

Is your **CV** twenty years out of date?

CV EXPERT

The new CV
approach that gets
you on the interview
list - every time!

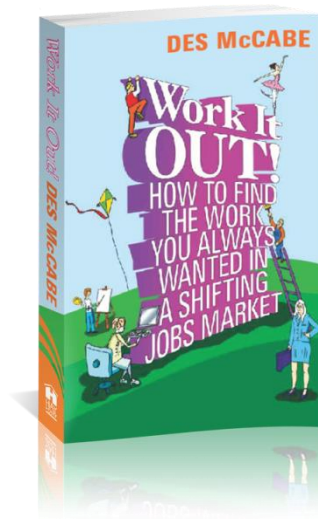


Des McCabe

CV Expert

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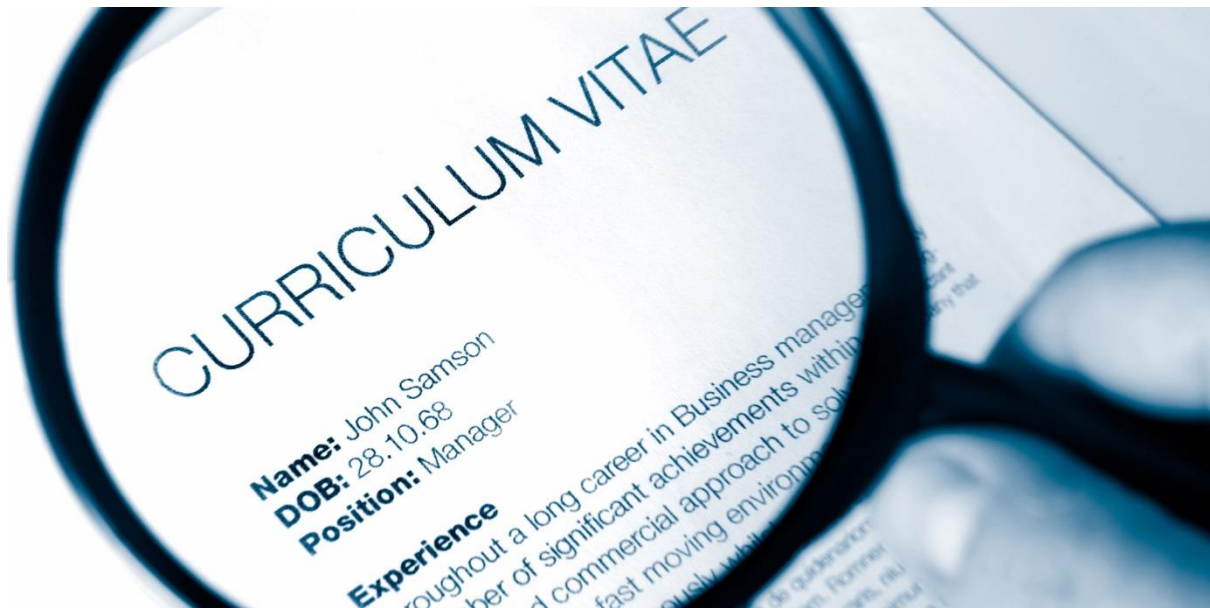


Author of the bestselling book
Work It Out! - How to find the work you always wanted in a shifting jobs market.

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Welcome to this guide to creating a brilliant CV and applying for jobs. Not only will you be able to create an amazing application by following the guidance here but you will place yourself at the top of the interview list every time.

The aim of this book is to get you thinking creatively, behaving differently and presenting better than everyone else - in order to get you into that pole position.

As you read through each of the sections think about your previous applications and what you've done with your old CVs. Keep asking yourself how can I improve my CV? How can I add more impact?

The ideas in this book will help you to make the most of every CV you send from now. For future job applications, refer to this book and use it as a checklist. Look at each idea carefully and think how it might help you to add weight and substance to your CV.

Use the ideas and guidance as a springboard for your own creativity. Use all of the ideas and don't hold back on your potential to make a fantastic application. You usually only get one shot at each application. This book will help you to make it your very best shot

What's the purpose of a CV?

There is a lack of clarity about the purpose of the CV. When I ask participants on courses I normally get responses such as

- to present yourself in the best way
- to help you get a job
- to highlight your skills and experience

All of these are of course correct to some extent but the real purpose of a CV is to get an interview. Many people still think that the purpose of a CV is to get a job but the number one aim is to get invited to that all important interview.

When you realise this then the way that you structure your CV changes dramatically. Once you are in front of an employer you can then convince them of your skills, experience and expertise. In the interview you'll be able to impress them with your personality, go through your work history, emphasise your achievements, etc. But stage one is to get the interview and that is the purpose of your CV.

