

Tips for Writing an Effective CV or Resume



Whether you just completed residency or are seasoned in your career, you need a strong CV or resume in order to secure your dream job. Your CV is often how a recruiter or prospective employer first learns about you, and it can be a “make-or-break” factor in determining whether you become a candidate for the position you want.

To create a CV that captures a reviewer’s attention and presents a clear, persuasive picture of your qualifications, here are a few key tips.

ORGANIZE CAREFULLY

There are two general formats for CVs: chronological and functional. A chronological format lists what you’ve done, in the order you’ve done it, and includes the categories of education and training, positions and affiliations, presentations and publications. A functional CV focuses more on skills and experience than a chronological work history.

- **Determine the general format that is best for you.**
 - A chronological format may be advantageous if you have little work history.
 - A functional format may be preferable if you are switching careers, have a gap in your employment history or are applying for a job within your current organization.
- **Consider blending elements of the chronological and functional formats to highlight how you fit the position.** (e.g. “2015-2016, Chief Resident: Developed staff satisfaction survey, participated in the implementation of a sepsis protocol...” etc.)

HIGHLIGHT STRENGTHS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The recruiter or hiring manager reviewing your CV is trying to determine if you are right for the job and how well you would perform if hired. Make it an easy decision by tailoring the document to clearly match your experience and qualifications to the job’s requirements and responsibilities.

- **Carefully read the job description and research the organization to better understand the requirements for a successful candidate. Evaluate how you fulfill those requirements.**
- **Write your CV to emphasize relevant experience and skills and consider minimizing or omitting irrelevant details.**
- **Focus on your accomplishments and the results you have achieved, rather than simply listing job duties** (e.g. “Developed an initiative that improved patient satisfaction scores by 50 percent” vs. “Responsible for patient satisfaction.”)
- **Use action verbs – such as created, prepared, instituted, and provided – to concisely convey your accomplishments.**

THINK ABOUT STYLE

After you've considered the content of your CV, take a step back and review it in a holistic way. You want the document to have a generally pleasing and inviting look.

- Use a standard, professional font that is at least 10 point in size.
- Use a standard page margin width.
- If you're providing a hard copy of the document, print it on a heavier paper stock in white or ivory. Avoid thin copy paper or colored paper.
- Review the way the document looks at a glance.
 - Does it have enough white space? Or is it very dense?
 - Does it look clean, neat and balanced?
 - Is the formatting consistent?

PAY ATTENTION TO DETAIL

Your CV or resume may be your only opportunity to secure an interview for the job you want. Don't let simple mistakes stand in your way.

- Carefully proofread the entire document for misspellings, punctuation errors or grammar problems.
- After you've proofed it, ask a trusted friend or relative to review it, too. An outside perspective will often illuminate errors or problems you've overlooked.

GO THE EXTRA MILE

A well-organized CV that provides a clear and compelling picture of your experience and accomplishments will go a long way in helping you secure the job you want. But in some cases, there may be a few extra things you can do to stand out from the competition.

- Consider including information on your hobbies or personal interests outside of medicine. This gives the reviewer an opportunity to learn more about you as a person and, potentially, relate to you.
- Compose a cover letter. When provided with your CV, a cover letter allows you to convey your excitement about the job, describe why you are well-suited for the role and let your personality shine through.

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