

In today's competitive job market one needs to market oneself. And your self-marketing strategy is best showcased by your CV. CV is a snapshot of what you are and how beneficial you can be for an organisation. Your career depends on how you begin and a CV is the first and the foremost element in your job-search.

**A tool to sell yourself**

Your CV is a selling tool that outlines your skills and experiences so that the interviewer can see, at a glance, how you can contribute to the organisation's growth. The first hurdle that your CV has to pass is to end up in the "consider file" rather than the "reject file" and this decision may take less than 30 seconds. While you may have all the attributes of a good manager, but your CV is a failure if the interviewer does not instantly come to the conclusion that you have what is required to be successful.

**Proper use of the terms 'vitae', 'vita' and 'CV'**

The minutiae of this controversial question remain the topic of vigorous debate. However, some standardisation may be possible using the following information:

The term "curriculum vitae" translates as something close to "course of life." The term "vita" translates as simply "life." The correct label for one's (single) document can be either "curriculum vitae" or simply "vita." In other words, one does not use the term "vitae" by itself, nor does one write "curriculum vita". In informal conversation we

avoiding the Latin forms altogether. This practice is widely accepted, but we do not recommend your putting "CV" at the top of your curriculum vitae for application in institutes. It is better to use one of the two acceptable forms shown above.

**Attributes**

**Words, words and words:** The name of the game is word management. Your economical use of words, and the use of the right words at the right place is what we are concerned about. Remember that you must minimise personal information.

**Academics:** Start with your highest qualifications, so if you have a master's, don't talk about the diploma and certificate courses. Work-

year first), clearly state the year of the award, the college at which you studied, and if it is to your advantage, state the grade attained.

For some CV writers who do not have a lot of certificates, it is not a good idea to have a whole section dedicated to 'education'. The information concerning schools attended can appear later in a 'General Additional Information' section. But people who fall in this category should concentrate on highlighting another section entitled 'Professional courses undertaken', where their professional development can be traced through the courses attended over their working life.

**Relevance of current affairs:** Most potential insti-

most recent work history is what catches their eye. Lead with your current or most recent engagement/position, don't give a terminating year reference, unless of course, you have left that position.

**Loopholes in a CV:** Do not leave unaccounted for gaps or years of inactivity in your CV. Interruptions in a career profile which are unaccounted for, only raise awkward questions and make the interviewer suspicious about why you omitted to state where you were.

**Be honest:** Don't ever invent qualifications that you don't hold or bluff about work positions you have not held. Tell what you have achieved and who you are.

**Make it attractive:** Inject life and energy into the way you describe yourself. Aim to use language powerfully and always avoid unnecessary repetition.

**Research**

Before preparing your CV it would be helpful if you could do some preliminary research

going for an interview, it is essential to find out as much as you can so that you are able to present your credentials as effectively as possible. Here are a few tips on deciding how to make this decision:

**Work experience**

You've probably read this a dozen times by now, but human resource professionals know that the best predictor of future performance is past performance. This means that your work experience section should tell the interviewer what you've accomplished in past work experiences, which will suggest what you can accomplish for them in the next job. Basically, this is an extremely important section of your CV.

**Activities/Interests**

The first thing you need to know is that the activities /interest section of the CV is optional, although every time you include them, you benefit from the same. Here's why

you might decide to include it as you assemble your CV:

- to demonstrate a well-rounded person with more dimensions than just work
- to point out skills that have been demonstrated in your nonprofessional life
- to account for gaps in employment / education
- as a conversation starter

Finally ...

- Spell check document.
- Proof read (firstly for sense, secondly for typing). Be careful of missing words. Errors are highlighted by most computer packages, but omissions often go undetected.
- Consistency of format. (Capitalisation, bolding, underscoring, italics.) Adopt a style and stick with it.
- Have someone else read your CV through. When you are happy that your CV is as perfect as you can possibly make it, it's time to write the accompanying covering letter.

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**SMART STRATEGY: EFFECTIVE SELF-MARKETING**

**Make your CV stronger**