Common C.V mistakes

Set a standard for yourself: do not apply for a job until you are certain your CV avoids the following mistakes:

- Omitting essential skills/responsibilities/achievements. The skills the role requires must be shown clearly on your CV. Prioritise those most relevant and mention them consistently throughout your CV. remember you only have 30 seconds to get the employers attention.

- Listing too many skills/responsibilities/achievements: It looks unfocussed, unrealistic and reveals nothing about you.

- Work experience written like a job description. Instead, focus on how you performed and demonstrate the benefits of employing you.

- Waffle. Less most definitely is more. Every word, every sentence needs to have a purpose for the specific employer. If it's not important, remove it. Remember your CV is the first evidence an employer has of your communication skills.

- No bullet points. Do you write lengthy paragraphs describing each job? Don't make it hard for the employer or they'll make it hard for you by ignoring your CV. Use bullet points with complete sentences.

- Complex formatting, gimmicks, photos, shading, stylised fonts, colours. Keep it simple: you don't want to stand out for the wrong reasons.

- Dates in the wrong order. Always state the most recent first: it's your most recent experience they will see as the most relevant.

- Too long. Your CV should be a maximum 3 pages, 2 pages ideally.

- Leaving the best points of your CV to page 2 or beyond. Remember you only have 30 seconds to get the recruiter's attention.

- Using jargon and abbreviations that only made sense at a previous job. Your language should always be simple and clear. Jargon could alienate a potential employer.

- Sending the same CV off to multiple jobs. You must tailor your CV to ensure you are highlighting the points most relevant to the role you are applying for. (See point 1)

- Not including a personal profile. Recruiters, with little time, need to understand who you are, the value you bring and what you want in 30 seconds.

- Leaving gaps in your employment history. It arouses suspicion.

- Including too much personal information. Do not include anything about your personal preferences or facts about you other than those required by the employer.

- Inclusion of negative information. Reasons for leaving, poor exam results etc. should be omitted. Your CV should be a positive document.

- Including your salary. Leave this for discussion at interview, after you have had a chance to sell yourself.

- Poor spelling and grammar.

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