

CREATING A CV THAT STANDS OUT FROM THE CROWD

One of the subjects we get asked about the most is how to create a CV that stands out from the crowd. The modern job market is competitive, and so in order to ensure your CV works for you and will get you noticed, you need to understand the purpose of your CV and how to sell your strengths and achievements.

When an employer or recruiter receives your CV most will skim read it for 15-20 seconds to pick out key information. Your CV may also go through an applicant tracking system which identifies keywords that are relevant to the job vacancy. This means your CV has to attract an employer's attention quickly in order for them to consider taking you forward to an interview.

The purpose of a CV

Your CV is a sales document which helps you to secure an interview. A CV should not be a detailed analysis of your full career history to date; tailor what you are presenting to make it relevant to the employer or recruiter or they will stop reading it.

You need to highlight your key skills and strengths which are relevant to the role that you are applying for. Most job descriptions will include the experience and skills that the employer values most in an ideal candidate, so try to identify what is important to them and if you have the relevant experience, include it in your CV.

You must be able to sell your key achievements by demonstrating how you have added value to any previous organisations you have worked for.

Identify your achievements

Employers want to see where you have added value in your career to date. Examples of your past behaviours are seen as indicators of your future behaviour. These achievements will help you to stand out from potentially hundreds of other applicants.

- Did you transform or implement any systems? How did this add value to the business?
- Did you improve any processes – did this increase business efficiencies?
- Did you identify any cost savings? How did you do this?
- Have you identified trends and made recommendations? Did you have to influence at a senior level?
- Have you mitigated risk? What analysis did you undertake?
- Were you the lead in a project, if so what did you do and was the outcome?
- Have you built a new team/division for the company?

Writing achievement statements

Writing a good, compelling achievement statement will put you on the top of the pile. Following the **FAB** sentence structure will help you to turn a good achievement into a great achievement:

- **(F) Feature:** The way you did this. Start the sentence with a power word (e.g. consistently, successfully, actively, continually, efficiently).
- **(A) Action:** What you did. Use a verb (e.g. maximised, minimised, exceeded, revitalised, created, launched, coordinated) followed by a few words describing what you did.
- **(B) Benefit:** State the benefit to the company, customer etc. If you can make the benefit quantifiable this will have much more of an impact and show the employer how you can add value.

Example: 'Consistently (F) met customer requirements, ensuring (A) effective communication and management of expectations to ensure satisfaction (B)'

Example: 'Regularly (F) contributed innovative ideas within the workplace, demonstrating (A) understanding of plants and conditions to achieve the most suitable and viable options (B)'

Applying this structure to your achievement statement is essential when producing a long list of strong, compelling achievements.

Perennial is working in partnership with **Renovo** who provide our Employment Support Programme. Renovo is the UK's leading specialist provider of career transition and job search support having helped tens of thousands of people return to work twice as fast as the national average.

If you require help or support please call Perennial's helpline on 0800 093 8543 and speak to one of the team, or email services@perennial.org.uk and we will get back to you. Our office hours are Monday and Wednesday 9.30am – 5pm and Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 9am – 5pm.

www.perennial.org.uk

renovo



Helping people
in horticulture
Perennial