CV Writing Guidance

Constructing your personal marketing tool

Fikrah HR

Pay as you go HR

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Introduction:

Your CV is your advert, its your marketing tool, its more important now than ever before to have one that stands out and really sells YOU!

What is covered:

- CV formats - what to put where, how and why.
- Subconscious Bias - what is it and how to avoid it
- Applicant Tracking Systems - what are they and how do they affect our applications, how to get them to work to our benefit
- Resources

Make it simple

Make it memorable.

Make it inviting to look at.

Make it fun & easy to read.

Leo Burnett

CV Formats:

There are three common formats:

- Chronological: Classic format that lists your work experience in order, starting with the most recent. This is best for those whose work history is closely related to their desired job.

- Functional: Emphasizes qualifications and accomplishments instead of specific jobs, but isn't recommended. This is best for those looking to highlight skills or who are looking for a career change.

- Hybrid: Modern format where skills and highlights go at the top before a detailed work history. This is best for those who have a mix of relevant skills and similar work experience

Visible Differences:

Chronological

Alexa McGuire
City, State Zip
(206) 555-5555 • alexamcguire@email.com
linkedin.com/in/your-name-here

WORK EXPERIENCE

Company 4, Location
Job Title   (MM/YYYY)-Present

This is where you write about your experience. Do not simply list your day-to-day job duties. Work in resume keywords that are most relevant to the job for which you're applying. Try replacing some of your duties with measurable results and accomplishments rather than duties. Remember, "duties tell, accomplishments sell." To create a strong measurable result, try this format: [Action verb] [brief explanation of accomplishment] resulting in [quantifiable outcome. Using %, $, etc. will draw the eye and make an impact]. For example: "Responded to an average of 203 customer service emails per week, improving response time by 74% and customer satisfaction by 31% between 2016 to 2017."

Company 3, Location
Job Title   (MM/YYYY)-(MM/YYYY)

Keep your sentences short and to the point. This will make it easier for a recruiter or hiring manager to read or skim. Use your limited space to focus on things are that most relevant to the new job, rather than going into every detail about the responsibilities that took up most of your time. Tailor your resume to the job description.

Company 2, Location
Job Title   (MM/YYYY)-(MM/YYYY)

It's OK to leave positions off your resume if they aren't relevant to the job you're pursuing. Unless the experience is crucial, you can also go into fewer details on older positions.

Company 1, Location
Job Title   (MM/YYYY)-(MM/YYYY)

Don't worry about having the same amount of information for each job. Spend more words on the most transferable skills and experience.

EDUCATION

Degree, Graduation Year (YYYY)
College Name, Location

Functional

Joe Jobscan
Seattle, WA | (206) 555-5555
joe-jobscan@example.com | linkedin.com/in/joe-jobscan-123

Skills Summary

A few sentences or bullet points listing off the most relevant hard skills and soft skills related to the position for which you're applying.

Professional Accomplishments

Major Skill 1 (Example: Management)
- More detail of the skill and how it relates to the job application
- Examples of projects or situations that utilized this skill
- Measureable results and accomplishments that back up your ability

Major Skill 2 (Example: Management)
- More detail of the skill and how it relates to the job application
- Examples of projects, measurable results, and accomplishments

Major Skill 3 (Example: Management)
- More detail of the skill and how it relates to the job application
- Examples of projects, measurable results, and accomplishments

Work History

Position 1, Company, Date Started - Date Ended
Position 2, Company, Date Started - Date Ended
Position 3, Company, Date Started - Date Ended

Education

Degree, School, Years

Hybrid

LeRoy Keller
City, State Zip | (206) 555-5555 | leroykeller@email.com
linkedin.com/in/your-name-here

Add a strong resume summary here that highlights what it is you do, the types of companies you've worked with, and why you're great at your job. Experience, specializations, areas of interest, etc.

