

CV WRITING

Tips and advice for job seekers and professionals alike.

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introduction

Ryan Marner – Manager, Senior Finance

Been in recruitment for over 8 years, specifically at Wade Macdonald since 2021.

Wade Macdonald are Accountancy & Finance and HR recruiters in the Thames Valley and wider regions. I personally focus on Finance (newly qual and up) but studied HR Management at University so have a nice mix of knowledge across both.

I have always loved helping people, so here I am hosting a workshop. Some of my most successful LinkedIn content has been CV structures, tips etc. so I hope to support and inspire you with your job search with this PP.



First things first...

Before you start writing/ amending your CV, think about...

- Why do I want a new job?
- What do I actually want to do?
- What do I want from my next job?
- Practical considerations such as locations
- Compensation – Understand your financial worth. The market could be changing.

Not every job is the right job!

What's the purpose of a CV?

It's to showcase your experience in order to gain an interview.

This is your opportunity to 'sell yourself' and make the employer see you as a well-qualified, professional, concise and thoughtful individual who is taking your career seriously.

Statistics show that most recruiters (whether internal or external) spend less than 60 seconds reading a CV during the sifting process.

Structure / order

- Address / Contact details in the header – Do not leave this out!
- Name
- Personal statement / profile
- Key Skills / Achievements
- Professional Qualifications / Education
- Career history – most recent job first
- Hobbies / Interests / Charity Work – We will examine later!
- References available on request – doesn't need to be on your CV but ensure you have people to hand if asked.

Spend time looking at CVs online (LinkedIn) of individuals with a similar background / experience to you and incorporate aspects you believe would enhance your "sales document".

Length of your CV

It is commonly thought that two pages is the correct length.

HOWEVER...

- One page is fine if you are at the beginning of your career.
- Three pages is fine if you are very experienced.
- The most important thing is that your CV is concise and relevant.

The personal statement

- Generally, your personal statement should be one paragraph made of four or five sentences.
- It should explain who you are, what skills you possess and what you want from your next role.
- Avoid clichés and try to make it pertinent to the job being applied for.

An example ...

“

A highly motivated CIMA qualified finance professional with 15 years post-qualified experience gained from a variety of multi-national organisations. An accomplished business partner, supporting stakeholders up to senior executive level across a multitude of regions. A strong man-manager who will support, challenge and advise depending on the circumstances. Proactive and innovative in approach with a focus on achieving personal and business objectives. Seeking an opportunity within a forward thinking, growing SME where I can utilise the skills I have gained, working in a senior management team to push the business forwards.

”

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Skills & achievements

- Your personal statement will have covered many skills off, so focus on achievements. However, depending on the role you are applying for it could also be appropriate to add some IT skills. Use of specific computer systems and depth of knowledge are always helpful e.g. SAP Super user, Excel including VBA/Macros.
- Achievements and awards are in many ways more important than a list of duties.
- Do not duplicate too much with your personal statement or your job responsibilities. In achievements think about cost savings, process improvements, cultural achievements, prizes won etc.
- Four to six bullet points is normally enough, you do not want to push the first job you display on your CV on to the second page.

Professional qualifications & education

- Highest qualification first.
- Some training qualifications that are an adjunct to your main role should be highlighted e.g. 6 Sigma black belt or Prince 2.
- If you have a professional qualification with first time passes, mention it – remember this is a sales document.
- If you are part qualified, list exactly where you are at and when you intend to complete the qualification.
- Do not list every GCSE / O-Level achieved unless it is very recent and relevant.
- There is debate over whether to add the years of education – I always would because if someone really wants to work out your age they will anyway.

J o b h i s t o r y

- A description of your employer is very relevant e.g. industry sector, turnover, number of employees.
- Reporting lines can add value, especially if you report to someone more senior than your job title might suggest.
- Try and use recognised job titles.
- Ensure the months of employment are added not just the years.
- For your most recent roles list your main duties and your achievements.
- Once your roles are not relevant to the one you are applying for simply put the name of the employer, the dates and job title without duties / responsibilities.
- Use bullet points for your duties and achievements not paragraphs.
- If a role is temporary, make sure it is clear.

