

Write a Great CV





If you have decided it's time to look for a new job or are passively seeking your next career move, having a well written CV is your essential first step.

Most employers spend just a few seconds scanning each CV before moving on to the next.

Our advice is based on over 20 years' successfully recruiting across a range of sectors – read on and don't leave anything to chance.

Best regards,

Best Regards

David Beck

Managing Director

The rpc Group of Companies

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1. Introduction

A Curriculum Vitae is your promotional or sales document. Its function is to enable you to market yourself- i.e. to gain an audience with a potential employer.

Like any promotional document, a CV needs to create an immediate impact. It must convey the maximum amount of information in the minimum number of words. Style and presentation are as crucial as content.

Remember there is no such thing as a perfect CV. The only measure of success is – does it achieve getting interviews? However, we strongly recommend that you adopt the following layout.

2. Content


The information is best set out in clearly defined sections in the following order:

Contact Details

This section should include your name, address, telephone numbers and e mail address. Use an email address that is regularly monitored and sounds professional.

Telephone numbers should include mobile number, home number - if you have a landline and daytime telephone number if you are able to receive calls at work.

Your remaining personal details should appear as the very last item of your CV. Whilst relevant information it should not be regarded as part of the main CV as they have nothing to do with qualifications for a job.



The eye will look for the structure before reading the content.

Profile / Personal Statement

Not a necessity, but a popular option, a short personal statement at the beginning of your CV can be used to explain why you are the best person for the role, the type of person you wish to portray yourself as or reasons behind your job search. This area can also include an overview of relevant skills.

It should be a short paragraph which should be written in a lively style summarising the salient points of the whole document.

Experience

It is the most recent job history, normally of primary interest to a prospective employer, and therefore should be the first details entered under this section with subsequent jobs listed in reverse chronological order.

It is normal to give more details of your most recent employment consequently a diminishing amount of information for the earlier job history.

For each period of employment, the dates of employment, your job title and the name of the Company should ideally be on the same line.

The dates should be on the left as when CV's are first scanned, the eye will look for the structure before reading the content. Also, British and American readers tend to let the eye go to the left by force of habit that is where first sentences normally start in English.

Another major point is to make it easy and quick to determine the layout of the experience of the candidate. In this way, unnecessary eye movements are eliminated and the CV seems easier to read.

Under each period of employment, the narrative should be made up of three areas:

- Nature of the business e.g. products / services, turnover, number of depots, vehicles, square footage of warehouse, cost budgets etc
- Responsibilities e.g. who you reported to and any management you are responsible for, numbers of staff, list key responsibilities etc
- Achievements e.g. sales growth, service level improvements, cost reductions, project initiation and completion etc. Try and quantify your achievements wherever possible

It is becoming more common for CV's to feature hyper - links to past employers in the candidate's experience or employment history. This enables the reader a far better understanding of the companies the candidate has worked for than they may have now.

Education

Your educational history should always be listed in reverse chronological order and should include the qualification that was gained, where and when. This section may also include any professional development experiences, such as courses attended and membership to any relevant professional body.

Some discretion can be exercised as to how much detail to supply. Normally details of qualifications are sufficient. e.g.: BA (Hons) 2.2, 3 'A' - levels, 9 'O' - levels.

Note: If a degree is cited, there is no need to mention 'O' or 'A' levels because they are of lower attainment

Training

It is not advisable to give a long list of all the training courses and seminars, which you have attended.

Management training courses of a week or more should be listed, together with any training in relevant specialist skills. e.g. CPC International

Membership of Professional Institutes

List the professional memberships you are currently a member of followed by the abbreviated initials appropriate to your grade of membership

Interests

It is not essential to include this section. However, if there are aspects which provide evidence of relevant knowledge, skills or personality, they are worth listing.

Examples might include being a school governor, various forms of voluntary work etc which demonstrate organisational and management skills. An unusual hobby such as skydiving or genealogical research can be worth mentioning, even though it has no obvious relevance to the job, as it may help to give your CV an interesting feature which the reader remembers.

Personal Details

It is recommended that you do not state your age on your CV but include any personal information you think relevant e.g.: marital status, nationality, non – smoker etc

Note: if you state your age this invalidates your CV after a few months.

Licences, passport numbers and reference details are not needed at this early selling stage.