So the challenge is to make sure that your CV stands out from the crowd and is better than all the other CVs. This book will show you exactly how to do this.

Employers do not read all of your CV

It's important to know that employers do not read all of your CV. They do not have time to go through all that information and then work out whether your skills are relevant to the particular job at hand.

In reality employers scan the top third of the first page and it is here that they will find information to either reject or interview you. So the first part of the first page is where were you must say that you are the ideal candidate for the job.

It's no use filling up this vital space (top of page 1) with personal information or your education details.

Newspapers have a strong headline to attract attention at the top of their front page. They don't put the address of the newspaper in this prime spot.

Write one sentence that says exactly why you are perfect for this role or the key person that they must invite for interview.

Is your CV twenty years out of date?

If you are still using black ink on two sides of A4 paper then the answer is probably 'yes' to this question.

A modern CV is more like a brochure which reflects the best of you. It is in reality your marketing document. Effective CVs are now colour brochures. They have sections with articles about our achievements and skills. They have photos showing us at awards ceremonies or doing community work. They have features on our achievements, the impact we have made and the results we have delivered.

Your CV is a sales document - not two pages of your life history. It's a brochure to sell you. You know what an effective brochure looks like. It's colourful, well laid out, attractive, good headings, photographs and of course a call to action.

The call to action in any brochure is normally to complete an Order Form, call Customer Service or Book Online. Your call to action is getting the recruiter to put your CV on the interview pile and thinking this one's worth talking to or having a look at.

So think of your new CV as a brochure promoting you specifically for the job or organisation. This thought frees you up to be creative in the way that you gather and present information. If you need the support of a graphic artist to help you lay out your CV then check out your friends with graphic skills or click on 'odesk', 'elance' or 'fiverr' where you'll find plenty of people keen to do this for you. Click on www.workitout.info for help in designing your CV.

A delegate on a course recently said to me that they had sent out forty CVs in the last three months and didn't get one interview. I asked if they sent the same CV to every organisation. They said 'yes'. Did they really think that these employers were going to read through their whole CV, analyse their skills and match these up with the job specification?

The priority of the employer at this sifting stage is to get an interview list. They are not deciding on the best person for the job - just the seven or eight they are going to call for interview. Your task is to make sure that the decision to select you is easy.

Think about how you could improve your current CV especially if you are still using black text. What could you do to make it more visually appealing? Could you have better headings or use bullet points? What photograph could you add?

Here's a point worth noting. Sometimes Word documents get messed up when sent by email because of different computer settings so save your CV as a PDF (Portable Document Format). Usually you can do this in a word document by clicking Save As PDF in your Word menu. This turns your document into a publication and is perfect for emailing as it will stay exactly as you want it to look.



The 5 things you must not do

1. Don't send the same CV for every job

Your CV must be 100% relevant to the job - in fact it must show that how you are the perfect candidate. You are only fooling yourself and wasting time and money if you send the same CV every time.

Knowing that most people still do this however offers you the opportunity of a huge advantage. So tailor your CV specifically to this organisation and vacancy - and escape from the 'reject' pile on the employer's desk.

Most employers have to scan through CV's to find relevant points in terms of the current vacancy and reasons to shortlist you. In doing this scan (for they can't read every bit of every CV properly) they see information that's not relevant and information that raises unhelpful questions in their mind about your suitability. In looking for the CVs that are relevant they so often find documents that simply give reasons to 'reject me'.

So you have to tailor your CV to every job - if you really want that interview. Do not send a general CV. You have to respond to each situation and opportunity. Indeed this is why so many CVs are unsuccessful - they all appear like a general CV. They are the standard CV that a person sends to every job. The employer sees this and knows you have made no effort to highlight your strengths or show your suitability for this role. Make the effort and watch your interview rate improve dramatically. Invest time in your future.

2. Don't only use black ink

Nearly all applicants use black ink and do not use any other colour or images on their CV. Would you watch an old black and white TV? Would you read a newspaper with no photos?

3. Don't always use A4 paper

Most CVs use A4 paper. The vast majority staple the top of their CV and covering letter or use a paper clip. Could you be different?

Why not print your CV on A3 paper (that's a double A4) and fold it like a newsletter/newspaper?

Why not design your CV on an A1 sheet of flip pad paper? Imagine the conversation as this is opened to cover the whole desk! This person is creative. You are winning before they read a word!

How would you highlight your skills and experience on an A1 sheet of flip pad paper? How would you design an A3 folded CV?

4. Don't put your Application in a plain envelope.

The vast majority of candidates put their CV in a plain envelope - brown or white. Why not get yours to stand out? You need to be different. Could you use a coloured envelope?

