

# CVs

The single only goal of a curriculum vitae is to get people to shout 'this is who we need!' Recruiters receive so many CVs, that if you ask how long they read them, they usually say 9 seconds at most.

There are countless tips for writing a good CV and this checklist will give you a good idea of what to focus on. Always remember that you offer a unique solution\* for potential employers and that the best CV for you is the one that gets you the interview!

## General

- No more than two sides of A4. Remember that the first page is decisive, and the top half of this page is what people usually see first on their tablet, laptop or smartphone. Make sure your expertise shines through.
- Create easily 'scannable' lines and use bullet points (● or ○) to summarise instead of bulky sections of text.
- Use keywords featured in the job descriptions in your field: this is vital for ATS (machine) selection and CV selection processes (and LinkedIn).
- Focus on your last 10 years of professional experience, as this describes who you are TODAY. You can briefly mention previous professional experience.
- The areas **underneath (and next to)** bullet points and pages always catch the eye. **Take advantage of these spaces.**

## Personal details

- Photo: use the same professional, business-like portrait photo as on your LinkedIn profile. *Wear your interview clothes* 😊 and be sure to wear a smile too!
- First name (familiar form), surname and any applicable titles (adding your official name/middle names is old-fashioned).
- Your street, house number, postcode and town/city details can be placed on a single line.
- Write the month in full when specifying your date of birth, e.g. 28 November 1997.
- Mobile phone number, e-mail address and your *public LinkedIn address* (adding a land line is old-fashioned).

## Profile

- Give an *illustrative* description of why you are exactly who the prospective employer is looking for. Emphasise your strengths. Use no more than a couple of lines.

## Professional experience

- Describe your professional experience in reverse chronological order, i.e. list your most recent experience first.
- Write your employers' current names in full and avoid abbreviations and former names.
- Context: briefly describe who your employer is/was, how big the company is, how many employees, etc.
- Job title: use the *most common* job title used within the profession (which is not necessarily the job title(s) specified in your employment contract).
- Briefly describe any gaps in your CV in a positive light, e.g. 'job-market orientation', 'gap year', etc.
- Professional experience: include the most important aspects in bulleted lists using concrete terms, results, figures, percentages, etc: **numbers work wonders!**

## Education and training

- List all applicable study programmes and specify the years and the *current* name of the institute.
- If you took an important programme as a part-time student, then specify it in your CV *twice*: once in the education section and once in the professional experience section (in the description of the job(s) you worked whilst completing the part-time programme).

Language knowledge, for example: Dutch: 12 years of fluent business Dutch since 2008.

Other activities/interests/sports: decide which of your hobbies would be most relevant and appropriate to your 9-second CV.

## Adding a sport makes your CV more appealing!

### \* Write with a friend

In my experience, writing your CV on your own or only getting it 'checked' means only 30% of your true story will shine through at most. This is because what you do at work is **completely normal** to you: you are 'unconsciously competent' in your field of expertise.

Writing your CV together with a fellow jobseeker or coach will make you 'consciously competent' of these skills and help you write a CV that'll get you hired in 9 seconds!