Hobbies, interests, charity work...

- Make this part short and sweet. Give people a bit of insight as to who you are outside of your job title.
- This could also be achievement driven like a black belt in karate, county tennis, climbing Kilimanjaro.
- Include any charity work / volunteering.
- Avoid 'socialising with friends' and 'reading' – most people do this and it doesn't say much about you!

DO'S

- Include your academic and professional qualifications and at which stage you are at – put if you have first time passes, it will help separate you from the competition.
- Put your current role first, and bullet point your duties and achievements clearly, not lengthy paragraphs.
- When in your duties and responsibilities don't write in the first person (I did, I have).
- Tailor your CV for the specific role you are applying for.
- Try and keep it as close to 2 pages maximum as possible, but don't stress too much if it is 3 pages (as long as all is relevant).

More do's

- Highlight key achievements in your last few roles (process improvements, money savings, new systems implemented etc.)
- When sending your cv to a potential employer by email, send it in a word format and title the word document appropriately.
- If you are available for contract assignments make sure the reader is aware – see point below.
- Be conscious that a number of corporations utilise cv keyword search software.

Don't's

- Mention marital status or dependants, people can use this to discriminate.
- Write your date of birth on the CV.
- List hundreds of duties and responsibilities – use headlines and bullet points. Part of assessing a CV is how well you are communicating information about yourself, getting the message across, in a succinct and precise manner.
- Include a photo.
- Write in capitals – it makes the reader feel they are being shouted at!
- Write in too large or too small, a font 10-12 is perfect.
- Use poetic license in your cv as during the interview process you might be put yourself under unnecessary pressure (and jeopardise your chances of securing the role) by the interviewer who hones in on a semi mistruth!

KILLERS

- Don't use different fonts, **colours** or clip art 😊 ☹️
- Check for spelling and grammatical errors as these point to a lack of attention to detail especially on software like word where errors are underlined!
- Gaps between roles – If there are reasonably sized gaps and you feel comfortable to share why, include some information. Not all employers are sensitive to the many reasons behind gaps and just assume the worst i.e. Jail!
- Not a killer necessarily, but be aware when using AI/ ChatGPT to build your CV. There are tools that hiring managers and recruiters use to identify when AI has been used. You don't want to get caught out and come across as ingenuine.

Before sending your CV off

- Tailor your CV to the job description -

Every CV submission should be tailored to a specific job application.

- ✓ Read the job description carefully.
- ✓ Ensure you have mentioned relevant experience in your duties if you have covered off areas in the job specification.
- ✓ Tailor the personal statement to the job you are applying for.

C h e c k l i s t

- ❑ Ensure consistency of formatting throughout.
- ❑ Ensure the voicemail on your mobile is professional and clear as a hiring manager may choose to engage with you verbally as opposed to via email.
- ❑ Ensure your LinkedIn page is current and the information you have posted on LinkedIn reconciles 100% with your CV.
- ❑ Ask a recruitment consultant who you have a relationship with to give you honest and constructive feedback on your CV.
- ❑ Request a number of friends / colleagues to proofread your CV and ask them to both check for errors / mistakes and for any constructive criticism.
- ❑ Change all spellings are English as opposed to American spelling.
- ❑ An awful lot of people preparing CVs forget their experience of why they reject applications when they are hiring so bring that experience to the table when composing your own CV.
- ❑ **Read your cv and honestly and objectively ask yourself “would I see me for an interview?”**

Q & A TIME

Any questions welcome!

CONTACT

If we haven't answered all your questions, please reach out to us - we're more than happy to advise further and give you as much information as we can to help you in your journey.

Contact me: Ryan Marner

Email: ryan.marner@wademacdonald.com

OR our Managing Director, Chris Goulding

Email: chris.goulding@wademacdonald.com

Our website: www.wademacdonald.com

Our LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/wade-macdonald

