



'Must Do's'
For
Preparing Your CV

'A resume that works for you in the 21st century'

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What a curriculum vitae IS:

- A vehicle for ensuring that you are invited to interview for any position you are interested in pursuing further

What a curriculum vitae ISN'T:

- A long, dull, functional chronology that merely records your work history to date
- A brief, once-over-lightly view of your career, offered on a scant 2-3 pages ("I'll give them the useful details at the interview")
- A generalised sales pitch trumpeting your achievements, but minus any context or details ("The hype will make them keen to meet with me")

How to achieve an effective CV that will work well for you in the job market of the 21st century?

Easy! You need to get....

ARRESTED!

ARRESTED means that, when you are applying for a position, your CV needs to be:

1. Always Relevant

Show a clear, immediate relevance to the role you are applying for.

So if you are applying for, say, a project management role with an emphasis on financial systems implementation, talk a lot about where you have done that.

If applying for a position in an IT software development project environment, talk a lot about that.

Always seek to convince the reader from the outset that your experience and skills are obviously Relevant.

2. Recent Employment focused

Talk about your RECENT EMPLOYMENT history.

Employers are going to want to know more about the work you have done recently than what you did years and years ago. That's because your recent experience is usually what you are leveraging off to secure your next position.

Please bear in mind - we are now 8 years into the 21st century!

So concentrate your focus on the work you have done in this millenium, rather than a decade or more ago. I guarantee your career has definitely moved on a LOT in the last eight years.

Resist the urge to discuss what is, in professional terms, ancient history. It won't help you get to where you next want to be.

Rule of thumb: Your most recent position and those positions held over the last 1-3 years should receive the most emphasis.

3. Specific and Targeted, offering Examples of projects

Be Specific and Target your resume to show where you have done what it is they are asking for by providing Examples of projects.

By offering brief examples of specific projects – a few facts and figures – you support your statement that you have experience in certain areas.

You need to be very clear about the size and duration and scope and budgets (general approximates are OK) involved in projects you have carried out.

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You also need to be very specific about what YOU personally did in relation to the projects, and not just limit your description to what the projects themselves were about.

NOTE: obviously, you never, ever give out confidential information. But even in "commercial and in confidence" situations, you can give enough of an outline to make the reader understand the scale of project work you carried out.

Suggested format for offering such examples in your CV:

Start with the most recent project

Project title – month/year started - month/year finished

Then note:

- the reason for the project (as in why it was deemed necessary)
- the aim of the project
- the budget of the project
- the size of the overall project team (total number of people involved)
- the number of people in your immediate team
- how many people you directly managed in the team
- how many other areas/other business units within the organisation you had to work with/liaise with
- other external organizations or suppliers or vendors who were involved – what their role was, e.g. was it scoping & planning or implementation or both?
- what technology was used (if relevant to the specific project)

You want to put emphasis on your most recent projects and/or those of the greatest complexity so you give yourself a chance to best describe the skills you have in the project management area.

NOTE: If you have any project management qualifications or have experience of recognised project methodologies, note them here as well as in your educational summary.

Be specific - spell it out!

And never, ever think that the reader being an project professional will automatically assume that since you did X, you've also automatically done Y. More likely, if you

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don't spell it out, they'll assume you *haven't* done it.

Major achievements: Briefly note any successful projects you contributed to or any ideas you offered or implemented that had a positive outcome

THEN follow the same process as above for the positions you have held prior to your most recent role.

You should list ALL of your employment history. However, the less recent work needs to offer less detail.

Once you are going back more than 5 years in your work history, you can afford to offer much less detail – 3-4 bullet points to describe the role you held.

By the time you are back in the year 2000 and earlier, offer only the bare bones of data. So just note your dates of employment, job title, employing organisation and the city you worked in, e.g.

October 1998 – June 2000
Senior Project Manager – Financial Systems
(PERMANENT) ABC Bank, Head Office, Wellington

January 1998 – September 1998
Project Manager – Procurement Systems
(CONTRACT) XYZ Insurance Ltd, Wellington

4. Details are critical in ensuring high quality presentation of your resume

- DO use a modern font – Arial, Verdana or similar – NOT Times Roman.

Times Roman is dated, fussy and cluttered. A modern font looks clean and fresh.

- DO use a readable font size – at least 10 or 11.

Small sized fonts are hard for mature eyes to read and make the reader squint!

- DO offer a CV that has “white space” around it.

It is easier to visually scan, offers a cool, professional appearance and gives the reader a chance to make notes regarding questions they may want to ask you.

- DO use a Word format, not Adobe

- DON'T use graphics, photos or colour

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