

How to Write a CV for the Construction, Engineering and Property Industry that Gets Results

We review hundred's of CV's every week and although there are no cast iron rules on what you should or should not do we can offer some sensible advice to help your job searching and chances of interview. First impressions count so making an impact is important but a CV is a standard document. Many CV's that we see include simple mistakes which will send up straight in the bin. So how can you increase your chances of success?

Firstly, follow a format that suits your employment sector. We specialise in recruitment for the Construction, Engineering and Property industry and come across CV's of every length. Typically most fall into the two to three page range, although this can vary for experienced candidates. Two pages is an ideal length as you should be targeting your CV to a particular position.

At the top of your CV we always suggest that you include a profile outlining your main skills and responsibilities. Make things easy for the reader, they shouldn't have to search around for information - make your most relevant information stand out, again this should be tailored for individual job applications. It is also advisable in Built Environment industry to include example project information, it helps employers quantify your experience and they might even have direct knowledge of the schemes you have worked on. Project information also shows the size of projects you have been used to working on. In these industries it is very important to list your computer skills and level of competency. This is particularly important if your role involves AutoCAD, Project Management or Design Software where a range of software experience is a very key requirement that clients look at first.

We would also suggest listing professional memberships of relevant organisations, RICS, ICE, IStructE etc and further training or professional development. Follow up your CV with a call or email at an appropriate time to show that you are keen. This is your chance to get noticed by being proactive and perhaps get an opportunity to speak directly with a key decision-maker. We would strongly suggest that you DO NOT use unusual fonts, brightly coloured paper or strange designs - the attention should be drawn to your content and your skills and project experience and not the fancy font!

Pictures in the built environment are rarely a positive thing in our experience, you are not applying for a modelling or PR position, it is your project experience that is more of interest rather than what you look like! Incorrectly spelling the name of the person you are sending your CV to - it will go straight in the bin. Get a friend to read through your CV first, it could be the best thing you do!

A clear layout will actually draw the reader's eye to the information on the page and gain interest and the opportunity to get in front of an employer at an interview where you can go into more depth. Write in the first person but more importantly you should be clear and concise.

Covering letters are optional and really depend on the type of application. Online applications do not require covering letters as you are often only given the chance to attach a CV. If you are responding to a specific advert, include the reference and more importantly try and tailor your CV to reflect the key requirements of the job, what are they looking for? What skills do you have that match or are transferrable to their requirements?

Another simple thing to remember if you have been with one company for a long period make the most of your experience, how have you worked your way through the organisation, have you been promoted? Don't just list the dates of employment and very little information and then spend pages writing about your interests and education details. The two pages should be used to reflect your strengths. If you have more educational strengths put these before your employment details.

If you have gained more practical skills but maybe lack all the qualifications, put your Employment details first! Finally, a clear layout, think about the line spacing, bullet point, don't use loads of uneven tabs, how does the page break look, does it disturb the look of the CV - a clear layout, well lined up with good margins could make all the difference in getting that all important interview.

Presentation really does count. We have enclosed a guide CV layout below as a further example to help you. Good luck.

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Curriculum Vitae – Guide Layout

FULL NAME ADDRESS & CONTACT DETAILS

CAREER PROFILE

This is basically your “sales pitch”. It could be your only opportunity to make a potential employer read on & consider all of your experience - instead of just skimming over previous employers & basing his decision on limited information.

A traditional CV format tends to stick to a basic format without a profile and written in a style that provides fundamental information on your career and education to date. From our feedback it would suggest that clients prefer a simple, well laid out format with an initial profile to summarise you and rest of the CV. We have found that this style delivers a greater success rate as it quickly aids the client to determine that you are the right candidate for him. In addition as it is “your profile” it is individual and will help you stand out from potential competition.

- **Points to remember:**

- Keep it detailed but concise; Make it interesting and informative,
- It is a “sales pitch” but don’t make it too sales like
- Think about the layout and ensure that it is well thought out.

The main points to include are:

- What you do and what you can supply, your skills and experience,
- Explain your career progression, and how you want to further this,
- Key skills and expertise, What you can bring to an employer etc.

PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND MEMBERSHIPS

- We advise to prioritise this ahead of education as it is usually more relevant to employers. Most employers can relate to industry specific memberships over some of the educational courses/degree that you may have but this will vary depending on the individual candidate

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- Include only relevant/industry specific training courses and education from A Level or equivalent upwards. List your highest achievement first - which usually is also in age order.

KEY SKILLS/COMPUTER SKILLS & PACKAGES USED

- A small selection of bullet points is sufficient

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

- Although most online resources state that you go from your entry position through to you current position, we would advice that you start with your current position as it shows the client immediately your current level and they don’t have to go through 2 pages of your career progression before they reach it.
- For every position you need to give a detailed yet condensed version of your duties and achievements. Always include any key projects with values, key accounts, budgets managed, etc as it helps visualise what you did and gives the client a better understanding.
- Always explain any breaks in employment. Be honest in what your duties were and when you worked for the company as if you are successful and this information isn’t confirmed during the reference process - you can see the offer being withdrawn.
- If you were previously headhunted, worked on a contract basis, made redundant, left to further your care etc, then state it. You need to try and eliminate any doubt from the client towards why you have moved on from the company – especially if a previous employment contract was short term.
- Keep things as concise as possible, you want to give the client enough information so that he knows that you are suitable and is interested in taking things further. You can go into greater detail in the interview, but there also needs to be enough detail in your CV to get you there.

INTERESTS AND HOBBIES

- Be specific and include the reasons why you are interested in this. Try and think of why a potential employer would be interested to know this and if it isn’t particularly relative then leave it out.