

Seven Seconds Away!!!

You have Just seven seconds for your CV to grab a hirers attention!!!!



Everyone wants to give you advice on your CV, it must be 2 pages, it needs to be as long as it takes, it must say this, it must say that!! It's hard to know what advice to take and what to ignore.

One thing that is well researched and documented, is that you have a very limited time to grab the attention of the reader, reports vary but generally you have seven seconds! Yes, you read that right, you have just *seven seconds* for your CV to make the right impression.

Of course, once you have passed the seven second test, the person reading will start to dig deeper and deeper into the detail in your CV, so it really needs to be able to stand up to that scrutiny.

So how do you make your CV one of the 'I need to read on' ones? The obvious answer is to have relevant information at the top of your CV and by relevant, I mean skills and attributes that match those required for the job you are applying for.

If that means moving things around for each application, then do it!!! If the job isn't worth that much effort why are you applying?

A simple tip is to use your opening statement to 'highlight' your relevance to the role. Recruiters and hiring managers don't want to see "I work well under pressure", "on my own or as part of a team", "quick learner" and they certainly don't want to know how you see the rest of your career up to retirement. If recruiters and hirers had a pound for every time they have read those lines, they would all be sitting on beaches living off the interest! Let's get you in the door first, sitting in front of the hiring manager.



So here are some tips to keep your CV from the dreaded 'delete' button:

Get straight to the point with statements like, I have 12 years' experience as a BDM with 5 years' selling Unified Comms in the UK/EMEA/APAC for ABC communications. Or, I am an experienced program manager with 5 years leading change programs for XYZ Ltd. If the role requires selling UC, or managing programs for XYZ's competitor you are immediately a "Person of Interest", and not in the TV detective way!

Please don't use the third person (anywhere in your CV) 'Fred has 5 years' experience' is so impersonal, keeping your CV to the point means it loses some of your personality, by using the third person you remove it altogether. And, be warned, using the third person came in the top ten of hiring manager's dislikes in a recent Recruitment survey.

Where possible include an example of a recent work achievement in the opening statement: Delivered 3 major change programs on time and on budget 2015/16, or, delivered £800k against a target of £500k in the first half of 2016.

If you were a 'Manager of Fun' or a 'Wombat Hugger' (remember that from a previous article in May) use more industry recognised titles like HR Manager and Animal Welfare Officer. By all means include your actual title as well, the fun aspect may stand out in your favour. Some of these titles do grab attention, but if they are too company specific the reader may lose the will.

Be aware that when recruiters search job sites for CV's for an Animal Welfare Officer a CV of a Wombat Hugger may not be found, if it is it would be way down the list.

Avoid repeating the same achievements, or use of the same skills in a number of your previous jobs, if it is a relevant skill or achievement include it in your most recent job.

How many pages?

Two is a rule of thumb, for a school leaver it is hard to fill two pages, for a 30 years “seen it all and done it all” C-Level executive it is hard to cram it all in to two pages. However, there is no need to go much beyond 3 pages even at this level. It is understood that if you have been the CFO at a multi-national for the past three years you understand P&L and EBITDA so there is no need to list it.

Should you list your education?

Again a school leaver will need to, there will be little else on their CV apart from some work experience.

Your Degree, if you have one should be included.

Those of us that are a little more mature really don't need to include our 'O' and 'A' Level grades, no one is interested.

You should also avoid over formatting, a CV that has lots of fancy formatting can 'confuse' recruitment and HR software and vital information may be lost, keep it simple and easy to read.

There are hundreds of sites that offer advice on your CV, just remember, whatever you decide is right for you, you have just **SEVEN SECONDS** to engage the reader and keep your CV open on their screen.