

Career Information Guide No. 1

Your Curriculum Vitae (CV)



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1. Introduction

A Curriculum Vitae is your promotional or sales document. Its function is to enable you to market yourself- i.e. to gain an audience with a potential employer.

Like any promotional document, a CV needs to create an immediate impact. It must convey the maximum amount of information in the minimum number of words. Style and presentation are as crucial as content.

One of the biggest challenges that Ex-Military personnel face when job hunting is preparing and updating their CV. It's a fine balance in outlining your previous roles and responsibilities but without containing too many technical terms and military jargon that civilian recruiters and HR do not understand.

When producing your CV please do not demilitarize all the content. Some civilian employers do understand the rank structures and the responsibilities that go with the rank. Furthermore, it is our job to present and, where necessary, expand on your service background to any prospective employer.

That said, do avoid too much 'deep' military terminology - unless it is relevant to the role you are applying for - and avoid TLAs (Three Letter Abbreviations!!).

We acknowledge that it is sometimes very difficult to readily convert military ranks, responsibilities, and/or roles into a civilian equivalent. The best advice is try not to - simply try and use straightforward and recognizable terms without losing your military identity.

Also, don't forget to include secondary duties - many civilian personnel do not have such responsibilities (in the workplace), so they can provide extra insights into you as a person and your suitability for a role. What you took for granted as 'just being a part of Forces life' (e.g. first aider, club/society committee member, document custodian etc.) can be very useful information for a prospective employer. If in doubt, give us a call and we will do our best to help and advise.

Remember there is no such thing as a perfect CV. The only measure of success is – does it achieve getting interviews?

However we strongly recommend that you adopt the following layout in the order stated.

2. Content

The information is best set out in clearly defined sections in the following order:

- Contact Details

This section should include your name, address, telephone numbers and e mail address (if you have one). Telephone numbers should include mobile number, home number and daytime telephone number if you are able to receive calls at work.

Your remaining personal details should appear as the very last item of your CV. Whilst relevant information it should not be regarded as part of the main CV as they have nothing to do with qualifications for a job.

- Profile

This is a key part of the CV as invariably one of the first things recipients of a CV want to have is a thumbnail sketch of your experience and key attributes. It should be a short paragraph which should be written in a lively style summarising the salient points of the whole document.

e.g. “An HR Generalist, professionally qualified with eight years varied experience in two third party logistics companies. A record of achievement, particularly in the implementation of employee communications and performance management systems.”

- Key Skills

This is an opportunity for you to list 4-5 bullet points to highlight your key strengths

These should be tailored to highlight that you meet the key requirements of the role for which you are applying

- Experience

It is the most recent job history, normally of primary interest to a prospective employer, and therefore should be the first details entered under this section with subsequent jobs listed in reverse chronological order.

It is normal to give more details of your most recent employment consequently a diminishing amount of information for the earlier job history.

For each period of employment the dates of employment, your job title and the name of the Company should ideally be on the same line.

The dates should be on the left as when CV's are first scanned, the eye will look for the structure before reading the content. Also British and American readers tend to let the eye go to the left by force of habit that is where first sentences normally start in English.

Another major point is to make it easy and quick to determine the layout of the experience of the candidate. In this way, unnecessary eye movements are eliminated and the CV seems easier to read.

Under each period of employment the narrative should be made up of three areas:

- Nature of the business e.g. products / services, turnover, number of depots, vehicles, square footage of warehouse, cost budgets etc
- Responsibilities e.g. who you reported to and any management you are responsible for, numbers of staff, list key responsibilities etc

Please do not “copy and paste” the duties of your job description under this header, something which a lot of candidates do. Just in your own words list 5-6 key responsibilities

- Achievements e.g. sales growth, service level improvements, cost reductions, project initiation and completion etc. Try and quantify your achievements wherever possible

- Education

Some discretion can be exercised as to how much detail to supply. Normally Details of qualifications are sufficient. e.g.: BA (Hons) 2.2, 3 ‘A’ - levels, 9 ‘O’- levels.

