

What not to put on your cv

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Introduction

A CV is an important tool that everyone uses when applying for a job. Many people may not be aware of the fact that a CV may also be used in school applications, such as universities for example. Where there is tight competition, your CV is the key to helping you stand out. When someone takes a look at your CV, they see a summary of your experience and skills that you can offer. When they see this, they see a painted picture of you. Let it be beautiful!

Although there is no model CV that everyone should follow, it is no secret that there are guidelines that are generally recommended. There are ways in which you can write your CV and some details you must include. Some details should not be put in your CV as some may put you at risk rather than benefit you in any way. The McGill University Career Planning Services (2019), helps in identifying what works more than others when writing the perfect CV for you.

What are the general CV guidelines?

When writing your CV, some keys elements need to be included or considered. To begin with, put yourself in the reader's shoes. You may know your story and how your life has panned out but imagine someone looking into your life's summary. In the space of about two pages, everything about yourself must be well articulated. Because there are usually many CVs to go through at one given point, it becomes difficult for some to spend time looking at what you would be trying to say in your CV.

According to McGill University (2019), CV writing "is an art, not a science".

Do your research on the employer. Understand what exactly they are looking for an tailor your CV for that specific post and company for just that. Do not be tempted to have a "one size fits all" CV. Although your experience may be relevant to many jobs, various differentiating skills are more suited to one job than the other.

When listing your educational and work experience, the order matters. It is wise to start with the most recent one working back to the oldest. This is important so that what you are currently doing is the first thing to show. Some CVs will show experience from 30 years ago, for a job that has nothing to do with what you are looking for. The disadvantage of this is, a long CV may discourage the person reading your CV may not end up reaching the part where the relevant work experience is. Keep to about ten years of work experience and give a summary of your previous job titles, where you put the title, company and years worked. Note down the duties and responsibilities for the much older ones.

What should you not put in your CV?

An author, Smith, with *The Undercover Recruiter* (2020), has outlined some key things that you should never include in your CV. Below are some of the points with an explanation as to why this is advised

- Including unnecessary personal information – Before people master the art of writing CVs, many believe that everything about ourselves must be noted down on the document. As much as you need to give the recruiter a good picture of yourself, remember that some pieces of information may work against you. An example is including your religious views in your CV. This is not necessary and may at time jeopardise your chances of getting the post. As much as employers, school counsellors and other deciding bodies aim to be objective and neutral, there may be someone who may include their personal beliefs in how determining the way forward. The same applies to include information about your gender or age. If you are qualified for the job, you should be able to go forward based on your skills and experiences. Unless a certain a position only needs a type of person then you may include it but ensure you know that it is not for invalid discrimination purposes.
- Your physical address – It is not the best idea to add your physical address onto your CV. As much as your CV is intended to fall into the correct hands, you may never know who is likely to end up with this piece of information about you. For security purposes, it is advised to only include the area or city to live in but never pinpoint exactly where you live.
- Length of your CV – During our school years, we are taught how to write concisely and straight to the point. This is the same when writing out your CV. Making it too lengthy may tire the people going through it and naturally, may feel like putting it away and moving onto the next. Think back to when you made presentations at your work or in university. What is a major point to you were taught to take away with you? The content on your slides, yes? Yes. Presenting some work to people with hundreds of lines and sentencing may distract your audience and bore them into focusing on other things that have nothing to do with what you are presenting. In this case, the person going through your article is your audience. Present a reasonable CV in length, with just the information they need. By going on about unnecessary things may distract them and make it easy for them to think of other things you may have included, causing them to scrutinise it even more.
- Poor Grammar – Although this may not necessarily have much to do with the actual post you are applying for, always bear in mind that reading something that is not written correctly can be tedious and extremely frustrating. The Guardian (2009), highlighted the costs of bad grammar in a CV. In a survey published in 2009, it was noted that many CVs with bad grammar are received from individuals aged 21 – 25. Many of these CVs are prone to making the same mistakes as someone who did not go on to university. This does not mean that because you are in this age range, your CV will be scrutinised even more. It is just something to look out more for. At the same time, no matter what age group you are in, you may be well over 40, ensure that your CV is correctly written. Ensure that you have Grammarly on your desktop. This tool is very useful in checking the quality of your writing. Over time, with the suggestions you often receive, your writing improves as you start using some words and phrases instead of others.
- Improper email addresses – The email address you put on your CV matters! Many of us created our first email at a very young age. It is not surprising that you may see some emails like “cupacke@email.com”. For a young person, that is alright and very understandable but at some point, we all have to grow out of the things we did when we were young. If you see that your

email address is inappropriate, do not squeeze it in because that is where the majority of your emails go, instead, create a new email with perhaps your name and surname, so it can look professional. Smith (2020), has discovered that most people with these unprofessional emails, do not usually land the job.

Conclusion

One important aspect of this journey is to remember to tailor the CV and make it your own. As much as some guidelines and templates help in crafting the perfect CV, the content in the CV is your own. You are your own story. Other people may have a CV that looks like yours at face value but differentiate yourself with what you put into the document. There are some people without much work experience but their CVs are exciting to read as introspect into themselves and write it on paper. The more you understand yourself, your goals and ambitions, the easier it is to put it down on paper.

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