So, if you're applying for job with the airline Easyjet, what colour of envelope would you use? Yes - Orange! The employer will have fifty boring brown envelopes in front of them - and one orange one (in the company's colours). Which one will they go for first? The orange Easyjet one of course. They will also have a positive and optimistic attitude to your envelope. You're winning before your application is even opened.

What colour of envelope would you send for a job with McDonalds or IKEA?

There's lots of other great ways to grab positive attention with your envelope. Why not have an envelope with a relevant photo or image on it, or one with a key message across the front?

Why not have an unusual size or shape of envelope? Why not send your CV rolled up in a tube? The key point is to be imaginative and to relate your envelope to the organisation.

There's a great advertising slogan that goes 'It does what it says on the tin'. If your 'tin' is boring then that's not a good reflection of you. Get your 'tin' right. Be creative and relevant with your envelope.

5. Don't send your Application in the normal post.

99% of people send their CV by normal post. Why not use DHL, Fedex or another courier? Your CV will arrive 'special delivery' and grab attention. Someone has to sign for it. It is seen as valuable. It doesn't get lost in the pile - it goes to the top.

Why not hand deliver your application? Ask for the person on the envelope (or their secretary) when you get there. Be smart, smile and thank them.

If you are returning your application by email then make sure your email stands out - a catchy title, a professional template and superb content. Don't forget links to your blog/websites if these help. Include other relevant documents e.g., such as ebooks you've produced. We'll look at these shortly.



Do your research

How can you help this organisation?

Many candidates do not make a serious effort to find out about the company, recent developments or to check out the latest news about its successes or difficulties. How can your skills address this issue or make the most of this opportunity? How can you help the organisation at this time? Show you know what's going on by relating to these challenges and opportunities in your application.

Find out what's happening from the organisation's website, Google, its offices and national/local press. Do your research. Where do you think you can help this organisation?

Are you applying for a checkout operator position at one of the supermarkets? Then call in, watch the operators and then identify five key things that impress you. This demonstrates that you understand the role and what the key criteria for succeeding in the job are. For example - greeting the customer, efficiency and accuracy, speed, add-on till sales, packing and send off, etc.

Gathering Information on the organisation

There are seven ways in which you might research the organisation.

1. Google galore! Do multiple searches for key points about the organisation that interest you and are related to the role.
2. Study the organisation website.
3. Survey customers (e.g. coming out of the shop).
4. Check out press reports and articles.
5. Talk to staff.
6. Visit their premises.
7. Ring the organisation and ask about a product or service.

Why is this job being advertised?

It is sometimes useful to know the context of the job you're applying for. Why has the vacancy arisen?

- Is this a replacement vacancy? Are you taking over from someone who has left? Why did they leave?
- Is this cover for sickness absence or maternity leave?
- Is this vacancy due to expansion and growth within the organisation?
- Is this a reorganisation with a reduction of staff or consolidation of roles?

Try and find out what the reason is. You can do this by speaking to someone in the Human Resources (HR) department. You will be able to use this information positively in your CV or covering letter to show you understand the situation and demonstrate your flexibility

Calling the organisation or the HR department

Talking to the HR department can be a good opportunity to start to build a relationship before you put your application in.

Here are a few reasons why you might call:

1. To ask for additional information regarding the role.

'I am considering applying for the position of ... and I would be grateful if you could send me some additional information.' You might ask if there is a job description or person specification if this is not already included. (A job description set out their duties and responsibilities of the role. A person specification lists their qualities experience and qualifications needed by the ideal candidate).

You could also request some product/service information (e.g. marketing documents) if you think this is appropriate. Make sure you check the website first in case they are available online.

2. To find out why the vacancy exists or has arisen.
3. To request a short discussion with the current manager or team leader before you apply.

'There are just a couple of points I'd like to check regarding the position before I apply and I would appreciate a quick word with... '

It would be great if you could build up a rapport with someone in the company. This is an opportunity for you to impress the person not just with your friendly approachable manner but also your knowledge of the organisation already. Contacting the organisation is not essential but it's another way to make a positive impression.

Let your Application really reflect the best of you.

If you say you are creative, then be creative. If you say you can sell then sell yourself. If you are brilliant at customer care then make your application the best example of customer care they have ever seen. If you have good technical skills then give a brilliant example of how you can use these.

Let your Application really reflect the best of you. It's you at your very best 'in an envelope'.

Evidence based statements

Don't put 'meaningless phrases' in your CV - like 'I am a creative and results focussed person who is good at motivating people'. Employers will want to see evidence of this statement – with examples.

So, don't just say you are creative. If you are creative then give a real example of when you were creative. Explain what the challenge was, the options or ideas you came up with and the impact that your idea had. Where's the evidence?

