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What is a CV, and why is it so important?

Your CV (Curriculum Vitae) is your foremost marketing tool in your job search. It outlines your skills and experience, and helps Hiring Managers and Recruiters understand how you can contribute to the customers and the team. Investing time in developing an attractive CV is crucial to you securing that coveted interview.

At Westpac Group we see the CV as a key document in your application as it helps different stakeholders to understand your background, and offers you an opportunity to tell your career story.

This guide has been created to help you put together a professional CV that conveys your motivations, capabilities and achievements.



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Preparing a draft

Writing a CV can put us on the spot – reflecting on ourselves and our achievements whilst distilling months, perhaps years, of hard work into a few sentences can be really tough

Getting started is almost the hardest part. What am I going to write? How am I going to write it? To help you we have outlined our top- tips to get over the initial writers-block

Just hammer it out, and refine afterwards

- Instead of getting stuck on technicalities, wording, details and exact dates – simply start writing out your career history, responsibilities and achievements. Don't put too much thought into it, build out a list, and once you have a broad outline you can select and refine the most relevant examples

Use a friend, partner or colleague

- Grab a coffee, bring a laptop and get your friend typing. Talk about your most recent jobs, let them ask you questions about what you do for work, how you get it done, what's difficult, what's easy, what's value adding, what are you proud of

Cheat-sheet – simple shortcuts that work

- Know someone who just got a new job? Ask them for a copy of their CV
- Download your LinkedIn profile and rewrite it into a CV
- Online CV writing – search for 'CV builder' or 'Resume builder' – there are some great tools available



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Creating a structure and organising your information

The key principles to creating an effective CV are;

- Easy to navigate and read – make sure it's well-structured with plenty of white space
- Clear, concise and succinct – relevance and brevity trumps minute detail
- Offer context whilst highlighting your contributions - make every line count

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Personal Information

What to Include

Make sure your name and contact details are clearly visible at the top of the 1st page

- Name, phone number, email address, LinkedIn profile, video chat account - make sure it's an inbox/phone number you regularly check
- Location/Address is optional

What to Exclude

As an inclusive company that supports diversity, we don't believe that any of the following personal details impact your ability to do a great job, so there's no need to include;

- Date of birth, gender, marital status, children, religion, illnesses, disabilities, memberships of political organisations, hobbies, reasons for leaving jobs and salary expectations

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Including summaries

Summaries can be a great way to highlight the things you want to express, but might not be able to convey in other parts of your CV. Here are some examples of areas you may wish to summarise but we suggest only using one summary in your CV

- Summarising your experience and professional achievements can be powerful – just make sure the content is tailored to the role you're applying for
- Articulating your career objective is useful if transitioning from a different environment - highlight transferable skills and aptitudes, and outline how you'd use these to problem solve
- A personal summary can be a good way of highlighting your interests and personality. If you feel this is the right option for you make it relevant, make it punchy and avoid platitudes



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Employment History

Your employment history should be outlined in chronological order, starting with your most recent role, working back in time. Make sure to keep it clear and easy to read – include;

- Company name, role title(s), time period
- A brief role-summary can be helpful - 'in this role I was responsible for ensuring customer satisfaction by...'
- Focus on outlining achievements instead of responsibilities (if you've just started out this can be a bit tricky, feel free to refer to your responsibilities)
- When outlining your achievements, highlight how you have contributed, and where possible quantify your achievements.
 - Say: 'Delivered project outcomes 1 month ahead of schedule, and at 80% of allocated budget as a result of thorough project planning'
 - Don't say: 'Met project deadlines'
- Academic achievements and education – this is best suited towards the end of your CV
- Life achievements like sporting, community, charitable work are great to highlight – but best placed toward the end of your CV
- Hobbies and personal interests – unless highly relevant for the role make sure to keep at the end of your CV

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Questions/FAQ?



Q: How long should my CV be?

A: A CV can be 3-4 pages long pending on your level of experience, shorten it by clustering similar roles, or early career experience into an abbreviated summary

Q: How many years of career history should I include/list?

A: Depending on your level of experience this will vary – however if you have been in the workforce for a longer period of time, the last 10 years will be more than plenty

Q: I've been contracting a lot and have had many different jobs and employers – what do I do?

A: If your contracting engagements have been of a similar nature, distil into a summary and outline your various contracts/employers

Q: What's the difference between a CV and a Resume?

A: The major difference is length - a Résumé is a shortened, high level summary of a Curriculum Vitae (CV), it's typically no longer than one page, a CV can comfortably stretch over 3-4 pages. The two terms have become interchangeable in Australia – but it is nonetheless a CV that is the commonly used format here

Q: Do I need a Cover Letter?

