

## Tips on Composing an Attractive CV

Your CV is the first impression you make on a hiring manager. Accordingly, it's vital that you make your CV as professional as possible. A strong CV will be the difference between getting selected for an interview or not. Our team at HireForce is experienced in the art of crafting an attractive CV. We have formulated our top tips for composing an attractive CV.

### 1. Be Relevant

Your CV needs to be curated to the role you are applying for. You want to convey your relevant skills and experience. If you are applying for a role in a financial services company your CV will look different to if you are applying for a role in a technology company even if the application is for an accounting position in both.

Your education and qualifications must be pertinent to the role. If you have a master's degree it's unlikely an employer will be concerned with your Junior Cert results. Research the company and role you are applying for and tailor your CV to highlight the skills you possess which are most relevant.

### 2. Proofread

Microsoft Word has a spell check function but it is inherently limited. It will flag words that are misspelt however, it doesn't flag instances where you have used the incorrect word but spelt it accurately. Don't allow a spelling mistake to be the difference between you and another candidate.

Consider using online tools such as Grammarly that are more comprehensive than your Microsoft Word spell check function. Or better yet, ask friends or family members to proofread your CV before you submit it.

### 3. Be Concise Yet Specific

Avoid listing off skills without providing details that demonstrate them. This is particularly important if you have fallen into the trap of using overused and clichéd terms such as dedicated and attentive. You need to provide examples that illustrate your dedication and attention to detail. Back up your accomplishments with facts, numbers and specifics. Try to express your achievements by using euro amounts and percentages if possible.

#### 4. Observe Industry Standards

A strong CV should typically be no longer and no shorter than 2 pages. However, it's important to observe whether your industry has any differing standards. At a minimum your CV should provide details about your employment history, qualifications, education and skills.

Unless specifically requested, do not include references in your CV. References take up valuable real estate and you are better off using this space to provide more details about your experience to date. However, have references prepared as the hiring manager may ask for references following a successful interview.

#### 5. Formatting

Use a consistent font that is legible. Bullet points can help you draw attention to key points and are useful provided that you are succinct. Ensure you use bold for all headings to make it easier for the hiring manager to scan through your CV. There is no need to include a photograph with your CV or cover letter.

Begin with your name and contact details at the top of the page. You want to ensure the employer can contact you easily. Include both an email address and a contact number. Don't use an e-mail address that is inappropriate or lacks professionalism. If you have a LinkedIn profile, include the URL at the top of your CV but make sure you have customised this URL as the default is long and contains numeric characters.

Once you have finished creating your CV, save it as a PDF. This will ensure the formatting does not change regardless of whether it's opened on Windows, Mac or other operating systems.

#### 6. Avoid Unexplained Gaps

Unexplained gaps in your employment history can arouse suspicion needlessly. Remember, it's about telling a story with your CV. During your break from employment perhaps you acquired a new skill or undertook an online course.

#### 7. Include a Cover Letter

Usually, a cover letter should accompany your CV. Again, these too should be tailored to the specific job and company. Even if the employer doesn't request a cover letter, many hiring managers will expect one. Furthermore, it provides yet another opportunity to distinguish your CV from that of the other applicants. It can be used to tell your story – why you are applying and why you think you are right for the role. The same advice as above applies to the cover letter. Be certain it's grammatically correct and have someone proofread it before submission.