

HOW TO MAKE A SUCCESSFUL CV



Essential piece of your job candidatures and self-promotion, it should give an instantaneous overview of who you are: the basic contact information, your career path and your studies until then, the skills you have learnt from them and, possibly, hobbies and realization to make this formal piece of paper more human. It is, of course, the resume or Curriculum Vitae.

As your first contact with your dream company and one request upon many others accumulating on the HR scope of possible, the resume must represent you while remaining professional, must catch your interlocutor's attention without hurting his aesthetic sensibility and express clearly what you stand for.

***“In a word, a slight alliance of concise rigor and relentless charm.
Keep it short, precise, clear but enticing and attractive at the same time!”***

You are not drawing a long list of what you have done or what you can do, you are selling a product: yourself! Your CV must be like a pack of cereal: you don't put the list of ingredients directly on the cover, you attract the customer with sharp slogans, with a nice design and with the main benefits. Only when the customer is hooked will he then check the back of the box to read the full content. But the first step is to attract the attention of your target! Especially when there are so many other similar and competing products of the shelves next to you. This is the same with a CV.

Here are a few tips to help you create this inevitable key to a job interview.

THE ESSENTIALS

The goal of the resume is to entice the employer to want to know you more and give you an interview. So, keep it clear, clean and coherent. You want them to meet you to know more about you.

The basic information

The reader must see at the first sight the different part of your resume.

The **personal information** must be gathered: Name, date of birth, address (city and country are enough), contact (phone number, e-mail). You can include a picture, but it has to be a professional one, not the last one you took at your karaoke's birthday or not a your latest selfie in front of a mirror.

Your **working experiences**. If you are looking for a first job or do not have relevant ones, it can come after your education. It has to be coherent with what you are applying for. You should write down your position, the company names, the duration and location of this experience and develop in a few words your missions and responsibilities and what you have learnt from them.

Your **education** is composed of the name of the establishments you have studied in, the diploma you get, the duration of your studies and when you graduated. It can include the associative/sportive/artistic experience or achievement/prizes you won.

Organization & Design

The information you want to put must be accorded with your desired impact on the reader. So it will influence what you present and how it present.

Separate your experience and education in different sections. List them in REVERSE chronological order, because your most relevant and applicable jobs are likely to be the most recent.

Balance the material and allow sufficient white space. Bulleted list are easier to read.

Use bold, italics, font-sizes and upper-case for emphasis, create variations and to control the reader's eye. Type should be between 10 & 12pt, except for the heading that have to be consistent. Do NOT italicize your entire resume.

The plus

If the following categories are not essential, they will add real value to your profile and can make the difference in employer's mind:

- **Headline or Branding Statement**, in which you explain what goal or position you apply for and your current situation. You can complete it with a "Strenghts section" where you describe your personal skills or your motivations to integrate the company, a sort of resume's executive summary.

- **Languages:** If you want to join an international firm, it will be essential. Can be reinforced by abroad experiences or level certifications.
- **Skills:** When transferable to different jobs or personal.
- **Licenses/ Certifications:** About languages, trainings, exams... you have attended, recognized by institution, as a complement on a specific topic.
- **Hobbies and Interests:** It shows commitment in an activity (if competition level in sport or artistic representations) and participate in showing who you are and what you like by achievement you have reached. As well could be associative or volunteering experiences.

WHAT TO AVOID

As you have to introduce yourself the best way possible, be careful with the presentation you use, the colors etc., but among everything some mistakes could be crippling for the following of your candidature. Avoid typing errors and misspellings. Do not lie, because you will have to prove what you said later.

Some information are too personal and have no reason to be mentioned in a resume, and do not include negative information that would penalize you, as:

- Height, weight, age, date of birth, place of birth, marital status, number of children, sex, race, health, social security number (except on an International Resume/CV)
- Reasons for leaving previous job(s)
- Name of boss or supervisor
- Salary information
- References (more on this issue later)
- The title "Resume"
- Religion, church affiliations, political affiliations

HOW TO GET STARTED

- Brainstorm your accomplishments (from work, volunteering, education...) and quantify them when possible. Do the same with life's experiences.
- List 3 strengths you are proud of and give one example of each. Think about the things people come to you about for help and advice.
- Write a short text about yourself that reflect what you would want an employer to know about you.
- Start with the headings. Then list everything you can think about which one of them.
- Select the ones according to your goal.
- Make your resume clean, clear and attractive for reader's eye.
- Send them and get the interview you were aiming to!

Finally, do not send your CV without mentioning why you are sending it. Emails with just an attachment and no message will be deleted automatically. Keep your email clear, polite and short, just mentioning to which position you apply and that you are sending your application in attachment. Your email is not your cover letter. Send your cover letter in attachment with your CV.

For more information on how to draft a cover letter, check our next article on that specific subject.

Good luck in your professional adventure!