

Top CV Pitfalls to Avoid

Have you found yourself sending out loads of CV's with no responses from them? Check your CV against the most common pitfalls that mean your CV is overlooked.

Top 5

1. Typing Errors & Poor Spelling and Grammar

No one is perfect with spelling and grammar. Always get someone else to proof read your work.

What's the Impact?

It can seem like you haven't put much time into creating your CV.

2. Listing duties instead of achievements

Writing phrases like 'responsible for ordering stock' reads like a job description and doesn't explain what you have achieved or done – make sure you elaborate on the duties you have experienced. Use active language instead of passive. For example 'team-worker' could be replaced by 'practical experience working in a team, using my communication skills to achieve store targets & sales'. Much more dynamic and shows two skills!

What's the Impact?

Listing duties can make your CV look dull and doesn't show anyone what you can do or how you would enhance their company's team. Remember you want to show how you would be a great candidate for them.

3. Not tailoring your CV

When sending out a mass of CV's it can show that you are not being specific enough for the range of jobs available, employers recognise mass CV distributions. Try and show your transferrable skills and develop each CV for the job role you are applying for. By doing this you are able to sell your skills and experiences. You need to consider what the employer reading your CV might be looking for. For example: a leisure centre they would be more interested in detail relating to your Sport Leader Award.

What's the Impact?

Your CV could look generic and unfocussed, if it doesn't highlight your abilities. You want to show that you would be an asset to a potential employer. Make your CV stand out from the crowd.

4. Visual Appearance

When trying to include everything you have done into a CV it can sometimes look cluttered and difficult to read. Try avoiding the use of long sentences and large paragraphs with lots of descriptive information. It is a good idea to use bullet points, short punchy sentences that enhance your skills.

It is also tempting to make your CV stand out by doing something creative with the layout, such as varying WordArt fonts and colours. Try to avoid doing this and stick to a single format all the way through as it could look messy.

What's the Impact?

Your CV will be difficult to read and employers will not take the time to decipher the information you are trying to give, the clearer and more concise your CV is the more inclined the employer will be to read it.

5. Too long or short

This is a balancing act. You want to include as much positive information to sell yourself without being too descriptive or short. Always remember employers have stacks of CVs to work through. The general rule is two pages for a CV.

What's the Impact?

If it is too long you risk waffling about irrelevant information. If it is too short it can come across very generic and can easily miss key information. Both scenarios would mean an employer may not look at your CV or application.

The most important thing is to take your time over your CV, make sure it is the best it can be.

Once you think it is done, get it checked by someone else, they may spot something that you haven't.