If you are results focussed then give an example of how you achieved results. Give figures, objectives, what you did and dates. Show the evidence.

If you are a great at motivating people then give an example. What did you do or say that made a difference? Why are you good at motivating? Who says so? Give the evidence.

So be specific and say 'I achieved...' , 'I delivered...' , 'my department produced...' , 'our team sold...'etc.

Employers need to be able to identify with the situations you describe and the way that you acted. They will be looking for 'transferable skills' – in other words, how you can use your abilities in the role you are applying for to benefit the organisation.

Don't be chronological

In the old days we were taught to go through our work history job by job and to make sure that there were no gaps!

Employers are interested in the skills you acquired, what you learnt, how you added value and how you helped that organisation.

Odd-jobs or short term positions are an excellent way to show how you went out to gain experience in a particular area, to learn a new skill or to plug a financial gap at the time.

Everything in your career to date has offered new learning or met a need you had at the time. Bring out the positives or don't mention it at all.

Employers will be looking to see the process of how you have put your career together so far. They will be interested in what you are doing now and maybe the role before that. They will want to see that the role you are applying for now makes sense to the organisation and you? Is this a good match?

Ten different CV formats

– thinking beyond A4

Most people think of their CV as an A4 document - but you can be creative with other formats.

Have a think about some of the following formats and how you might use these to grab the employer's interest.

1. A1 page CV

This is a flip chart size page. Image the intrigue as this is unfolded - or unrolled! And there are your details laid out - not as boring black text but as a mind-map or spider diagram – all emphasising your strengths and what you will bring to the role.

2. A2 page CV

This could be an A1 page folded as a large booklet or simply an A1 page cut in half. You'll need a big envelope for this one – bound to grab attention! It can be paper or card from your local stationery shop.

3. The A5 booklet CV

This is an A4 page folded in half to give 4 sides. You could put two A4 pages together to create an interesting eight page brochure with each page highlighting one of your key strengths or area of experience.

4. The roll-out CV

This is your CV rolled up (like a poster) in a tube. A large sheet of flip paper (see A1 above) is ideal.

5. The Scrapbook CV

Why not send your CV as a scrapbook - full of clippings, photos and articles. Each page can capture a key point, your experience, aspect of the role, etc. Remember to make it look neat not tatty!

6. The website CV

Many people now have their own website e.g. a one page website to promote them. This could have different pages relating to the projects you have worked on or your achievements.

7. The Facebook CV

Employers will often check your Facebook page to see what you are really like! Facebook is a good way to present yourself, so think carefully about the photos you upload, the posts you make and the overall content (see below).

8. The LinkedIn CV

LinkedIn is an on-line CV with your contacts. Present yourself in the best light. Invite people to link with you in industries or sectors or roles you are interested in. For example, if you want to build your career in retail HR – then build your links with others in retail, HR or preferably both. When you get a new contact, check out their links and invite some of them. Build your network (see below).

9. YouTube CV

Some people have videos posted on their own YouTube channel. These collectively are their YouTube CV. These videos are usually instructional showing how to do various tasks. Are you good at office skills – access database, PowerPoint, mail merge, etc?. What about more practical skills – painting, decorating, car maintenance, etc? Videos not only shows your skills but present you as a real person. This person could help us.

10. PowerPoint presentation CV

If you are good on PowerPoint (or know someone who is) then why not present your CV on PowerPoint. You can then send this in hard (paper) copy, on a CD or on a memory stick.

CV templates

Your CV does not have to follow the same layout or structure every time. You can use a variety of design layouts and styles.

Magazine CV – for lots of images

Newsletter CV - dates and events

Business brochure CV – charts and diagrams

Newspaper CV – one bold headline

Restaurant menu CV – different sections

Checklist style CV - shopping list

The style of your CV (just like the envelope) can reflect the Company's image or products.

Your Facebook CV

Many employers now check out your Facebook page before they decide to interview you.

If your Facebook page is full of activities that are not in keeping with their company image or the role you are applying for then clearly you will get very far. Indeed all your good CV work can be undone by one indiscreet posting on your Facebook page.

So be smart about this and make sure your Facebook page promotes you! Ensure that your posts are a positive and productive reflection of your creativity, show how well you work with others, demonstrates your generous charity work, etc.

Go to your Facebook page now and wearing an 'employer hat' identify all those aspects that could be unhelpful. You should also start to do regular positive posts to reflect your expertise and experience in the type of roles that you are applying for.

Your LinkedIn CV

Linked in is used by many professional and business people so again you can expect an employer will check out your profile.

This is an important marketing format for you so make sure that your description, profile, skills and achievements are all up-to-date.

