

A basic guide on how to write a CV

Author: Takudzwa Vanessa Machingauta . November 2019

Your dream job has just been advertised. It could have been in the press as has been traditionally done for the past few decades or you could have spotted it on the internet, the new frontier in the job market. The one common thing, however, is that you will definitely be asked to submit a curriculum vitae (CV). Can your CV pass the recruiter's test? Here are some basic guidelines on how to write a CV.

With the unemployment rate in Zimbabwe higher than the regional average, the vacancies that materialise generally garner a lot of interest meaning that the average recruiter at most only looks at a CV for a few minutes before moving on to the next one. Starting from the top, the first thing that should be included are your personal details. These include but not limited to, the applicant's full name, date of birth, contact details-both email and telephone numbers for ease of communication, current location in terms of residence and in this technological age, a link to one's LinkedIn page if the CV is in electronic form. One of the most asked questions in terms of CVs is if it is necessary to attach a photo. Generally speaking, if the job advert does not explicitly ask for a photo it is safe to leave one out. Whilst the advantage of adding a photo might be that the recruiter may be able to put a human face to the qualifications, there are also potential downsides. Issues that may arise include some photos being perceived as inappropriate, taking up space that might have been utilised better and opening oneself up to discrimination and biases.

The main body of the CV should start with a personal profile. A personal profile, which is also known as a personal statement, career objective or professional profile, is one of the most important aspects of your CV. It's a short paragraph that sits just underneath your name and contact details giving prospective employers an overview of who you are and what you're all about. The profile should preferably be tailored for every vacancy, highlighting specific qualities that match the role and an example or two of similar work done. Although it is effectively a chance to sell yourself to the recruiter, the applicant should be mindful to keep their profile short, balanced and realistic.

In the work experience section, the applicant can then list down their employment history inclusive of internships. The most common way is to use reverse chronological order starting with your most recent role. Information that should be included includes the names of the relevant companies that one has worked for, the duration of employment at each company, the job titles as well as the main duties and a description of the skills used or developed that have some relation to the advertised vacancy. In this technological age, some recruiters have already started using sorting software that searches for keywords in CVs to screen candidates where volumes of applicants are overwhelming. This might mean that you might actually be the better candidate for the job but because your CV is not concise and tailored to the vacancy, it may not end up being ranked by the automated system.

In the education and qualifications section, the norm is that the most recent qualifications are listed first cascading downwards whilst those in progress should be indicated as ongoing. Relevant certifications

should also be included. For references, most candidates generally list a minimum of 2 or 3 references. A referee is someone who can give a potential employer information about your past work experience, skills, character, and conduct. Examples of people who can be references include former and current employers, supervisors, co-workers, subordinates, business contacts, and even clients. It is good practice to inform an individual about your intention to put them down as a referee.

There are many ways to skin a cat, and this is just one format that one can present their CV in for consideration. In a technological world, it is worth mentioning that there are multiple sites that offer ready-made CV templates notable ones being Resume.com, Zety, and Visual CV. One must however not forget that tailoring the CV to the vacancy is very important and it can be the difference in a competitive job market.

Vanessa Machingauta is a Consultant with Industrial Psychology Consultants (Pvt) Ltd, a Business Management and Human Resources consulting firm,

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