

CVB



Writing An Effective CV & Cover Letter

December 3rd, 2009

CVBoosters
Inspire • Encourage • Educate

Agenda

5 Point Plan for your CV

5 Point Plan for your Cover Letter

Useful Links

Agenda

5 Point Plan for your CV

5 Point Plan for your Cover Letter

Useful Links

Point 1: Cosmetics

- The CV can be one page or two pages but not more
- Use Arial or Times New Roman, my preference is Arial size 10
- Don't use fancy colours, black and white is the way forward
- Do highlight key phrases if you feel they are important for the role; personally I don't but you can
- Use bullet points rather than prose

Point 2: Structure

- **Personal Details:** Include name, address, email, telephone number, date of birth and nationality
- **Education:** Start with the most recent, so university, A levels and GCSEs. Mention any scholarships, prizes or any other academic awards
- **Work Experience:** Chronological order again, so starting with the most recent. Include both paid and volunteer work, the latter looks very impressive if you can show that you have developed skills such as initiative, creativity, teamwork, negotiation etc. Include both the responsibilities that you had and the skills that you gained.
- **Interests/Hobbies:** If you didn't include voluntary work under 'Work Experience' then add it in here. You can include examples from school but if you do that, ask yourself why? Do you not have anything from your time at university, if not why not?
- **Skills:** Languages, IT skills come in here
- **References:** "Available on Request"

Point 3: Content

- Think about the role you are applying for, what attributes is the employer looking for? Some key ones include: teamwork, analytical skills, initiative, leadership, communication and creativity; the list of skills is usually quite generic and found on the company's website
- How can you **demonstrate** that you possess these skills?
- For example, which of these is better at demonstrating your teamwork skills?
 - (i) I have great teamwork skills and am a very creative individual
 - (ii) I was responsible for organising several mentoring projects for college students and had the opportunity to work with a variety of individuals which helped develop my problem solving and team work abilities

Obviously the latter as it provides evidence to show the reader how you acquired the skills

Point 4: Spell Check

- An obvious point but one which countless people fall down on; please use a spell check on your CV
- A spelling mistake can result in a rejection. After all, if you claim to be a detail focused individual on your CV but then make a spelling mistake on it, it's a little contradictory wouldn't you say?

Point 5: The Best Way to Boost Your CV

- A 2.1 or above is an absolute must, this cannot be **stressed** enough
- Get involved at university, be it through sports, voluntary work, student societies, debate, charities, entrepreneurial endeavours; teamwork, initiative, leadership, creativity, negotiation, effective communication skills are not learnt while sitting on your hands
- Attend Careers Fairs and Campus Presentations by firms and find out as much as you can about the profession; websites are also increasingly detailed
- Start reading a decent newspaper i.e. not the Metro to develop your knowledge of current affairs, business and politics
- Voluntary work or social entrepreneurship can be a great addition to a CV and are personal favourites of mine
- We all have weaknesses but also the ability to turn them into strengths

Agenda

5 Point Plan for your CV

5 Point Plan for your Cover Letter

Useful Links

Point 1: Cosmetics

- One page is an absolute maximum
- Arial or Times New Roman are ideal, again I prefer Arial size 10

Point 2: Structure

- **Introduction:** Introduce yourself, where you are studying and what you are applying for
- **Why are you applying for the role at that company:** Include your reasons for applying for the role and anything that is unique about the company that made you apply. Perhaps you met someone from the firm at a presentation, if so mention their name in your letter, though do ask before doing this
- **What differentiates you from your peers and why does this make you suitable for the role:** Arguably the most important section of the cover letter. Highlight a couple of experiences that you have had, what you have learnt and why this makes you stand out. If you don't have anything, then get involved with a project, student society, charity or business that interests you. Perhaps even tell a story linking this answer with the answer to the question above
- **Thank you:** Thank the reader for their time

Point 3: Content

- Try to build a story around yourself explaining how your life experiences have brought you to apply to the firm; you must capture the reader's interest
- Rather than listing several projects that you have been involved with, choose a couple and develop them extensively
- Consider using the STAR approach

Situation (10%)

Task (10%)

Action (70%)

Result (10%)

- Do mention names of people that you have met at Careers Fairs in your cover letter; ask permission for this

Point 4: “Copy and Paste”

- Though parts of your cover letter will be similar from one firm to another, simply copying and pasting is a bad idea
- Recruiters can always spot which students have taken the extra effort to find out about the firm and the role
- Remember the cover letter is just as important as your CV and is your chance to market yourself to the employer
- Plus finding out as much as you can about the role is in your best interests; after all, you don't want to join a company and then regret the decision because it wasn't what you expected

Point 5: CVBoosters & FTCF

CVBoosters Ltd

- We run the following services:
- CV Check (15mins) with a finance professional
- Mock Interview and Group Case Studies
- CVB Finance Lectures Series
- Free Practice Numerical Tests
- For more information please visit <http://www.cvboosters.com>

All profits from the workshops above go to “Friends of The Citizens Foundation”



FRIENDS OF THE CITIZENS FOUNDATION

Agenda

5 Point Plan for your CV

5 Point Plan for your Cover Letter

Useful Links

Useful Links

- [CVBoosters](#)
- [DiversityNow](#)
- [SEO](#)
- [Milkround](#)
- [The Times Top 100](#)
- [Inside Careers](#)
- [The Gateway Online](#)
- [FTCF](#)

“The future belongs to those who prepare for it today”

[Malcolm X]