Contact your 'contacts' and get endorsements for your key skills - again related to the areas of strength that you are trying to promote e.g. customer service, organisational development, leadership, sales, etc.

Build your contact list weekly by sending out invitations to those in your sector, or skill area or location. It isn't very impressive if you only have two contacts!

Try also to get some recommendations (i.e. testimonials) from others you have worked with or helped. Remember these do not need to be from formal employment positions but can include colleagues or associates that you have worked with in some capacity.

A good LinkedIn profile can also lead to people contacting you regarding vacancies and opportunities. Your profile can be found easily on Google and this gives you potential worldwide connections. So do keep your LinkedIn page up-to-date, keep it relevant and keep building your contacts, endorsements and recommendations.

Get testimonials

Don't wait until you are asked for references. Offer some testimonials from previous employers, current colleagues or people you have worked with. Testimonials are the new references - and they are instantly available.

Testimonials (or recommendations) are used to great effect on LinkedIn, eBay, Trip Advisor, Amazon and many other sites. All you have to do is gather a few brilliant testimonials and include them in your CV.

This is easy to do. Write or email a selection of people now and ask them to send you a short quote or recommendation on you and your work.

Here are some good ways to gather a good selection of positive testimonials:

- Ask your personal friends, neighbours and colleagues.
- Ask any Civic organisations, Religious groups or Voluntary bodies that you know.
- Ask previous College lecturers or Teachers.
- Ask current or previous clients.

Let your colleagues know that this is to help you get an important job. Suggest that they might like to comment on your personal skills, (drive, attention to detail, creativity, etc.) or on your achievements (in previous roles, voluntary work, etc.) or simply how you've made a difference to them (making something happen, offering advice, etc.).

The little card



Here is an incredibly powerful technique.

Attach a little card (or postcard or real photo) with a paper clip to the front (top) of your CV.

The first thing the employer will do when she or he pulls your CV out of the envelope is to take off the little card, hold it in their hand and read it.

What do you want to say? Make sure that you have your key message on this little card. What's the one thing that you want this employer to know? What will you tell him or her that will guarantee you an interview?

The little card will literally grab their attention. All you have to do is write the message.

Oh - don't forget that the paper clip should be in the Company or Organisation's colours. Just check the logo if you're not sure.

The bigger card

If you have a longer message that you want to get across and it doesn't fit on a little card then you can still use the same 'paperclip and card' tactic with a bigger card. You could use a (relevant) postcard or photograph.

'X' is really important in this job so here is a card with:

My top 5 achievements are directly relevant....

My approach to getting results....

How I hit my targets....

How I build a strong team....

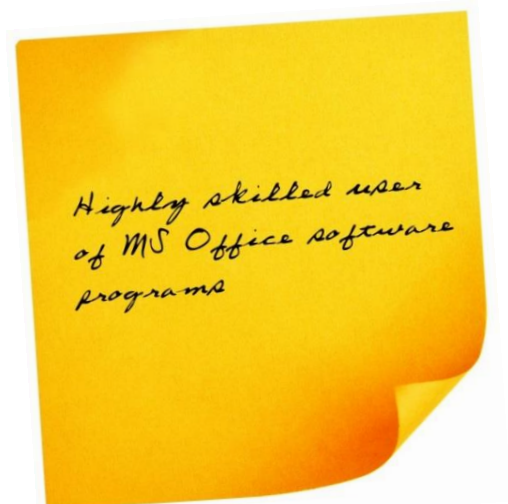
Post-its

These little yellow stickers can be a great way of getting the attention of the recruiter.

You can place one strategically on your CV with your key message on it. You can be sure that this is the first thing that the reader will look at!

Post-its are great because they allow you to be a little less formal (than the printed text) and therefore you can start to build a relationship with the reader.

You can use post-its as pointers to highlight specific



aspects of your experience, skills or achievements.

You can also use post-its to write your message. You can add diagrams, arrows, doodles or illustrations to get across key points and ideas!

Why not use a number of post-its (1, 2, 3) throughout your CV? It's a great way to build up a story and rapport with the recruiter.

Post-its now come in a range of colours and sizes - so be creative. Post-its can help you to connect your skills and experience directly to the job and the organisation.

Use highlight markers

Highlighting key words or phrases is a simple and effective way to draw attention to specific points on your CV which you want to highlight for the particular role you are applying for.

The fluorescent type markers are ideal for this – in a yellow, pink, orange, green or blue.

You can also use the markers to draw little 'arrows', use 'N.B.' or 'stars' in the margins to focus the attention of the reader.



Send an e-book

This is brilliant for online applications. You can really make yourself stand out by producing a mini ebook - one that is 100% relevant to the role/organisation. Let's use our topic of Customer Care again. We have to give the book a great title...