SKILLS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- **Skill Topic 1** (eg: Software Engineering or Warehouse Management): Skill 1 | Skill 2 | Skill 3 ...
- **Skill Topic 2**: Skill 1 | Skill 2 | Skill 3 | Skill 4 | Skill 5...
- **Skill Topic 3**: Skill 1 | Skill 2 | Skill 3 | Skill 4 ...
- **Accomplishment 1**: [Action verb] [brief explanation of accomplishment] resulting in [quantifiable outcome. Using %, $, etc. will draw the eye and make an impact]
- **Accomplishment 2**: ...
- **Accomplishment 3**: ...

WORK EXPERIENCE

Company 4, Location
Job Title, (MM/YYYY)-Present

This is where you write about your experience. Do not simply list your day-to-day job duties. Work in resume keywords that are most relevant to the job for which you're applying. Provide context to the skills and accomplishments above.

Company 3, Location
Job Title, (MM/YYYY)-(MM/YYYY)

Because you listed skills and accomplishments above using this hybrid format, you can afford to write a little bit less in your experience section. Expand to two pages if necessary, but keeping your resume to one page is a good goal to have (unless you have over 10-15 years of relevant experience).

Company 2, Location
Job Title, (MM/YYYY)-(MM/YYYY)

It's OK to leave positions off your resume if they aren't relevant to the job you're pursuing. Unless the experience is crucial, you can also go into fewer details on older positions.

Company 1, Location
Job Title, (MM/YYYY)-(MM/YYYY)

Barely relevant positions deep in your work history can be summed up in a quick line or two.

EDUCATION

Degree, Graduation Year (YYYY), College Name, Location

What do we need to include in our CV?

- Name

- Contact Details - mobile & email address

- Current Location

- Qualifications & Certificates

- Education Details

- Work Experience

- <u>Skills & Competencies</u>
This gives you the chance to highlight what you're good at and make sure you have the 'key words' from the job description

- <u>Executive Summary</u>
This is a brief paragraph summarising who you are in your career and what you can bring to the role, this too should be adapted depending on the role being applied for.

Education, Location & Industry:

- Job titles - keep them streamlined, dont use fancy terminology (even if that's what was written on your contract!) a recruiter needs to understand the positions you have held

- Responsibilities - Writing the same details for each job title can be a boring and tedious read for the recruiter. Highlight the brief details & responsibilities of your role, especially any unusual ones and then bullet point your achievements during that role. Do not copy & paste the company job description.

- Company Name - Consider whether the company name is known to the recruiter, it maybe regional or a local company, if not give a small detail or two about it, has it won awards, how many staff, whats the main business etc.

- How far back to include - depending on your career and whats important to the application you are making - general advice is not more than 10 years if you have less than this then you can choose to include all.

- Students, or apprenticeships/internships - include all relevant experience, even if its part-time, evenings, casual work or other. Detail what you achieved in the roles and mention the status/type of position.

Achievement & Quantifiable based statements:

The STAR acronym is easy to remember and will help you organise material for when you write your CV and in an interview. It works like this:

- Situation - Describe the situation, the problem, challenge, project or obstacle you were faced with
- Task - Describe what was required of you
- Action - List the actions you took
- Result - Describe the results you helped to obtain and the benefit to your employer, quantify these - $, % etc.

Set yourself up with an excel spreadsheet, one column for each S, T, A & R. Start by brainstorming the tasks or any actions you have taken in each role.
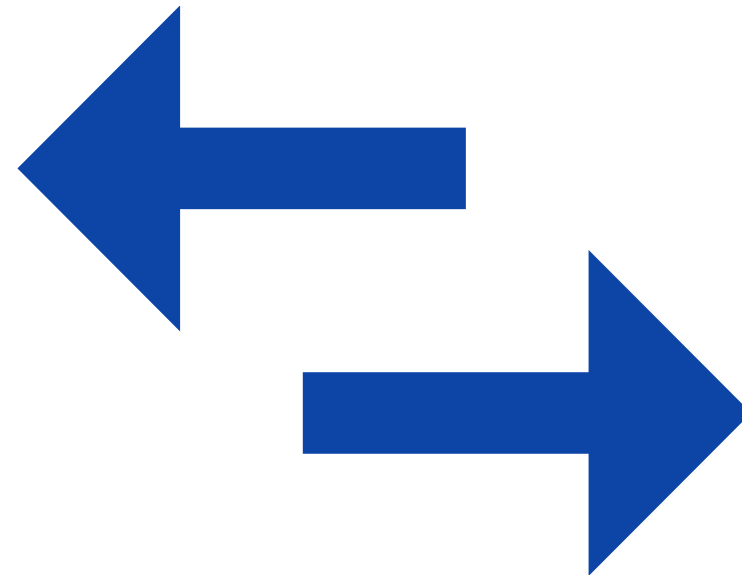
Achievement & Quantifiable based statements:

The task or achievement:

I changed the light bulb

How to write it on your CV:

"single handedly managed the successful upgrade and deployment of a new environmental illumination system with zero cost overruns and no safety incidents"

Achievement & Quantifiable based statements:

Give the person reading your CV something to measure your achievements by:

"Grew a team of account specialists from four to twenty in less than 8 months, resulting in a 230% increase in revenue collections and a decrease in late payments by over $365K in one quarter."

"Hired to fulfill new customer orders, track inventory shipments, answer billing questions, and manage payments via inbound IM/chat and phone in 200-person call center."
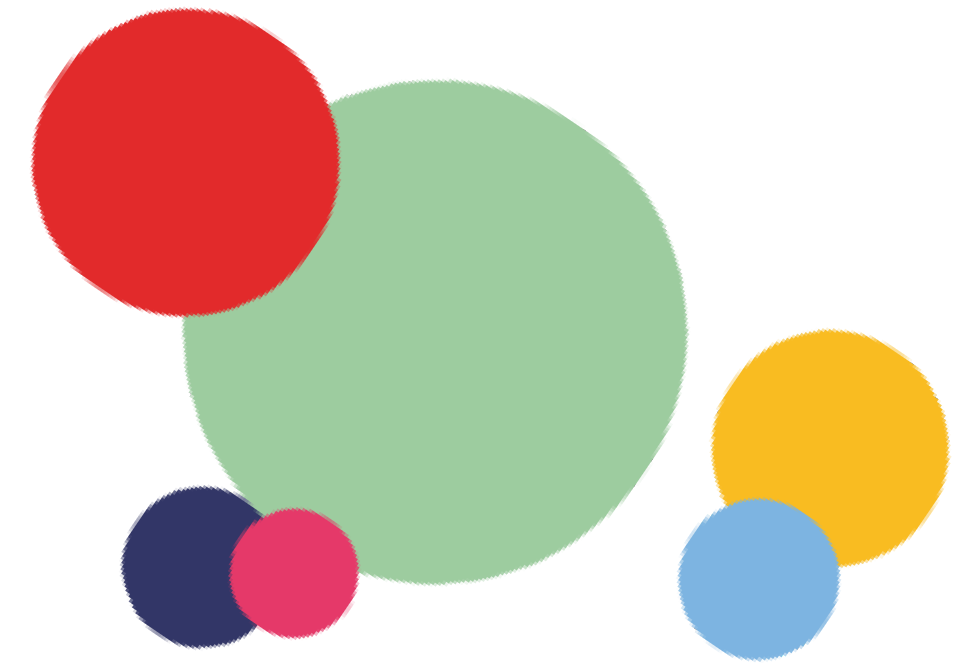
Other Important points to note:

Font:

- Choose a legible font - something like Arial, Times New Roman or Calibri.
- No fancy colours or styles - black or dark blue is best - these give the most contrast against white paper and on most Computer screens.
- Font Size - ideally a minimum of 10points maximum of 12points. Too small and its difficult to read, too big and it spreads out on the page.
- Make sure your font type, size and colour are consistent throughout the whole document.
- Capitalise correctly - whole words dont need it unless its an Acronym, and its more difficult to read.