Do not be tempted to do CVs which are radically different.

3. Style and Format

The length of your CV will depend on the amount of experience and jobs you have had; however, two pages is usually considered the norm. Keep it punchy, to the point and have less information for less recent or less relevant roles. Avoid jargon and acronyms, especially if you have a military background.

CV's should NEVER be more than 3 pages long. In the first instance any longer submissions are unlikely to be read properly. The average time taken by Recruitment Consultants and HR / Hiring Managers on a first scan is around 20 seconds; you cannot afford to have important features of your career ignored.

Do not be tempted to do CV's which are radically different. This will only confuse the recipient.

Non-standard formats force people to think a little more. Quite often they don't, won't or can't find the time to do this.

CV's should be prepared in MS Word format for ease of opening and saving when e-mailed to a recipient.

If intending to post a hard copy of your CV, use good quality white A4 paper (min 90gsm paper). Do not staple sheets together and do not bother with folders.

Avoid headings for self-evident categories such as “Curriculum Vitae”, Age, and Marital Status etc

Adopt the conventions of spacing between category and sub-category. i.e.: bigger gaps for categories.

Chose the type of font carefully to make the run of text easier to read and less cluttered. Arial and Calibri are considered modern and easy to read fonts.

Category headers should be in bold and can be in a slightly larger font if space permits.

The use of bullet points to list out responsibilities and achievements can be used to good effect.

The impression of responsibility and expertise can be heightened by careful use of words.

Your range of responsibilities and actions will appear wider if you can avoid using the same verb twice; use different verbs that have the same meaning! Refer to Appendices 1 and 2 for lists of action words.

Do not be secretive about who you currently work for. It may put off the company you apply to and might be taken to reflect on your character.

If there are gaps in your employment record don't, unless you have something like a university degree course to fill the gap, attempt to explain them. Leave them as they are, the interview is the best place for such explanations.

Salary levels should only be mentioned in covering letters and only then if the advertisement specifically states that salary details / expectations are to be provided.

On first submission, avoid copies of references and do not attach pages of your psychological profiles and test results.

Other Things to Consider

Tailor it

Take the time to make sure your CV reflects each role that you are applying for. Research the Company and use the job description / job advert as an insight into what the employer is looking for.

Make sure your CV highlights the skills and experiences that are relevant to the role.

Appendix 1: Action Words

A

administered advised analysed anticipated appointed appraised approved arranged
assessed audited augmented averted avoided

B

bought built

C

captured centralised combined completed composed conceived controlled
counselled created

D

decreased defined demonstrated designed determined developed
devised directed documented doubled

E

edited effected eliminated employed enforced engineered established estimated
evaluated executed extracted

F

forecast formed formulated

G

generated guided

H

hired

I

implemented improved improvised increased initiated inspired inspected instigated
instructed insured interpreted interviewed introduced invented investigated

L

launched led lightened liquidated

M

maintained managed marketed modernised monitored

N

negotiated

O

obtained operated originated

P

performed pioneered planned positioned prepared presented prevented processed
procured produced programmed promoted proved provided published purchased

R

recommended recruited redesigned reduced regulated rejected related
re-organised researched resolved reviewed revised revitalised

S

saved scheduled selected settled shaped simplified sold solved specified staffed
standardised stimulated streamlined studied supervised supported
surpassed surveyed

T

taught terminated tested tightened traded

Appendix 2: Alternative Action Words

Advised/Told

Assessed
Counselled
Instructed
Presented
Recommended
Taught
Trained

Bargained

Negotiated
Traded

Calculated

Estimated
Evaluated

Changed

Converted
Corrected
Directed
Guided
Implemented
Improvised
Lightened
Modernised
Promoted
Redesigned
Reorganised
Revised
Revitalised
Simplified

Checked

Appraised
Audited
Inspected
Monitored
Tested

Controlled

Administered
Approved
Centralised
Determined
Effectuated
Enforced
Engineered
Executed
Led
Managed
Positioned
Regulated
Supervised

Constructed

Built
Compressed
Created
Designed
Devised
Invented
Marketed
Proved
Shaped

Engaged

Appointed
Recruited
Hired
Interviewed
Instigated
Introduced
Launched
Organised
Prepared
Produced
Programmed
Selected
Staffed
Utilised

