



## Writing a Winning CV

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Today, with hundreds of applicants applying for a particular job, it is more important than ever that you send in a CV that stands out. Recruiters have found that you have 6 to 7 seconds to impress the reader of your CV. That is all. When someone picks up your CV, they will scan the front page for up to 7 seconds and decide whether you should be eliminated from the applicant pool or not. So, you really do need to put in that effort. And it must be immediately apparent that you are the right candidate for the job. Recruiters and hiring managers are not going to read through pages of a CV to see whether you are the right person for the job or not. It needs to jump out at them on the front page of your CV. They are going to pick up your CV, glance at it, and you want them to immediately think to themselves, “this is the right candidate”.

1. Hopefully there is a job description or role profile for the job you are applying for. I say hopefully, because that guides what you put on your front page of your CV. If there isn't one, then see if you cannot get some more information about what the company is looking for. Rule 1 for sending in a CV for a job, is that your CV must be tailored to the job. Everything that they have indicated they want in a candidate, which you have, you must indicate on your front page. If they mention skills they want you to have and you have them, indicate so on your front page. If they want certain qualifications and you have them, indicate so on the front page.
2. Your front page is critical. It is in fact a marketing document. It has to sell you. Put the good stuff on the front page. If it is on later pages the chances are very good no one will even look there.
3. Because you only have a few seconds the information must stand out. Use columns and boxes and tables and even graphics. Writing essay style no one will read what you say. It is hidden in all the writing. Make your front page visually appealing like reading news headlines. The headlines that are good to use are: Summary of work experience, qualifications, skills, and achievements.
4. Everything you have that is written in the job description must be on the front page. And you keep the same words as well. Just don't make it look like you copied the job description. The reason why using the same words as those in the job ad is good, is because often the first screening of your CV is done by computer. Your CV is received, and it is scanned for keywords. These are usually keywords from the job description. If you have enough of the keywords, then you go forward to the next round.

5. You must have achievements listed on your front page and if you can make them relevant to what you would have to achieve in the job you are applying for then so much the better. If the job requires you to develop brand campaigns, then talk about your successes with previous campaigns you have run. If you can quantify your achievements, that is use numbers, then so much the better. It gives the reader of your CV a very good idea of what you can do. When recruiters hire candidates, they want someone who meets the skills and experience and qualifications requirements, and they also want someone who has a track record of good performance. The more you can show that you have over-delivered in your previous roles, the better.
6. The only personal information you need is your name, your email address, your cellphone number and sometimes people give a geographical region where they are based such as Gauteng, or Johannesburg. Don't take up space by listing all sorts of personal information, half of which it is illegal to ask for anyway. If they are interested in you they will ask for ID number and references at a later stage. You don't need to list these upfront and I don't think you should.
7. When you have completed your CV have a few other people read it. Get them to read the job description first and then read your CV. Get them to glance at it for 7 seconds after they have read the job description. Ask them if they would hire you. If they would hire you based on that 7 second glance at your CV, then you have probably done a great job. If not, then focus on improving your front page, such that your work history, skills, qualifications and achievements sell you. When someone reads your CV at the hiring company you want them to think something like this, "Wow, this person is exactly what we need".

Because there is so much competition for job openings these days the job hunt requires you be strong in marketing yourself. Getting hired for a job has always meant selling yourself. These days, you have to think carefully and craft a really good CV to show that you are the candidate they want to come and work for them. After all, there are plenty of other people out there who also want that job and are trying to showcase themselves in the best light possible. You must stand out.