How to Write a Killer CV

Learn the 3 C's of CV Writing to help you design the best CV

An e-book by Lorraine Mc Guinness, CV Expert

About the Author

Before we dive into the nitty-gritty details of CV Writing, I wanted to introduce myself.

In 2016, I started a company called CV Tips and Tricks with the ambition to help people find confidence in themselves and be proud of their professional accomplishments.

Since then, I have written more than 6,000 documents (CVs, cover letters, LinkedIn profiles and application forms) for clients across Europe, Asia, UAE, Africa and North America.

I'm a trained HR professional who has delivered LinkedIn Workshops for Grow Remote / LOETB, acted as a Career Coach at Jobs Expo Galway (Feb & Sep 2018) and presented *'How to Design a Killer CV'* as part of Employflex's Webinar Series (on which this e-book is based).

What are the Three C's of CV Writing?

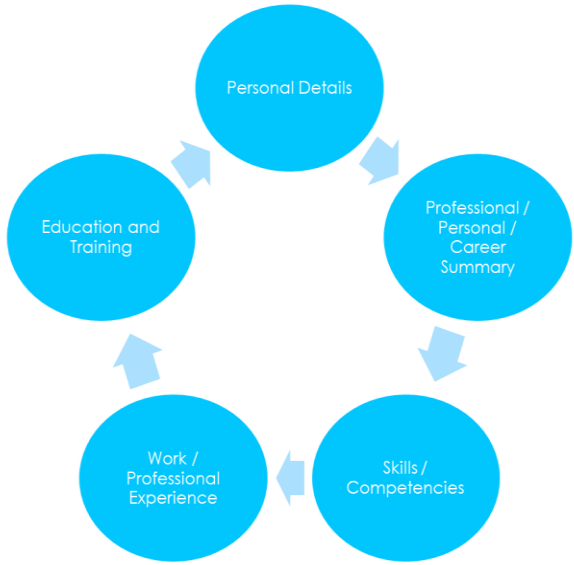
Throughout my professional journey, and during my time refining my writing ability, I noticed that there is no *'perfect CV design'* that is suitable for everyone. It is a constantly evolving document that should be updated, tailored and reviewed on a regular basis.

I quickly realised that the best way to create a CV is to follow the Three C's:

- **CV Layout** – Placement of the information throughout your CV
- **CV Design** – The more creative element of your CV
- **CV Content** – Use of industry keywords, action verbs and language

Yes, I know I may have cheated here calling them the Three C's, but trust me, if you remember these three elements, everything else will flow more naturally.

CV Layout



Where you place your content in your CV can have a positive impact. Employers always scan through quickly, so remember to have the most important content on the first page. For example, if you are a recent graduate or are currently studying, you can have your *'Experience'* underneath your *'Profile and Skills'*, instead of your *'Experience'*.

Personal Details: This includes your name, phone number and email. Your address isn't a requirement, but can be used to show your location.

Professional / Personal / Career Summary: This is ideally 4-5 lines on the page (6 maximum) and it should position you

as a professional. Make sure to bring forward the value you can bring, skills already gained and keep it concise.

Skills / Areas of Expertise / Competencies: Always have this on your CV at the top of the page. It is your chance to use keywords specific to the industry. Make sure to mix it up with professional, personal and technical skills.

Work / Career / Professional Experience: Your experience should be listed chronologically (most current first), with less weight granted to experience over 10 years. This does vary depending on the individual.

Education / Training: Include any third-level, courses, certifications and qualifications gained. Remove any outdated certifications and anything that may be obsolete if a technical qualification.

Additional Sections:

- Voluntary Experience
- Academic Projects (Group or Individual)
- Relevant Experience or Notable Achievements
- Recent Projects
- Hobbies and Interests
- References

CV Design

"The ideal CV design is clean and uncluttered with effective and strategic use of spacing to break the content. Although minor, the visual impact of a CV is the key to an employer reading the document thoroughly" [1]

The next step is to decide on how you will design your CV. There are many different templates, where some are more graphical than others, but the main thing to consider is whether the design is impacting the overall performance of your CV.

How the content is presented and how well you utilise the space on a page will help with managing its length, content positioning and overall performance.

Paragraphs and Bullets: Bullet points should be used strategically to draw attention to key achievements, contributions or specific strengths. Break up the content with short paragraphs, giving the CV some structure.

Deliver excellent customer service by politely greeting customers, processing orders and resolving any issues that are submitted. Uphold a high level of cleanliness within the café, during the day, and the bar, during the evening; prevent accidents within the workplace for co-workers and customers.

- Diligently maintain knowledge of cocktail ingredients to inform decisions and optimise satisfaction with drinks ordered.

Tables and Columns: This an excellent formatting technique that can be used to reduce space. These are best used for the skills or education section.

[1] https://cvtipsandtricks.com/5-tips-achieve-best-cv-format/

EXECUTIVE MBA, (MARKETING AND FINANCE), 2009
UNIVERSITY, Location

BACHELOR OF ARTS (BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION), 2005
UNIVERSITY, Location

Margins and Spacing: By default, margins are set to 2.54cm on all sides. Adjusting these will help you to use the full page, bring up content and space information evenly.

Font Styles and Size[2]: Experiment with the style to find one that appeals to you with Cambria being used instead of Times New Roman if you'd like a more conservative feel.

Keep It Consistent: Whatever you decide to do with the design of your CV, always remember to stay consistent.

[2] https://cvtipsandtricks.com/best-cv-font/

CV Content

"Be careful not to come across as a 'doer' rather than an 'achiever'"

Now that you'd decided on the design and where you want to place the information, the final – and most important – step is to refine the content.

But, how do I do that?

Your CV is a marketing tool, so don't be afraid to sell yourself. Highlight some key achievements, contributions and skills gained throughout your experiences, bringing forward your VALUE.

Use Punchy, Action-Orientated Language

When writing your CV, look at the HOW, WHY, WHAT and WHO to tell your professional story. Employers want to see the results of your contributions, no matter how minor they may seem. Sometimes the smallest change makes the biggest difference.

To achieve this, use action verbs to bring your story to life[3].

Look at the job Description

Always have a read of the position and note any specific skills or requirements that you have already. Filter elements of the language, phrases and keywords used to appeal more to the employer.

[3] https://cvtipsandtricks.com/achieving-effective-cv-template/

Thank You for Reading

CV Tips and Tricks was set-up to provide you with additional resources, blogs and advice to help you with creating your CV, cover letter or LinkedIn profile.

Feel free to take a look by visiting the website.

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