**Helped/
Looked After**

Insured
Maintained
Supported

**Looked into/
Through**

Analysed
Conceived
Defined
Forecast
Interpreted
Investigated
Originated
Pioneered
Planned
Researched
Reviewed
Studied
Surveyed

**Made Bigger/
Better**

Augmented
Developed
Doubled
Expanded
Generated
Improved
Increased
Marketed
Surpassed
Tightened
Tripled

Made Smaller

Decreased
Eliminated
Liquidated
Reduced

**Made/Set Up**

Established
Formed
Formulated
Initiated

Motivated

Inspired
Stimulated
Vtalised

Paper Control

Documented
Processed

Programmed

Scheduled

Purchased

Bought
Procured

Put Right

Rescued
Saved
Settled
Solved
Standardised
Streamlined

Ran/Performed

Operated

Showed

Demonstrated
Related
Specified

PS : If you enjoyed reading this guide, why not head over to The rpc Group of Companies [Blog Page](#) where you can view an array of content on Recruitment, HR and Management.

Need Help With Your Recruitment?

You can get in touch with the rpc team in multiple ways.

Call us on: **+ 44 (0) 23 8022 4654**

Alternatively, email us on info@therpcgroup.co.uk

Do also **follow us** on LinkedIn. We have our own Group on LinkedIn entitled “The rpc Group of Companies”.

You can also follow us on Twitter [@therpcgroup](https://twitter.com/therpcgroup)

We have a Facebook page “**The rpc Group**”, click on “Like” and two Groups, one called “rpc Group of Companies” and the other “Friends who like The rpc Group of Companies” both of which you can apply to join.

And an Instagram page [@rpcrecruitment](https://www.instagram.com/rpcrecruitment)

If you wish to follow me personally (David Beck), my Twitter account handle is [@rpcrecruiter](https://twitter.com/rpcrecruiter).

My Instagram account name is [beck1084](https://www.instagram.com/beck1084) and I have a Facebook page “**David Rpc**”, click on “Friend Request”

The rpc Group of Companies has 6 operating divisions:

rpc | technical recruitment formerly known as **rpc search and selection** is a leading technical recruitment specialist in logistics and supply chain, engineering, FM, Military and Defence, IT and Telecoms positions across the whole of the UK.

It has 2 sub brands – **rpc | logistics & supply chain recruitment** and is one of the UK’s oldest established executive search and selection companies with its origins going back to 1985 and specializing in filling key UK based management roles for leading organisations operating within the Logistics and Supply Chain and related sectors.

rpc | IT and telecoms recruitment – our newest division specialising in IT and Telecoms positions across the whole of the UK.

rpc | foodservice recruitment is a leading recruitment specialist in the foodservice sector. Operating throughout the UK and Internationally in the areas of Delivered Foodservice - All temperature spans, Contract Distribution, Food to Go, Van Sales, Food Ingredients, Catering Disposables, Catering Equipment, Foodservice Manufacturing, Fresh Produce, Meats, Seafood, Charcuterie and Fine Foods and Cash and Carry.

rpc | catering & hospitality recruitment is a leading catering and hospitality recruitment specialist in supplying Chefs of all grades and Hospitality General / Deputy / Assistant / Restaurant / Bar Managers / Sommeliers and Mixologists and Hotel staff of all levels throughout the UK and Internationally.

rpc | commercial recruitment is a leading commercial recruitment specialist for Sales, Marketing, Business Support, HR and Finance positions across the whole of the UK.

rpc | international recruitment is an international technical recruitment consultancy and in addition to its core strength of managing logistics and supply chain assignments worldwide, also focuses on the additional sectors of facilities management, catering and life support services, military and defence support services, aviation, security, fuel supply and distribution, IT and telecoms, retail and wholesale, cruise ships, mining, engineering and construction including oil and gas.

rpc | interim recruitment specialises in the growing market of supplying Interim Managers and Consultants in the UK and Worldwide. All recruitment divisions source HR / Personnel, IT, Sales / Business Development and Finance Executives who have particular experience in the sectors in which **The rpc Group of Companies** operates.

Thank you for taking the time to read this guide.

Best Regards

David Beck and Anita Searle

Co-Directors

The rpc Group of Companies

