

How to craft the perfect resume for your new job

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Aug 28 2017



You've got the interview lined up, but is your CV up to scratch? *Photo: Alamy*

Decided it's time to look for a new job? Join the crowd – 43 per cent of Aussies were considering a career change in the next 12 months, according to research released by Seek earlier this year.

Updating your CV or resume is typically the first step on the road to a new role. A succinct, polished document which highlights your qualifications, experience and achievements can help you stand out from the crowd when you're applying for positions or tapping your network for opportunities.

Conversely, a document which is outdated, poorly formatted or which contains inappropriate or irrelevant information can send your application to the bottom of every recruiter's pile.



Be honest, or risk being caught out during the interview. *Photo: Supplied*

So what should you omit from your CV to increase your attractiveness to potential employers? Here are some tips on what to consign to the circular file.

Keep it professional

According to careers specialist Edwin Trevor-Roberts, your CV should paint a picture of who you are professionally and you'll up your appeal across the board if you avoid providing personal information. Think age, race, religion, marital status, trade union membership, the reason you left previous positions and anything else that may discriminate against you.

No photos please

For the same reason, photographs are a no-no, even if they're professionally taken and you're looking your very sharpest, Glide Outplacement and Career Coaching principal Simon Bennett says.

"Employers do not need to know your hair colour, height or weight, ethnicity or any disabilities you have," Bennett explains.

"Not only do they not need to know, they really don't want to know. Many will ignore resumes with photos, to avoid claims of discrimination. If they are interested, they can look up your LinkedIn profile."

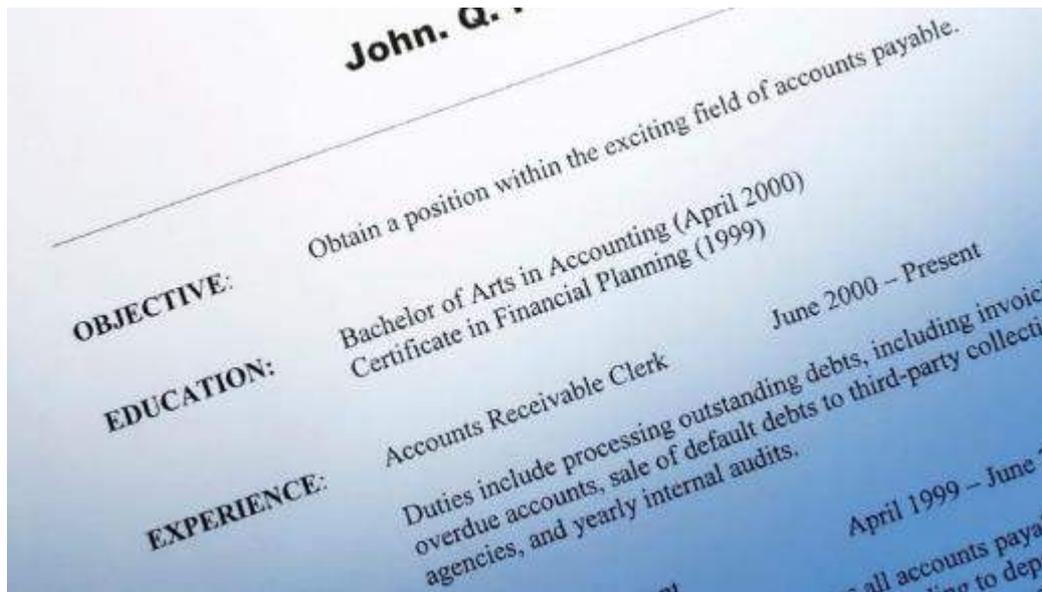
Ban the buzzword

Think a CV littered with jargon and buzzwords will convince potential employers your experience is cutting edge? Time to get ruthless with the red pen, advises recruiter Jarrad Skeen.

"A lot of the time people feel they need to put in every buzzword, especially in technology, so they pop up on the search engine," Skeen explains.

"They may say there are things they've got experience in and they don't or they'll list all the different acronyms, so they come up on a search.

"They're trying to create a bit of a catch-all document but really all that [does] is it takes away from what their true value proposition is and acts as a distraction more so than it does add any value."



A good CV paints a picture of you professionally. *Photo: Jim Jurca*

Not so strong

Everyone believes they're conscientious, hardworking, ethical and a great team player with excellent people skills. But saying it doesn't make it so and unless you have definitive proof, it's best to leave those calls to others. A shopping list of your (self-assessed) strengths and qualities won't convince a potential employer you're any of those things and may leave the impression you've a few too many tickets on yourself.

"Two pages of an individual telling me how great they are at a whole range of things is subjective and doesn't serve any purpose," adds Skeen.

Hold the hobbies

Including a list of hobbies or interests on the end of your CV used to be common practice, but it won't necessarily add to your appeal.

"Your love of hiking, reading or football is not relevant to how you perform professionally," Bennett says. "If you want to demonstrate your varied interests and good work in the community, save it for the interview."

Irrelevant referees

Well credentialed referees who are able to attest to your experience and abilities will strengthen your CV. Friends and colleagues who haven't worked with you directly or don't have the knowledge to evaluate your professional expertise, not so much. If they don't appear credible, don't include them, Skeen advises.

DIY

Tempted to outsource the writing to a professional who can talk up your talents and toss in some terminology to make your background sound seriously impressive? Don't, Trevor-Roberts advises: the best document is a DIY job.

"You know yourself best so do not have someone else write your resume," he says. "You have to defend the contents and know what's in it in order to talk about it in the interview.

"Getting guidance and advice is beneficial but not writing – there needs to be a cohesiveness between the written word and the spoken word."

Aside from striking a more authentic note, doing it yourself provides another big benefit, Trevor-Roberts adds.

"Once you've done this, you've done 70 per cent of the preparation for the interview," he says. "The achievements you list can be turned into answers for interview questions."