Note: If a degree is cited, there is no need to mention ‘O’ or ‘A’ levels because they are of lower attainment

- Training

It is not advisable to give a long list of all the training courses and seminars, which you have attended.

Management training courses of a week or more should be listed, together with any training in relevant specialist skills. e.g. CPC International

- Membership of Professional Institutes

List the professional memberships you are currently a member of followed by the abbreviated initials appropriate to your grade of membership

- Interests

It is not essential to include this section. However if there are aspects which provide evidence of relevant knowledge, skills or personality, they are worth listing.

Examples might include being a school governor, various forms of voluntary work etc which demonstrate organisational and management skills. An unusual hobby such as skydiving or genealogical research can be worth mentioning, even though it has no obvious relevance to the job, as it may help to give your CV an interesting feature which the reader remembers.

- Personal Details

If you intend to include your age or date of birth then it should be included in this section along with any other personal information you wish to include e.g.: marital status, nationality, non – smoker etc

Note: if you state your age this invalidates your CV after a few months.

Licences, passport numbers and reference details are not needed at this early selling stage.

3. Tailor Your CV

Although it may be a time consuming process, tailoring your CV to suit the requirements of each particular job that you are applying for can greatly increase your chances of securing an interview. There are several areas of your CV that can be adapted to meet the exact requirements of each job application.

Personal Profile

Once you have a good understanding of the advertised role from the job advert or job description, modify your Profile to try and ensure that the Profile statement shows that you have the key areas of experience and knowledge

Key Skills

Many of the roles you may be applying for will have a similar set of skills, but you should still modify these points to tie in with the key requirements contained in the job advert or employer's job description.

Employment History

Your employment history is your employment history however if you are applying for a managerial position but don't have directly applicable experience, emphasise your related experience; for example that your current and previous roles involved considerable responsibility and decision-making duties such as delegation, training staff etc

Hobbies and Interests

Many job advertisements specify personality traits required for positions. If you can identify what these are, you should try and illustrate how your hobbies and outside interests and any positions held relate specifically to the requirements.

4. Style and Format

CV's should NEVER be more than 3 pages long. In the first instance any longer submissions are unlikely to be read properly.

The average time taken by HR staff and recruitment / search and selection consultants on a first scan is around 40 seconds; you cannot afford to have important features of your career ignored.

Do not be tempted to do CV's which are radically different. This will only confuse the recipient.

Non-standard formats force people to think a little more. Quite often they don't, won't or can't find the time to do this.

CV's should be prepared in MS Word format for ease of opening and saving when e-mailed to a recipient.

Use good quality white A4 paper (min 90gsm paper). Do not staple sheets together and do not bother with folders.

Avoid headings for self-evident categories such as “Curriculum Vitae”, Age, and Marital Status etc.

Adopt the conventions of spacing between category and sub-category. i.e.: bigger gaps for categories.

Choose the type of font carefully to make the run of text easier to read and less cluttered. We recommend the use of Arial font, its modern and gives a clean cut appearance.

Category headers should be in bold and can be in a slightly larger font if space permits.

The use of bullet points to list out responsibilities and achievements can be used to good effect.

The impression of responsibility and expertise can be heightened by careful use of words. Your range of responsibilities and actions will appear wider if you can avoid using the same verb twice; use different verbs that have the same meaning! Refer to Appendices 1 and 2 for lists of action words.

Do not be secretive about who you currently work for. It may put off the company you apply to, and might be taken to reflect on your character.

If there are gaps in your employment record don't, unless you have something like a university degree course to fill the gap, attempt to explain them. Leave them as they are, the interview is the best place for such explanations.

Salary levels should only be mentioned in covering letters and only then if the advertisement specifically states that salary details / expectations are to be provided.

On first submission, avoid copies of references and do not attach pages of your psychological profiles and test results.

5. The E – CV

It is becoming more common for CV's to be sent which feature hyper - links to past employers in the candidate's experience or employment history.

