

1. You have 10-15secs to impress the employer your CV at a glance should be mind blowing
 - job titles - are they relevant or not?
 - the layout of the CV or resume - what information do the eyes focus upon first?
 - the use of font type and size - is the information easy to read?
 - the use of bullet points - is the information easy to extract?
2. What is a "skill heading"? A skill heading represents a collection of experiences across different jobs on account of which you have acquired the particular core skill in question. Examples of skill headings include personnel management, branch management, accounts management, community liasion, technical support, administrative support, office administration etc. Note that these are different to job titles.

Skill headings give you greater flexibility in marketing the variety of different skills you possess, and they can also portray a much stronger image. To illustrate compare the job titles to the skill headings in the examples below:

Job title	Skill heading
Clerical Assistant	Office Administration
Receptionist	Departmental Reception
Salesperson	Business Development

As you can see, the use of skill headings can significantly alter your image, and you can avoid the weak image portrayed by your assigned job titles. As you will be more than aware, you generally perform a much wider range of tasks and have more responsibilities than your job titles may suggest. Using skill headings allows you to move away from the insignificance that job titles sometimes hold.

3. you should be focused on selling the fruits of your skills, or the benefits arising from the skills you possess. To get this across imagine holiday companies for a second. What do they sell you? No its not a holiday. You are the one taking a holiday. What they sell you is the actual benefits that go along with a holiday, which is the hotel, the sun, the beach, and the pleasure that comes with it all. That is what you are buying, the benefits that attract you. It is likewise in your CV and resume.
4. It is recommended to start your CV or resume with a career objective statement. Here is an example of a career objective.

Seeking a management position utilizing training and team leadership experience

By using a career objective statement you will achieve the following benefits:

- The employer will know exactly what position you are qualified for. The career objective statement is basically telling the employer "This is what I am going to

- do next". Without a career objective, the employer will have to figure out what you are qualified for by deciphering the remainder of your CV or resume. Since time is of the essence (and we are speaking of seconds here), then you don't want to let the employer or hiring manager to trash your CV or resume.
- You immediately inform the first person who reads your resume or CV (which might not necessarily be the person ultimately responsible for hiring) where it needs to be sent. Without this opening statement you might be leaving it to the judgement of the secretary or clerk as to where your CV or resume should be sent.
 - You have given the reader a lead in how to interpret the remainder of the information on your CV and resume. By making this career objective at the beginning, you are making it clear in the reader's mind that "everything to follow on this CV or resume supports and strengthens my career objective".
5. The career objective should be short and may consist of up to a few sentences. It should include two pieces of information. The position you are seeking and what experience or skills you possess that qualify you for this position.

Seek a Retail Management position utilizing my six years experience in sales, inventory control, customer service and retail operations.

A word of advice, never use phrases such as "seek a challenging position..", or "seek advancement in career...", or "looking to develop my skills in..." or whatever is of this nature. This is wasting space and not really telling much to the potential employer.

Writing strong career objectives can involve some of the other principles of writing good CVs and resumes, such as quantification. If we look at the example above, mention has been made of "six years" of experience. We could add further power to the objective statement by adding more factual details:

Seek a Retail Management position utilizing my six years experience in sales, inventory control, customer service and retail operations of over □4 million per annum.

This would impress the reader and highlights your competencies more strongly.

6. Its a commonly held belief that gaps in employment can be detrimental to one's career prospects. This is not necessarily the case. People like to have time off to address other areas of life, such as bring up children, or look after parents, or recover from an illness and many other affairs, which can be legitimate reasons for a break in employment.

To employers unfortunately, gaps in employment history can raise questions such as "This person has a problem", or "There might be something to hide here", "This person is not dedicated or serious" and so on.

To remove any negative thoughts in the mind of the potential employer or hiring manager, you will need to address these gaps in your employment.

There are number of ways in which this can be done:

- **Use years only and exclude months** When referring to periods of employment avoid mentioning months. Placing months can sometimes make it confusing to gauge the period of employment.

