

# A Blusource Guide to Writing a great CV

A stylized orange silhouette of a woman with shoulder-length wavy hair, wearing a necklace. A speech bubble originates from her mouth, containing the text 'Ensure you make the right first impression!'.

Ensure you  
make the  
**right first**  
**impression!**

## Introduction

Before reading this, be aware this is a personal opinion of how to write a great CV to highlight the experience you have and is aimed at Finance & HR Professionals.

My thoughts are based on reading thousands of CVs over a 15 year period as a professional recruiter.

Bjorn Jones,  
Director,  
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Remember to  
highlight your  
achievements

## 1. Overview

In the vast majority of cases, the CV is to help you get an interview, not get you the job.

There is no need to put down every detail of every role you have done, just what is relevant for the role for which you are applying. A few simple things to think about before you start to compile your CV:

- **Your audience:** what do they want to see? What are they asking for in the advert or the job description?
- Most people focus on what they do day to day, but the most successful CVs highlight the difference you have made and what you have achieved in your past positions. **Highlighting your relevant achievements is very important.**
- Numbers have impact, so if you want to take your CV to the next level, **don't just say you improved a process, quantify it!** Did you save money for the company? How much? Did you save the company time by improving a process? How much time?
- Your CV needs to make a **good first impression**. If the reader isn't engaged with it in the first 10 seconds, your CV is less likely to go into the "yes" pile.
- How do you think a recruiter will read your CV? The truth is, people will generally only read your CV in depth if it passes the skim read test first! So make sure the **most relevant achievements and skills** for the role you are applying for are the **first things a potential employer will read** (this goes for a cover letter also).

## 2. Basic Information on the CV (top of the page)

Personal Information to include:

- Name
- Address
- Mobile Number
- Email address
- Qualification if relevant

You don't need to include:

- Date of Birth
- Writing CV or Curriculum Vitae
- Marital status



What does  
your audience  
want to see?

### 3. Content for each position in the last 10 years

- **Company name** – As well as the name a line to give an indication of the size, (financial turnover if you are in finance, headcount if you are an HR professional) and what the company does helps to put your experience into perspective. However keep any description as brief as possible.
- **Job title**
- **Dates** – start and end dates should show the month as well as the year. If you only show years, it may seem like you are covering up a gap. If you finished a position in 2009 and started a new one in 2010, there could be as much as a 23 month gap between the roles. No need to put the days on though.
- **Key Achievements** – What difference did you make in your role? What have you achieved; implemented; saved; streamlined; downsized; grown; enhanced; created; developed? Can you quantify it? Be specific if you can. 3 to 5 key relevant achievements per role is about right, but if you only have 1 or 2 good ones, just use those, don't pad it out.
- **Responsibilities** – Don't just list everything you do every day, especially if it isn't relevant for the position you are applying for. You should be able to sum up your responsibilities in 7-20 bullet points. If you have had 1 role in the past 10 years, then 15-20 bullet points is fine, but if you have had 10 different roles in the last 10 years, you will need to cut this right down or your CV will go on for pages and pages!

### 4. Education

The location of education on your CV depends on which stage you are at in your career.

If you are just starting out and are a graduate with no real work experience, your experience needs to go at the top of the CV as you are showing your "potential".

Once you have relevant work experience for a role, it needs to be seen first, hence the education would then follow and be pushed towards the end of your CV.

### 5. Training & Qualifications

List with dates (again only relevant qualifications which are useful for the position are really needed)

### 6. IT & Systems

IT literacy is important in most positions. If this is the case in your profession, worth mentioning them on your CV (this could be shown individually in the content for each role sections instead)

### 7. Interests

This polarises opinion. Interests are useful to show your human side on a CV, however certain interests could be off putting for a potential employer. If your interests are genuinely interesting, give a real insight into you as person or are relevant for the role you are applying for, then include them.

If it is going to say "socialising with friends; watching TV; playing computer games", probably better not having an interests section at all. If you put scuba diving and it turns out you went once 10 years ago, that could be seen as misleading, which would then raise questions about the accuracy of the rest of your CV.



## 8. Formatting the CV

- **You want your CV to stand out?** Great! However you want it to stand out for the right reasons. Interesting colours and fancy fonts can give the wrong impression. Ariel and Calibri fonts at size 11 or 12 may seem run of the mill, but they are professional and easy to read. Italics and overly large or small fonts with non-black font become harder to read and will not be seen as professional.
- **When you look at your CV, is the text cramped in?** If it is, it will not be easy to read. Bullet points and concise sentences instead of block paragraphs is the way to go.
- **Does it flow?** Reverse chronological (most recent first) is the best way to order your experience and makes it easier for the reader.

### Before you hit send, don't forget to check:

- ✓ Facts and dates
- ✓ Spelling and grammar
- ✓ Formatting
- ✓ Does it pass the 10 second skim read test?
- ✓ Have you included all your relevant skills and achievements?

## 9. Reviewing your CV once you have put it together

- Is it **factually correct** – make sure you are highlighting your relevant achievements, but don't over exaggerate your experience.
- Are there any **spelling or grammatical errors?** Use spellcheck, but also get friends or relatives to proof read it for you as well. Words out of context can be missed by spellcheck.
- **Is it too long?** 2 sides of A4 is the aim, however 3 is also acceptable if you are an experienced candidate with over 10 years experience. 4 is too long. If your CV is 4 pages or more, realise that experience which isn't from the last 10 years is probably not relevant. Ask yourself as you go through your CV line by line, is this relevant for the role I am applying for?
- Is the **formatting consistent** throughout? Do all of your bullet points match up and are you using the font and font sizes consistently?

- Is it in **3rd person** or does every other sentence start with "I did.." or "I had.."? Your CV should all be in 3rd person.
- Why does my CV not have a **personal profile?** Again this a topic which will divide many. It isn't necessary if the rest of your CV is written correctly. If you have minimal experience (a graduate for example) then yes, you should have one. If you have one, keep it brief, avoid buzzwords and highlight your technical strengths.

### And finally....

...whether you are looking for a Permanent, Interim, Temporary or Fixed-Term Contract position, the Blusource consultants are here to help!



# Contact Details



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