- How to increase average sales orders by 50% with good Customer Care
- How to train staff to turn complaints into new orders.
- The top 10 principles of Customer Care for Admin staff.

The ebook shows that you have expertise in these areas, can produce good materials and that you can bring this 'ready-made' into the business.



Attach a Special Photo

There is no need to include a photograph unless it is something special. Have you for example, a photo of you at an awards ceremony, a recent clipping from a newspaper or a photo that links you and the business together in some way? A smiling picture of you in a photo booth is usually of little use - unless you're applying for a position in PR.

Send an item with your Application

Grab the employer's attention by enclosing an item with your CV.

For example, if you are looking for a Team Leader's job in a Sports Shop, what could you send? What about a big blue box.....

The employer is faced with fifty brown boring envelopes on a wet Monday morning - and your blue box. We know which one will be opened first. Inside is a basketball with a little card attached that says 'I'm a real team player, a leader, a winner - and I can help your team to win'

The reaction will be a smile - and a comment something like 'I've got to see the person who sent the basketball!' Success - that's all you want. You've got the interview.

The basketball links you to the Sports business in a real way; it demonstrates your originality; and your little card shows you know what the job is about.

Let's take another one. What if you are looking for a catering job? What would you send?

The employer opens the circular plate shaped package and inside finds a plastic fork with a little card attached. It says 'I've sent this fork because it has four prongs and these remind me of the 4 key principles of customer care ... 'greeting the customer with a smile, asking how best I can help them, making sure the service or product really meets all their needs, and assuring them of our long term guarantee and ongoing customer care.'

The little plastic fork connects you to the Catering business; it shows your creativity; and your message emphasises your expertise in customer care. You are straight to the top of the interview list - and the recruiter hasn't even looked at your CV.

Always think how you can link your skills and experience to an aspect of the job you are applying for.

The items suggested here are purely as examples to encourage you to think creatively and positively about how you can get your skills across and show the employer the relevance of your experience. An item can often have a lot more impact than two pages of text. Remember that employers are desperate for something creative, something different, something fresh coming through, something showing imagination and something that gives them the reason to say 'yes' to an interview. Make the employer smile and they will make the right decision to interview you.

Include your CD

Why not send a CD with a proper cover and details of what is on the CD?

It could be an audio CD with you talking about what you can do to make this role or the organisation successful. It might be feedback from customers of the business who you interviewed in relation to their latest products.

It could be video on a CD taken with your camera phone and you talking at the same time as you walk around their shop. It could be videos from your YouTube channel.

Be creative - and make sure you plan what you are going to say or video before you start.

All of these can of course have a link from your online application also.

Eight ways to relate your CV to the organisation

1. Use the organisation colours

Make sure you reflect their corporate brand colours in your complete CV application package. This could be for example, the colour of your envelope or the theme colours for your CV design (blue and green border).

2. Respond to their strapline

What is the organisation's strapline? This is the phrase or words that are usually under the title. Get your creativity going and think how you might respond to any of the following phrases:

- 'Every little helps' (Tesco)
- 'Just do it' (Nike)
- 'The best a man can get' (Gillette)
- 'Connecting people' (Nokia)
- 'Eat fresh' (Subway)
- 'Ideas for life' (Panasonic)

3. Incorporate their logo

When 'pitching' a product or service to companies, consultants will often have a document (or PowerPoint presentation) with the organisation's logo on the front. Sometimes they will also have a little organisation logo in the header/footer of every page or slide.

This clearly links the organisation and the product. The Company starts to associate the two elements together and imagining how this could work. The consultants are assuming that the two will work well together and presenting this before the product or service is known in detail or a decision has been made. They are trying to influence a positive decision.

The same process can work for Job Applicants. By putting the organisation logo on your CV you will demonstrate first and foremost that this is not just another standard CV – and secondly that you see yourself linked (i.e. working!) with the organisation.

4. Use information from the organisation's documents and website

5. Relate you Application to a recent news story

This could be a success story, difficulties in a particular area or an opportunity that you see.

6. Relate you Application to a recent advert or promotion

7. Use images from the organisation to highlight key points

8. Use quotes

Use quotes from the Chairman or Chief Executive as part of your CV package. Build in quotes as part of your text – or use the quote as a headline for one of your CV sections.

Five opportunities to make a Big Impression - take them all!!!

Remember that employers are usually looking for people who can make things happen, who

are self-starters, driven, keen to achieve and enthusiastic. How well does your CV convey these messages?

Always remember to be clear on what the employer is looking for and make sure that your CV reflects those key qualities and requirements.

There are five key ways to make a positive impression that we've already noted but let's recap. These are important as they can help you land that all important interview.

