

**CV Advice**

**Introduction**

CVs do not get jobs -- but CVs do get interviews. One of the key elements of success in a job search is the CV, and can often be one of the more difficult documents to develop. A CV is the job seeker's primary marketing document that sells the product and the skills and experience of the candidate. To be effective, a CV must grab the attention of the reader in 25-35 seconds. A good CV will extend that attention span to over a minute. In effect, the success of the job search revolves around the effectiveness of the first step -- the CV.

No one knows your background and experience better than you. Many people can get the basics of their projects and experience down on paper in a sensible fashion. What most people who write their own CVs have difficulty with is making that sell to the reader. Here are six tips to help you make your CV sell.

1. **Select the best organisational format.**

Most CVs are written in chronological (reverse time order) format, but that does not mean that the chronological choice is best for you. A combination format may be best. The combination format is evenly balanced between skill set description, achievements, and employment history, with the advantage being that projects can be highlighted for greater impact.

1. **Make absolutely sure your document is error free.**

An error in a CV can often be the killer between two closely matched candidates. Professionals are expected to be detail-oriented so an error in the CV reflects badly on possible future performance.

1. **Find a balance between wordiness and lack of detail.**

Employers need to see details about your work history and experience, but they don't need to know everything. Keep information germane to the goal of attaining an interview. Discerning what to exclude is just as important as knowing what to include.  If a project was your 'baby' and you gave your blood, sweat and tears to it, you may be inclined to write too many details whereas just a two or three line overview would be best.

1. **Think "accomplishments" rather than "job duties".**

This is difficult for most people, because we are not objective about ourselves. Think about what made you stand out from the crowd:  How did you come up with a way to do things better, more efficiently, or for less cost? What won honours for you? Information such as this will be what makes you grab the attention and put your CV on the top of the stack.

1. **Keep it positive.**

Reason for leaving a job, setbacks, failed initiatives, etc. do not have a place on the CV. Employers are seeking people who can contribute, have a positive attitude, are enthusiastic, and have successfully performed similar job skills in the past. Concentrate on communicating these issues and avoid any detracting information.

1. **Be prepared.**

Most first-time job interviews are conducted via telephone rather than in person so be sure to be prepared for that telephone call when it arrives. Many people are not and are caught off guard -- and ruin their only chance with that organisation.