

## Preparing An Effective Resume

Until your first interview your only chances to make a good impression come from your resume and your telephone interview. This makes your CV and covering letter crucial. At the end of the day, they are your personal marketing documents. The documents which might move you up the ladder to a higher income and job satisfaction.

### WHAT SHOULD YOUR CV INCLUDE?

#### Preparation

Think about your skills, competencies, qualifications and experience. What are your unique selling points and strengths?

If you are replying to a specific advertisement review what key words and tasks were used in the advertisement. Which of these words applies to you? Use these words in your CV.

If you do not possess a number of the competencies required in the ad, then you should probably not be applying. Better to focus your time and resources on vacancies where you have the required skills and experience.

#### Helpful Hints

Remember that you want your CV to be read and responded to. Tempt the recipient. Include just enough information to stimulate interest, but not so much that you bore the reader. Four pages maximum is preferred. Every word must contribute to the overall message - so keep it brief and make sure that the contents are relevant to the job you are looking for now - not your last one.

Ensure your CV is well structured; this gives the impression that you think logically and makes it easier to review. A CV that is hard to read may be put aside and forgotten. When writing the CV remember self opinion is best avoided. Aim to include someone else's opinion (eg. from your last appraisal), facts or even evidence.

Pay, close attention, to reply instructions in advertisements (eg. spelling of the contact's name. Have someone check your spelling and grammar. Use white paper - never coloured as it does not photocopy well.

#### The First Page

This should contain your personal details name, address, telephone numbers, education and qualifications and a brief general overview of your skills, experience and the nature of work sought. if you are seeking temporary or contract work do not forget to include availability and preferred locations.

#### Page Two

This should be a concise statement of your key achievements in your career (and education) to date. In particular these should emphasise achievements which are relevant to the position you are applying for. Do not force the reader to search for them or interpret them - they may be missed if you do. You cannot rely on discussing them at the interview, you may not get one.

### **Pages Three/Four**

Here you should highlight your employment history in the past 5 years, Present this in reverse chronological order (ie. last job first). if you have worked for only one company, break it down with an entry for each position held or projects dealt with.

- For each position held describe the responsibilities.
- Do include achievements, not just tasks.
- If you can, quantify, them in sales, financial or production terms.
- List your hobbies and interests in no more than three lines if they are relevant. Any voluntary, charity or external posts you have held eg. school governor are worth including: Avoid listing anything too controversial.
- It is recommended that two referees be given - including the referees' official titles, addresses and telephone numbers.

### **The Covering Letter**

CV's are seldom used alone, they should always be introduced by a letter. The letter should earn readership for the CV.

- A good letter should be used to pick up points which modesty or space prevented you putting in the CV (ie. to highlight your key strengths relevant to that job).
- An introduction letter can save you from having to rewrite the CV each time you want to target your application to a specific advertisement or sector.

Nevertheless, keep your CV up to date. Using an out of date CV looks lazy at best and may exclude you from consideration.