1. Your phone call is your first opportunity to make a big impact. Impress the person with your politeness, enthusiastic/positive nature and request for further information.
2. Your envelope/package is your second opportunity to make a big impression. Catch the attention of the employer with your package even before they open it.
3. Your total contents is your third opportunity to make a big impression. Does your CV package have a WOW! or impact factor when it is taken out of the envelope? What have you included or attached? Does it make the employer think - 'hey, this one's for the interview pile....'
4. Your cover letter is your fourth opportunity to make a big impression. If your cover letter isn't special then why are you including it? Is it to say you are the best person or that you bring something special? Make it short - one sentence can have a big impact. Maybe you can use your cover letter to highlight your CV. Whatever you do, don't treat your covering letter as just a piece of admin or a 'not important'.
5. Your CV is your fifth opportunity to make a big impression. Let's now look at the ten key steps in putting your CV together.

Constructing your CV – Ten key steps

If you can, it is often helpful to create your CV with another person. Working together you might find you can encourage each other, ask questions, suggest ideas and work out how best to present yourself.

1. Do your research on the role/organisation
2. Write down all the important points they are looking for
3. Relate your skills and experience to this and create strong headings
4. Map out the key content sections – with headings and content
5. Now insert your text into your chosen format/template
6. Add your images
7. Add any special touches like highlighting, post-it note, little card, etc.
8. Include other contents – e.g. cover letter, CD, etc.

9. Make sure your packaging and presentation have impact – e.g. envelope, label, etc.
10. Review the overall look and feel to ensure it works!



Do check your spelling

Most people do not ask someone else to check their spelling. You must get someone to proofread and help you spot any typing errors.

Check carefully the spelling of the name of the person you are writing to as well as their title and address. Take time to call the organisation to check out these details.

Always type if you can, especially if your handwriting isn't the best.

Assessing your new CV

Here are 4 questions to ask when you've finished your CV.

What's the first thing that grabs the reader's attention?

What are the key messages that come across immediately?

Is this professional looking?
Would you interview this person?

You might decide to show your CV to a colleague who understands the 'CV Expert' approach and ask them to suggest one or two improvements.

Keep your CVs together in a file and try to make each one better than the one before.

The Seven parts of a good CV

Remember, there's no rule to say that your CV has to look boring like everybody else's. Take the ideas we have discussed and then use the points below to make an effective CV for each job. Use and flex the suggestions to meet your needs.

Part 1: An Introductory sentence or short paragraph that sells you

This is by far the most important part of your CV. The opening sentence / paragraph is your elevator pitch - your 20 seconds to sell yourself. This is the paragraph that positions you as the ideal person for this job because of your qualifications, experience, achievements and personal approach..

- What can you bring to the role?
- Why should they recruit you?
- What will you achieve?
- Why are you an exceptional candidate?
- Why is your experience relevant?
- What personal qualities do you have that can add value to this role?

Your first sentence should make it clear why you are the very best person for this job.

After your opening strong summary statement you can add another sentence or two to take the employer through the highlights and achievements of your career. This is not a chronological summary - more like your greatest hits. Don't use jargon or 'management speak'. Keep your sentences short, sharp and factual.

Part 2: Key Achievements (Work History) - Does your CV tell a great story?

Work history includes part-time jobs, temporary work, volunteering and caring for sick relatives. So just don't include full-time paid work. Show how your career has developed and adapted. It should show your successes and how you've dealt with challenges. Most people begin with the most recent role and work backwards.

Under each role write a short sentence about your responsibilities/purpose of the position. Beneath this state (in bullet format) up to three key achievements.

- I increased sales by 43% in 12 months.
- Our team reduced wastage by 12% within 3 months.
- I introduced a new system which reduced customer complaints by 63%.
- I developed and introduced a new policy on x which increased re-orders by 220%.
- I project managed all aspects of our office move - coming in 15% under budget and 2 weeks ahead of time.
- I worked in as a Deputy Manager for a large Charity shop and increased turnover by 32% in the 6 months I was there.
- I took on additional responsibilities for staff training and development within 4 months of starting.
- I was promoted to Senior Manager within 6 months and was responsible for the wellbeing of 365 patients.

Make sure that each point states clearly what you achieved. Show how you added value, made things better, improved the situation, etc. - and use numbers, percentages and timescales where you can.

Use your judgment to give most information on the roles that are particularly relevant for the position you are applying for. Your employment history should demonstrate your determination to succeed, real progression and your adaptability.

As I said include voluntary, part-time, ad-hoc and temporary roles. Many employers value the experience of being involved with 'not for profit' or charitable bodies.

Don't worry about gaps in full-time positions. Simply include the other activities you were engaged in - looking after a sick relative, additional studying, research for possible business venture, freelance work, self-employed opportunity, etc.