A: Some Hiring Managers may request one – and it's a good way for you to show how your skill set is relevant for a role



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Memory Jogging

Your old Position Descriptions; you saved them for a reason – this is it!

Your inbox; our lives are busy, our memories short - browse your inbox folders to recall all the amazing work you've done

Look through notes, emails and development conversation material

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Avoid over-designing your CV

Whilst there certainly is a place for great visual and creative communications, your CV isn't necessarily the one. This is because of accessibility, and the way application systems tend to reproduce your CV in 'text only' version. This means that your beautifully designed document may become illegible. If you want to display other skills like programming, development, visual storytelling or general creative flair we suggest you offer a 'portfolio' hyperlink or similar in the CV, or shared separately with the recruiter

- Keep your CV limited to words
- Avoid using any photos, pictures or gimmicks, use white paper
- Be aware of what your document is saved as – keep it simple such as FirstNameLastName.doc



Language and Examples

- Spelling and grammar - always spell check and proof read
- Don't use abbreviations or jargon
- Use bullet points with succinct and concise sentences
- Your CV should be no longer than 3 to 4 pages long
- Leave out: Date of birth, gender, marital status, children, religion, illnesses, disabilities, memberships of political organisations, hobbies (unless directly relevant to the job), reasons for leaving jobs and salary
- Provide up to date and professional contact details
- Include only relevant education and training
- Order the CV in reverse chronological order with your most recent experience appearing first
- Ensure it is well laid out, leaving plenty of white space on each page to make it easy to read
- Focus on your achievements – use specific examples i.e. 'reduced costs by 10% in 12 months'
- Only include referees who have agreed to provide a reference for you, speak with them about it before you provide their details

Let's review

What has been done well in the example CV opposite?

- No use of pictures, photos or gimmicks
- Professional email address provided
- Concise summary of key skills and experience relevant to the role
- Several key achievements listed
- No use of abbreviations or jargon



Example CV

FIRSTNAME SURNAME

200 Westpac Avenue, Sydney, NSW 1234

M: 0466 xxx xxx

E: name@xxx.com.au

 My LinkedIn address

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

I'm an experienced banking professional who has enjoyed a successful career with example company. I have dedicated my career to driving great banking outcomes for customers by developing best-in-class services, experiences and products that support their needs and goals. I am motivated to constantly improve tools, resources and technology that help us innovate to best help our customers.

SKILLS

- Creative problem solver
- Product development
- Customer centred design
- Well-developed stakeholder management skills
- Strategic sales knowledge
- Agile project management
- Investment risk analysis
- Comparable acquisition analysis
- Extensive knowledge of ASIC and APRA frameworks

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Lead Designer, Digital Banking

Example Financial Institution, Jan 2015 - Present

- Built and maintained productive relationships with internal and external executives to facilitate successful and timely launches of digital banking products
- Collaborated with engineering teams at the new product introduction phase to develop best-in-class solutions for a portfolio of 1m relevant lending Customers
- Interfaced with business analysts, developers and technical support to determine and plan for development and delivery of Digital lending solutions
- Worked closely with other departmental peers to develop high availability solutions for mission-critical applications.

Customer Experience Manager, Mobile banking

Example Financial Institution, Jan 2011 – Jan 2015

- Created custom mobile applications to support customer lifestyle needs
- Implemented innovative and secure systems for data collection, storage and management of customer desires and needs
- Collaborated with product management to design, build and test systems.
- Identified and implemented new technologies to enhance user friendliness for customers

Customer Experience Lead

Example Bank, Jan 2007 – Jan 2011

- Cross-trained and supported a team of customer service managers
- Assumed ownership over team productivity and managed work flow to meet service quality goals Facilitated inter-departmental communication to resolve complex needs
- Developed highly empathetic client relationships and earned a reputation for exceeding service standard expectations

Customer Care Specialist

Example company, Jan 2003 – Jan 2007

- Effectively communicated with and supported sales, marketing and administrative teams to meet customer needs
- Assisted and educated customers on product selection, inquiries and customising banking solutions to fit their needs
- Scored in top 10% of employees in successful resolution of issues
- Provided ongoing care and advice to a large portfolio of Home Loan Customers

Customer Success Consultant

Example Company, Jan 2000 – Jan 2003

- Increased customer retention rates by 15% after implementing ongoing customer care programs
- Increased new bank relationships within the local community by 10% through community sponsorships and activities
- Provided an elevated customer experience by personalising everyday banking experiences

EDUCATION & QUALIFICATIONS

- Example tertiary/university degree and year

ACHIEVEMENTS & AWARDS

- XXX CEO Award 2016
- Further studies and achieved Diploma in X year

PERSONAL INTERESTS

- Investing in rescue helicopters for 40+ years to help Australians everywhere
- Innovating the banking landscape and introducing game changing technologies