

# Put your best foot forward

Everyone has specific reasons when deciding to seek out a new career challenge, but the one common weapon everyone will be competing with, is their CV.



Madge Gibson

All CVs are not the same and it is those that are well composed and relevant that attract the attention of recruiters. Madge Gibson, CEO of The Change Initiative, provides some valuable tips on how to achieve this.

Gibson describes a CV as an individual's calling card, a foot in the door to that all-important interview. If you don't spend enough time creating a professional document that represents you well, you're doing yourself a great disservice.

CVs should be flawless - accurate spelling and grammar is critical. "Nothing turns off an employer more quickly than a CV with careless mistakes. If you can't spot mistakes in your CV, your attention to detail is poor. This is not a good starting point," Gibson stated.

Use a visually uncluttered and appealing layout, and format all content to look sleek and professional, using a simple, clear font.

Whilst your CV is a tool you will use to showcase your strengths, it is never wise to embellish, as this is easy to spot and can badly affect your reputation. Avoid putting your photograph in a CV - you are applying for a job, not a date.

## Clear, concise writing style

HR professionals need detail in order to differentiate the ordinary from the extraordinary, but ideally a CV should not be more than three to four pages in length. Adopt a clear, concise writing style whilst highlighting key accomplishments in both education and career. This should be set out in chronological order; with your most recent role first and no gaps between roles. If you were unemployed, or took a sabbatical, state that. Don't create doubt.

Personal information should be kept to a minimum and current contact details should be up to date and correct. Gibson suggests asking yourself: 'What is company X looking for?' 'What are their priorities in hiring for this role?' 'What experience, qualifications and personal qualities do they want?' and 'Am I providing evidence of this in my CV?'

"There is no one-size-fits-all CV. Every time you apply for a role, tailor your CV to highlight the experience you have that are a match to the criteria and minimise unrelated information," recommended Gibson.

Keep in mind that no matter where you are on the corporate ladder, when you apply for a new job, your CV is one contender in a pile of many others who are just as equipped as you. And, because of this, HR professionals spend on average only 30 seconds scanning CVs for relevance - if it makes the grade it will deserve a more detailed read, if not, it will be quickly discarded. Good CVs open doors, bad CVs close them.

Although putting together a CV is unquestionably time consuming, it represents you and is worth the time and effort to get it right. If you know this isn't your forte, seek guidance from a professional - it will be money well spent in the long run.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>