Formatting:

- Use section titles in the same font, slightly larger size (½point even!) and dont over emphasis them.
- Be consistent with all titles looking the same.
- Bullets points are good to use, dont over complicate the document with using funky options; a basic dot, dash or square point is fine.
- Use the auto formatting option in word to make sure they are all aligned and maintain the same across the whole document.
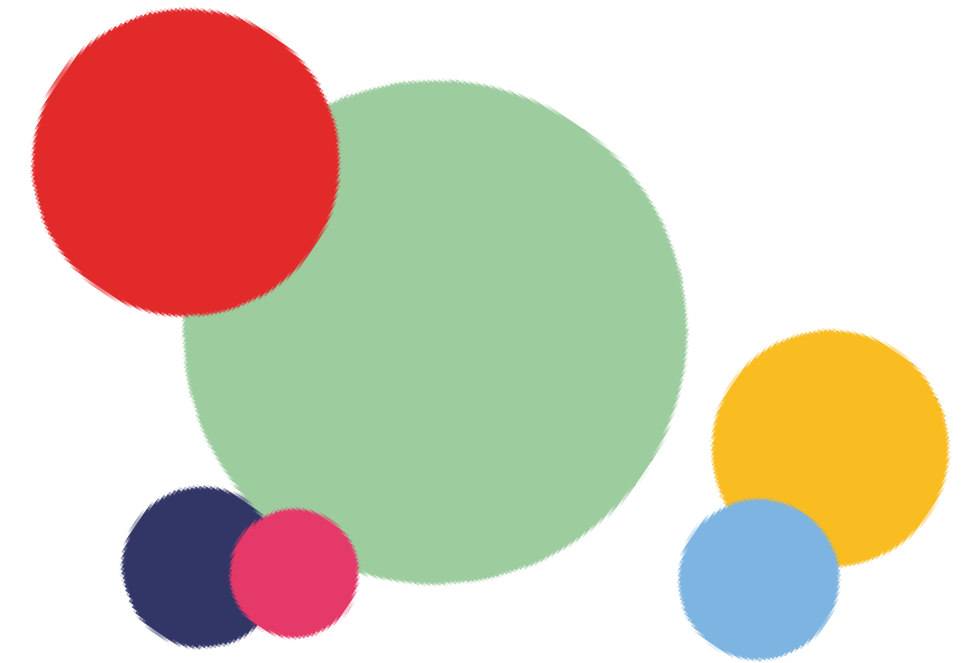
Other Important points to note:

Grammar & Spelling

- Use the word automated help for this,

- Decide on the language for your document and set it as default.

- Check which version of English you want to use! this makes a difference!

Color <u>versus</u> Colour

Capitalisation <u>versus</u> Capitalization

both are correct in different countries!

Proof read,

Proof read,

Proof read,

Then print it and read it again!

Ask your friends & family to read it!

CV's & AI

Yes, absolutely use AI tools to help develop the content for your CV but:

- Due to the nature of AI tools (Chat GPT etc) they are probability agents, the more people that use them for their CV's the more the CV outputs will all look and read the same!

- be aware of the common overused 'Chat words' - these are a dead giveaway that its AI generated

- be aware of hallucinations, Chat has a tendency invent details, data and statistics, because it thinks you want it to! make sure the information included is specific to you and correct. It can also reference the wrong or old data, so check and double check it!

Subconscious bias:

An automatic, mental shortcut, used to process information quickly and make decisions.

Subconscious:
The part of your mind that notices and remembers
information when you are not actively trying to do so, and
influences your behaviour even though you do not realize it.

Bias:
The action of supporting or opposing a particular person
or thing in an unfair way, because of allowing personal
opinions to influence your judgment.

How to avoid Subconscious Bias:

In many countries there is legislation in place to protect the candidate from bias or what is otherwise known as discriminatory hiring practises, this means that there is no legal requirement to provide certain information on your CV, these include:

- Dates or years of education
- Marital & Family Status
- Gender

- Nationality & passport details
- Family information (Names of parents etc)
- Photograph

Consider carefully the information you include and what can be derived from it.

