

Effective CVs and job applications

How to make yourself stand out for the right reasons

Objectives

- *Components and layout of an effective CV*
- *Where to start when writing a cover letter*
- *What makes a good application form?*

Curriculum Vitae - "course of life"

Importance of content and layout

- **Volume may be large so you need to stand out**
 - Do you have the right skills/ experience?
- **Short-listing in a hurry**
 - Clear concise key points (2 pages)
- **A chance to show your skills:**
 - attention to detail



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- **Personal details** (telephone, email)
- **Profile** (who you are and where you're going)
- **Skills** (what you can offer them)
- **Education** (emphasise what is relevant)
- **Work Experience** (make as clear as possible)
- **Voluntary Experience** (important for this sector)
- **Hobbies and interests** (what makes you different)

Profile

- First impression
- 3 – 6 sentences
- Clear and concise (short sentences)
- Who you are and what you are looking for:

I am a recent graduate with strong administration experience. With a strong commitment to social justice I have a high level of motivation when working on projects that produce real benefits. I have enjoyed organising events during my voluntary work and would like to develop these skills in a charity environment.

Skills and Education

- Relevant to the role
- Establishment
- Course
- Qualification
- Dates

Work Experience

- Most recent first
- Keep the layout the same
 - Dates of employment (keep constant)
 - Name of organisation
 - Job title
 - Job description in bullet points

Voluntary Experience/ Hobbies

- Chance to show your personality
- How are you different from the rest?
- How well do you know your self?
 - go into a bit more depth than:
I like reading, socialising and walking in the country

Advantages of cover letters and application forms

Fewer applications – gives you a better chance

- Helps you to focus on what you really want
- Find out if the role is right for you
- Gives less experienced candidates a chance

Application Form

- Sections – similar to CV
- Equal Opportunities
- Motivation Letter / Supporting Statement

- Would you rather read this document?...

Having completed my Bachelors degree in 2005 I have spent most of my working life in an office environment, gaining experience working in a variety of different roles. I am applying for this role in particular because of my knowledge of developmental issues, programmes and projects and infant mortality, HIV/AIDS and so on (I am due to complete my MA in Development and organisational behaviour with SOAS in Dec (2008)). I have been aware of your charity for a long time and have a great deal of respect and interest for the work you do all over the world. What also attracted me to this position was that it is a varied role. The majority of my experience has been very varied from general sales administrator to PA and Office Manager. This has demonstrated in my roles with Marie Curie Cancer Care where I have learnt to use the KEM online HR database, the Sentinel incidents and complaints database and the Care Manager online reporting software. I am an excellent communicator and know the importance of follow up whether it be with colleagues, suppliers or clients. Communication and simply showing you care can make an enormous difference. I know in my previous role, a visit to a client or a weekly phone call made such a difference to the working relationship even if the conversation or meeting was partially about work and partially about personal endeavours or issues.

That role called upon my ability to foresee the various aspects of the program planned and accomplish them as quickly and efficiently as possible while maintaining clear and open communication with the funders, managers and directors, keeping scrupulous records and maintaining a transparent organisation which could be inspected or stepped into on a moments notice.

- ... or this document?

Reason for Application

I have prior experience as an administrative assistant in a Human Resource (HR) department and currently work as a volunteer advocacy representative for employment related matters. I have in-depth knowledge of HR administration and would like to use this to benefit your charity.

Education & Qualifications

I have a law degree, prior to this I gained 3 A Levels including English Literature.

My education has provided me with a high standard of literacy; and so I can communicate well in writing, which is beneficial to drafting letters.

Proven Ability

I have over 4 years administrative and secretarial support experience. Combining my experience I have learnt to adopt a structured and analytical approach to work; which enables me to multi-task, organize and manage my workload in order to meet deadlines.

Motivation Letter

- The first paragraph
 - Introduce who you are
 - Interest in the organisation
 - Interest in the vacancy
 - Content of your motivation letter

Motivation Letter

**Common mistake:
Overemphasising your
interest in the charity**

Motivation Letter

Objective of the letter:

Show the organisation that you are right for the role.

Extract of a Job Description

- To provide administrative/secretarial/clerical service (manual and audio),
- To maintain and update personnel records and information,
- To assist with the production of management information reports.
- Organising meetings

Extract of a Person Specification

- Excellent time management and organisational skills required to multi task and meet tight deadlines.
- Good standard of written English required to draft non-standard correspondence.
- Excellent interpersonal skills - tactful and diplomatic.

Layout of motivation letter / supporting statement

- Introduction and ending
- Paragraph style
- Personal signature

To summarise

- Show that you are special
- Be consistent with layout
- Keep it brief and concrete
- Show them what they want to see
- Tailor to the specific role



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