



CPA Ireland's Guide to Creating the Perfect CV

This is a first in a series of articles by CPA Ireland aimed at providing you with a comprehensive guide to improving your job prospects, with advice on your CV, cover letters, networking skills and much more. Here, we begin with the most fundamental part of finding a job: creating the perfect CV.

The Comprehensive Guide to CV's

Your CV and cover letter is normally your first introduction to all of your potential employers. It will usually be the main deciding factor in whether you get an interview or not so it's vital that it makes the right impression. Optimumcareer.ie advise that you see your CV as your very own personal sales brochure, so here are some top tips on selling yourself to the best of your ability.

- **Always Proofread**
Careless mistakes or typos display a lack of attention to detail immediately to potential employers and are the main cause of poor quality CV's, according to Robert Half Finance and Recruitment. In their survey, they found 84pc of executives said it takes just one or two typos or mistakes in a CV to remove a candidate from consideration for a position.
- **Keep it Professional**
Everyone wants their CV to stand out, but unless you are pursuing a creative position, any unusual typeface or illustrations will make your CV look unprofessional. Stick to the traditional format, with a clean typeface like Arial or Times New Roman and let your qualifications and accomplishments speak for themselves.
- **Short and Simple**
CV's should be concise and easy to read, with clear facts and figures that make you a candidate for the job laid out in a simple and ordered manner. By prioritising your information you make it easier for the employer to assess your CV quickly, something they will appreciate and take note of.
- **Don't Make it Personal**
Keep your personal information to a minimum in CVs and avoid including unnecessary information such as your age, marital status or physical appearance. Refrain from including details about your hobbies and personal interests unless they are obviously career-related and make you more suitable for the position.
- **Truth Talks**
Ken Harbourne from Robert Half Finance and Recruitment warns against any white lies or misrepresentations in CVs. "Never stretch the truth as a way to get your foot in

the door. Even if you do get called in for an interview, and sail through that process, false information can be discovered easily by potential employers during the reference or background check that often takes place afterward. If discovered, more than likely you will be eliminated from contention. Also, your actions may cause serious, long-term damage to your professional reputation.”

- **Email Etiquette**

You must appear professional from the outset, so ensure that an inappropriate email address does not let you down. Stick to the traditional format of your name with a combination of numbers if required. If you have profiles on social networking sites ensure that the content on them is appropriate or make them private as employers will often check these in the hiring process.

- **Fine-tuned Formatting**

If you have to submit documents in an email or apply for a job online, make both your CV and cover letter in to a plain text format so that it is universally compatible. Remove bold formatting and replace bullet points with asterisks or dashes.

- **Keywords to Success**

Include key words in both your CV and cover letter that describe your experience, skills and academic credentials. It is especially effective to tailor these to the job you are applying for as many companies use filtering software to scan CV's. Explain your achievements in past jobs with action words, such as 'increased sales' or 'reduced expenses'.

CPA Ireland is one of the main Irish accountancy bodies, with more than 5,000 members and students in the island of Ireland. The CPA title is the most commonly used designation internationally for professional accountants and the Institute's qualification enjoys worldwide recognition. Its current membership operates in public practice, industry, financial services and the public sector and CPAs work in over 32 countries around the world.

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