**CV Preparation - How to write the perfect CV**
Even with the ever-growing rise and use of social media within the job market, a well put together and structured CV is still the main way you are expected to present yourself when applying for a vacancy. It is the CV that will fundamentally get you that all important interview and take you on the recruitment journey for your next role.

A CV is an overview of your working achievements, experience, skills and is your opportunity to promote yourself to a potential future employer. Remember, your CV is a reflection of your career so far. It is important to get the length, structure, and content right. Striking the balance between saying too much and not enough is difficult. We have put together a few tips that will help when drafting that perfect profile.

CV Structure
A common recruitment myth is that a CV should only ever be two pages. Yes, you need to keep it concise and to the point but if it rolls on to three pages, that's ok. There may be specific requirements when applying for a position but in most instances a straightforward and traditional CV will suffice. To kick off the daunting task, create a document with the below headers and start building your profile around them.

- **Contact details –** Name, address, personal email (make sure this is professional), contact number, and link to your LinkedIn profile.

- **Professional Summary –** A short paragraph introducing yourself. This needs to be a strong first impression highlighting any career achievements that you want to draw attention to.

- **Skills –** In this section use bullet points to make keywords standout and grab the reader's interest**.** We advise this mirrors job advert requirements.

- **Employment history –** Company, job title, employment dates, and a brief paragraph about what your role was when working in the business, start with the most relevant experience.

- **Professional memberships, chartership, certificates, etc. –** This can be bullet pointed with the dates achieved.

- **Education history –** Include the name of the qualification, where you studied and the dates it was achieved. Summarise what was covered and ensure to highlight anything that is industry relevant. You only need the headings for school or college qualifications, this will also help to minimise the space that is taken.

- **Hobbies interests or achievements –** A very brief section on what you do in your spare time to add personality. Examples - Sports, travelling, languages, studying, volunteering, or blogging.
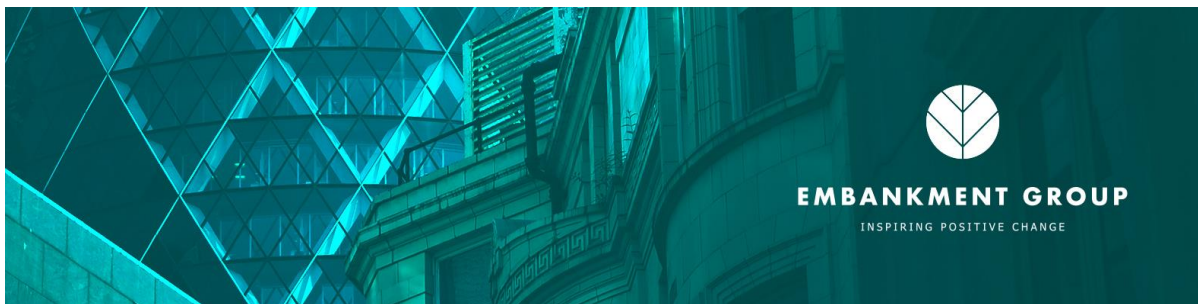
- **References –** You do not need to put actual references on your CV. 'References are available upon request' is fine in this section. But do have them ready because when you are offered an interview or the job these may be required.

General tips
Here are a few pointers to consider when creating your CV

- **Set time aside** – Block out a few hours and treat it like a job. If you're only sparing the odd 10 minutes here and there, it will never get done and may feel like an impossible task.

- **Brainstorm** – Think about your skills, previous roles, companies and even projects you have worked on, it will help you to remember what you did in your working past. Major projects, values, size, and your involvement will your make CV powerful.

- **LinkedIn** – View past colleagues' and managers' LinkedIn profiles it may give inspiration for keywords or job descriptions. Also, make sure your profile mirrors what's on your LinkedIn. A potential employer will always go on your LinkedIn page before meeting you. If you do not want them to view your personal social media profiles make sure they are set to private, this includes Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

- **Job adverts online –** Look at adverts online for the role you are in or the position you are applying for. Your current employer may be advertising for a similar position in your team, and it could help when summarise what you do day to day.

- **Format** - Use a clear font like Arial, Calibri, or Times New Roman along with clear headings, and bullet points. Do not use loud colours or small text making it hard to read. Keep the format basic, columns and text boxes can make it difficult when applying through online vacancy portals.

- **Spelling and grammar** - Get someone to check for spelling, grammar, and tone. It is a professional document that represents you and needs to create a great first impression.

Once you have completed your CV, re-read it and ensure you are comfortable with it. You want to sell yourself and shout about your successes, but it needs to be accurate. Remember, this is what you are going to be speaking about during an interview, so you need to know it inside out. Review the length, content, and check the dates are correct.
Good luck and if you need help or would like to discuss your CV, feel free to get in touch with one of our team!