This enables companies and recruitment / search and selection consultants a far better understanding of the companies the candidate has worked for than they may have now. It also saves time in searching out further details on a company and addresses etc necessary for references.

They will be able to click on the hyper - link and see what the company does and then return to the CV with ease so getting a greatly improved picture of the experience and history of the candidate. This is especially useful for those who have not worked for big name companies.

Once you type in a web link onto a Word document, it automatically becomes a web link. If somebody is reading the document on the screen, they can click on the link making Internet Explorer automatically open up and takes them to the website concerned.

Appendix 1. Action Words

administered	devised	insured	promoted	streamlined
advised	directed	interpreted	proved	studied
analysed	documented	interviewed	provided	supervised
anticipated	doubled	introduced	published	supported
appointed	edited	invented	purchased	surpassed
appraised	effected	investigated	recommended	surveyed
approved	eliminated	launched	recruited	taught
arranged	employed	led	redesigned	terminated
assessed	enforced	lightened	reduced	tested
audited	engineered	liquidated	regulated	tightened
augmented	established	maintained	rejected	traded
averted	estimated	managed	related	
avoided	evaluated	marketed	re-organised	
bought	executed	modernised	researched	
built	extracted	monitored	resolved	
captured	forecast	negotiated	reviewed	
centralised	formed	obtained	revised	
combined	formulated	operated	revitalised	
completed	generated	originated	saved	
composed	guided	performed	scheduled	
conceived	hired	pioneered	selected	
controlled	implemented	planned	settled	
counselled	improved	positioned	shaped	
created	improvised	prepared	simplified	
decreased	increased	presented	sold	
defined	initiated	prevented	solved	
demonstrated	inspired	processed	specified	
designed	inspected	procured	staffed	
determined	instigated	produced	standardised	
developed	instructed	programmed	stimulated	

Appendix 2. Alternative Action Words

<u>Advised/Told</u>	<u>Bargained</u>	<u>Calculated</u>	<u>Changed</u>	<u>Checked</u>
Assessed	Negotiated	Estimated	Converted	Appraised
Counselled	Traded	Evaluated	Corrected	Audited
Instructed			Directed	Inspected
Presented			Guided	Monitored
Recommended			Implemented	Tested
Taught			Improvised	
Trained			Lightened	
			Modernised	
			Promoted	
			Redesigned	
			Reorganised	
			Revised	
			Revitalised	
			Simplified	
<u>Controlled</u>	<u>Constructed</u>	<u>Engaged</u>	<u>Helped/Looked After</u>	<u>Looked Into/ Through</u>
Administered	Built	Appointed	Ensured	Analysed
Approved	Composed	Recruited	Maintained	Conceived
Centralised	Created	Hired	Supported	Defined
Combined	Designed	Interviewed		Forecast
Determined	Devised	Instigated		Interpreted
Effected	Invented	Introduced		Investigated
Enforced	Marketed	Launched		Originated
Engineered	Proved	Organised		Pioneered
Executed	Shaped	Prepared		Planned
Led		Produced		Researched
Managed		Programmed		Reviewed
Positioned		Selected		Studied
Regulated		Staffed		Surveyed
Supervised		Utilised		

<u>Made Bigger/ Better</u>	<u>Made Smaller</u>	<u>Made/Set up</u>	<u>Motivated</u>	<u>Paper Control</u>
Augmented	Decreased	Established	Inspired	Documented
Developed	Eliminated	Formed	Stimulated	Processed
Doubled	Liquidated	Formulated	Vitalised	
Expanded	Reduced	Initiated		
Generated				
Improved				
Increased				
Marketed				
Surpassed				
Tightened				
Tripled				
<u>Programmed</u>	<u>Purchased</u>	<u>Put Right</u>	<u>Ran/Performed</u>	<u>Showed</u>
Scheduled	Bought	Rescued	Operated	Demonstrated
	Procured	Saved		Related
		Settled		Specified
		Solved		
		Standardised		
		Streamlined		