Part 3: Other Relevant Skills and Experience

Here's some examples:

Include details of your publications

- I have written three ebooks in the area of customer care. These are:
- I have produced four brochures to launch new clothing ranges. These are:

Include details of how you can train, tutor, coach or mentor others.

Include any additional skills, hobbies or knowledge - for example, IT, counselling skills, software applications, driving license, languages, massage therapist, graphic packages,

cooking, facebook marketing, etc. Think about how each of these could be a hook for the employer.

Part 4: Education, Qualifications, Training and ongoing Professional Development

Keep this section as short as possible. If you have a degree or any postgraduate qualifications, just state the subject, the institution and the date. Providing the grade is optional. There is no need to include the full address of the institution as it only uses valuable space. Only list earlier qualifications or other academic qualifications if you do not have a degree.

Include any Professional or Vocational Qualifications, Membership of Professional or Trade Bodies and Additional Training.

Part 5: Testimonials

Include 3 - 5 quotes/testimonials/recommendations saying how fantastic you are. Put these in 'quotation marks' and include the person's name and organisation name (if relevant) after the quote.

Part 6: Personal Details

Include the following at the end of your CV

- Your full name and postal address.
- Contact telephone numbers and email address.
- Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn details where appropriate.
- There is no need to include details of your age, nationality, ethnicity or marital status unless you feel it is particularly relevant to the role.

Part 7: The Final Word (use your title here)

Make sure you have a strong statement at the end. This is your final call to action to get the employer to invite you for interview. Don't waste this brilliant opportunity - have a strong sign-off.

Reminders

- Make sure every part of your CV relates directly to the job you are applying for.
- Make sure you use the same words in your CV that you see in the job description.
- Make sure you show clearly how you meet the essential skills, qualifications, and experience.

Your Cover Letter

Don't just send a cover letter that says 'Please find attached my CV.... ' That would be really wasting an opportunity.

Use your cover letter to get your key message across. Tell the employer in a sentence why you are the best person for this role. Say why you should have this job. Give the recruiter a brilliant reason to interview you.

Mention that you 'spoke with Janet in HR', that you noted the recent developments in 'Customer Services', that you visited 'their shop in Newbridge', tested the 'new product', etc.

How can your skills and experience address current issues or make the most of this opportunity? How can you help the organisation at this time? Confirm the research you have undertaken and be clear how you believe that you can add real value to the role. Reflect this in your cover letter or email.

Time to create a good CV

You've probably gathered by now that it takes time to do each CV properly. The idea that you can sit down and send out a CV in 10 minutes is long gone. In the vast majority of cases this is just totally ineffective. You have to target your CV as we've discussed.

You need time to think about the organisation, to look carefully at the opportunity, to do your online research, to link up with the company, to decide on the best way you can design your CV for this role, to create your cover letter and to decide what else you should add or include in your package.

It will probably take you up to a day to do a CV properly. Don't worry about this however, because this process is about quality (interviews) not quantity (rejections). Decide to dedicate this time only to jobs that you really want because that's when you will put in your very best effort.

There are lots of ideas covered in this book. It is important to remember that these are designed to get you thinking about your CV, the opportunities you are applying for, grabbing the attention of the employer and securing that all important interview. All these examples are designed to show you how you can make a great CV - one that will guarantee you are top of the interview list every time.

Go back and read through each section carefully when you start on the next job application. You will then be able to bring your creativity, expertise and personality to produce a winning CV package. Your CV is a real opportunity for you to express yourself so that the employer will quickly see that - here is something valuable and someone special worth talking to.

So target the jobs you really want. Spend time and work really hard to put in a good CV. You will be amazed at the results.



Action Plan

I really hope you've enjoyed this book and found it helpful. If so, can I please ask you to do four things.

1. Please approach every application with the sense of excitement and opportunity - and not the awful task that sending CVs used to be. See the creation of your new CV as a real challenge and be determined to do all you can to get that interview.
2. Please share any ideas from this book with other friends, colleagues or family members who are stuck at the moment and not having much success in the job market. Your piece of advice and encouragement to others could make all the difference to their futures.

3. Please leave a short review of this book on Amazon and mention any particular points that you found helpful. Your review could encourage others to re-think their approach rather than just sending out lots of standard CVs.
4. Finally, please email me and let me know how you get on. I'd love to hear about your applications and successes. Email me desmccabe@diversiton.com with your story. If you have any ideas or suggestions that I should include in this book let me know. It would be great to include your news and views in the next edition of this book!

Best wishes and thanks!

Des McCabe

P.S. Don't forget to check out my bestselling book 'Work It Out! - How to find the work you always wanted in a shifting jobs market'.

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