Take a look at the example below:

Nov 00 - Nov 03 Manager, Italia Restaurant, Chicago
Nov 97 - Jan 99 Assistant Chef, Nando's, New Jersey

There is almost a two year gap. By removing the months, there does not appear to be any gap:

2000 - 2003 Manager, Italia Restaurant, Chicago
1997 - 1999 Assistant Chef, Nando's, New Jersey

- If the gap in your employment is over two years in length, you can still explain the reason for this. You need to make a list of all the things that you were doing during that time, such as travelling, independent study, volunteer work, taking care of family issues and then try to present them in a way that fits in with your career objective if possible.

Examples:

1996 - 1997 Independent travel in Europe and North America
1998 - 1999 Community volunteer, Hemlington, Northants
1997 - 1999 Homecare provision for disabled family member
1996 - 1998 Independent study of marine water systems

7. With the advancement of technology and the use of databases to store candidate CVs and resumes, employers are increasingly depending upon keywords to find suitable job candidates. The Internet has made the hiring process a lot easier for employers and recruiters who upon receiving CVs and resumes, simply dump them into their growing database. Keyword searching for relevant phrases or skills can then be performed to find an initial pool of prospects.

This technology is growing with more and more smaller companies taking this approach. In addition, many companies pay for being able to search third-party CV and resume databases on the Internet to find suitable candidates. With the more advanced candidate search software, results are weighted and ranked on the basis of the frequency of the words searched for - what is known as "keyword density". This

technology is the same one used by search engines to weigh and ranks web pages in search results.

Bearing this in mind, you have to ensure your CV or resume is seeded with relevant keywords so that it is not only flagged when employers or recruiters perform searches with keywords relevant to your industry or your skills set, but also ranked high enough to ensure you are picked out.

Keyword seeding involves extracting the keywords from the job advert, which are in the form of job requirements and personal qualities, and then seeding these statements into your CV and resume.

8. As your CV forms the basis for your interview you should ensure that it only contain positive information about you. Some information about yourself may be left out of your CV and what follows is a suggestion of what type of information this could be.

1. Salary

This is risky - too high or too low and you could rule yourself out. If you need to give a salary requirement, simply write 'negotiable'.

2. Reason for leaving a job

There is no point in stating the reasons that you left previous jobs. You need to use the valuable space on your CV to illustrate the qualities you can offer a prospective employer. Besides, issues such as this can be discussed at interview.

3. Technical jargon and abbreviations

You need to ensure that the reader is not put off your CV - making it simpler to read and avoiding 'jargon' and 'abbreviations' should achieve this. If you are applying for a job in a particular field and are confident that the employer will understand the terminology used then it may be acceptable. Another area where it may be acceptable is for educational qualifications, which again should be widely recognised.

4. Referees and written testimonials

Your first step is to secure an interview - employers are not interested in checking your references before they have developed an interest in you.

5. Mention of age, race, religion, sexual orientation

Legislation prohibits discrimination on these grounds in many countries. Nevertheless it is better to leave out these areas in your CV. The fact that

legislation was needed to combat these forms of discrimination shows that it must have been a major problem.

6. Photographs

Do not insert a photograph on your CV unless specifically requested. Careers in certain fields such as modelling and acting may request a photograph.

9. Miscellaneous Tips

Use an opening profile?

An opening profile is very useful in bringing immediate attention to a summary of your skills and what you have to offer. As recruiters have lots of applications and little time, you need to ensure that they can remember you, just by glancing at your CV. For this reason, a carefully prepared opening profile statement, can prove very beneficial.

Sell your abilities and skills

Firstly, it is important to focus on transferrable skills, or what are known as "soft skills", such as management, communication, problem-solving and the likes. You should demonstrate such qualities from your experience. Secondly, you should speak about each of your job roles from the angle of the skills you utilised or developed in that role, illustrating the skills with examples, and with achievements if any.

Enter details in reverse order

When entering your job history, education or projects, work in reverse chronological order (your last jobs first, at the beginning of the CV and resume). The employer wants to see your most recent job experiences and determine if that makes you suitable for the job.

Use active language and give detail

The use of active verbs and positive language allows you to put your experience across with more impact. As an example, saying "Managed a team of 25 sales personnel" has more impact than "Sales management". Where there are significant numbers involved, such as personnel in departments, or annual budgets, or items of sale, then it is useful to mention the numbers, as this helps to quantify your ability and experience.

References

It is best to avoid putting references on your CV or resume unless you have been specifically asked to provide them. Employers usually ask for references when they actually need them.

<http://www.cvtips-free.com/cv-misc.htm>

