track record of using improving efficiency. Strong team player who is able to convey financial information in easily understood formats. In depth understanding of Dream and Sage accounts packages as well as advanced knowledge of Excel and Word.

Achievements & Accomplishments

Dates

????????????????????

Deputy Accountant

- The company (turnover £8m) had invested in a Dream software accounts package to run the whole accounting function. Responsible with a sub-contractor for initial installation. Subsequently attended session at 'Dream University' to become fully familiar with the package. Became the sole administrator for complete system within ????????????????
- The consolidated accounts were previously produced by another accountant but required a lot of input from the auditors. Asked by new Finance Director to produce the consolidated accounts (10 companies with a group turnover of £500M). Distributed the 'company packs' to the relevant staff with comprehensive instructions and dealt with the resulting questions and queries. Monitored and supported each company in meeting the dates for completing critical tasks. Completed the consolidated accounts on time, with much reduced input from auditors and audit fees. Subsequently given bonus by FD.
- The monthly management accounts were taking too long to produce. In conjunction with the Dream accounts package, developed spreadsheets that used macros, VLook up and pivot table functions. This enabled individual business units to input their information speedily and efficiently. These spreadsheets were rolled out within the accounts production team and this reduced the accounts production time from 15 to 10 days.
- The group needed tight cash management systems and the company had to produce daily cash flow statements. With the co-operation of the sales, purchase ledger and the cashier set up a series of complex Excel spread sheets. This enabled cash flows to be produced on a daily basis and submitted to the Treasury department with explanations for any variances. The group was thus able to minimise interest and maximise the efficiency of their cash balances.
- The company had staff working in Spain who had taken up residency there; therefore it had to comply with Spanish PAYE legislation. Liaised with the local accountants (who were not fluent in English) and gained an overview of the Spanish PAYE system. This allowed the wages to be properly incorporated in the accounts.
- The company wished to set up a subsidiary in the ??????????. Liaised with the company lawyer and local accountants to ensure that we complied with the insurance and the payroll requirements. Despite the language difficulties the wages costs of the subsidiary were properly incorporated in the management accounts.

If you have had a career break.

- Give the reason but don't feel you have to justify it. For example:
 - Took career break to look after sick relative
 - Help build a school in Nigeria
- You might want to show you did something to improve yourself during your career break
 - Attended seminar on IHT
 - Completed ICAEW sustainable business training course
 - Became treasurer of local charity
 - Completed CIPFA diploma

If your significant experience or achievements were a long time ago

- Consider an achievement based CV
- Give a list of your achievements and accomplishments without attaching them to a particular role. Put the most relevant ones to the job you are applying for at the top of the list
- Put your career history at the bottom of these with just dates and key responsibilities.

An achievement based CV

Name
Contact Details
Profile

Key Achievements and Responsibilities – Not attached to any particular role. Use STAR format.

Skills – angled towards the job you are applying for if possible

Career History with dates

Education and Qualifications - most recent or important first

If you have done a lot of short term jobs

- Consider amalgamating them into a group called something like 'Various Short Term Assignments'
- Don't feel you have to show each one separately.

What to do with your CV

- Even if you are very happy with your CV. Do not throw it at anyone who might have a job for you. Focus on building a relationship with people who might be able to help you. See if there is anyway you can help them as well as them helping you
- Wait until you are asked for a CV. Find out the right person to send it to and get their email right.
- Then send it quickly. You might want to follow up with a phone call to check it was received
- Ensure you send it in a format that is easy to open and retains the format. Word or PDF files are fairly standard
- Remember your CV just gets you an interview. It is you selling yourself to another person that will get you a job. Be prepared to back up verbally everything you have written down.

Remember

- A CV is supposed to represent you, your experience and what you can add to an organisation
- Getting it right takes time and effort but it is worth it!

Thanks for watching

- If you have any questions or queries I can be contacted through the ICAEW jobs website - <http://www.icaewjobs.com>
- Or directly at bob@bobgriffiths.com