For Example if you include language skills using the term "mother tongue" could lead a recruiter to consider this related to your nationality, its better to use a term like "fluent" which describes your capability with that language.

Applicant Tracking Systems:

What are they, how do they work and what does this mean for our CV?

Applicant tracking systems are used by companies to assist with recruitment and hiring processes. Each system offers a different combination and scope of features, but ATS are primarily used to help hiring companies collect, organize, and filter applicants.

When you apply through an ATS, you will most likely be asked to answer what are called "knockout questions." Knockout questions can be in the style of check boxes or short answer questions. Their purpose is to narrow the pool of applicants.

If an applicant answers any of the knockout questions unsatisfactorily, the resume will either be flagged or auto-rejected by the ATS. If you answer the knockout questions correctly, your resume will make it through to the next stage.

All applicant tracking systems parse and store resume information in ways that make candidates easy to filter and search by keyword.
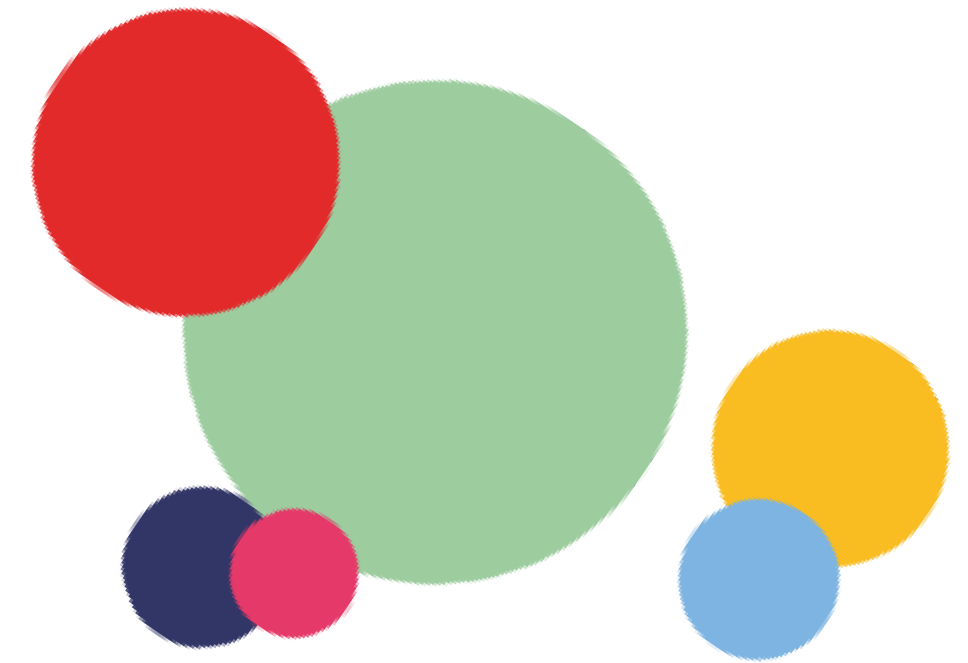
How can we beat the ATS?

1. Tailor your resume to the job description.

2. Match your Resume key words to skills found in the job description.

3. Use Long form and Acronym versions of key words

4. Use a Chronological or Hybrid Resume Format

5. Dont use tables or columns

6. Use a screen friendly, traditional font

7. Dont use headers of footers

8. Use standard resume section headings

9. Dont use graphics or photos

10. Save it in a word format preferably docx

Resources:

There are plenty of resources online to help you with Key words, common Skills and competency terminology.

Here are some online resources I have found:

- thebalancecareers.com/list-of-resume-and-cover-letter-keywords

- zety.com/blog/resume-action-words

- themuse.com/advice/185-powerful-verbs-that-will-make-your-resume-awesome

- novoresume.com/career-blog/resume-keywords-how-to-use-them

Use a website like JobScan to check your CV against a known job description, its a 'dummy' ATS.

Worth to do and see the impact of your changes!

Thank you!