

## Huntress Candidate CV Guide

At Huntress we will never try to put you in role that doesn't fit. We really listen to your goals and aspirations and will work closely with you to ensure that you are on your chosen path and working in an organisation that reflects your needs.

A CV is essentially a marketing tool that is used to sell your skills gained in previous employment to obtain interviews for new positions. Think of your CV as a brochure on yourself and write it from the point of view of an employer – and what they would want to see. Your CV is your first chance to stand out from the competition and not paying proper attention to your CV can seriously damage your chances of getting a job.

The five most typical sections in a CV are:

- Key skills
- Career history
- Education and training
- Introduction or profile
- Personal interests

The Huntress CV Guide aims to give you tips on writing your CV and includes advice on content, layout and design, as well as exposing some common mistakes to avoid! See overleaf for tips and advice and please feel free to contact us with any additional questions you may have.

For more information please visit our website [www.huntress.co.uk](http://www.huntress.co.uk)



## First things first, should you have a chronological or functional CV?

- **Chronological:** Best used to show progression up the ladder in the same profession, e.g. marketing assistant, assistant brand manager, brand manager, marketing manager, marketing director. Lists jobs by date, starting with the most recent. Focuses on job titles and dates.
- The chronological CV is useful in fields where you want to demonstrate steady career progression. The functional CV can be useful if you've spent a long time in one organisation or, conversely, if you've moved around many employers. And it means you do not need to present your past work in terms of job titles, which can be useful if you are changing direction.

### I've heard of a functional CV - what is it and when should I use it?

- **Functional:** Best used when you want to change career, or if you've chopped and changed jobs a lot. Highlights the skills and transferable experience you have gained in your previous jobs, rather than the jobs themselves. Plays down actual dates of jobs.
- If your previous work experience is in jobs that don't relate to what you want to do next, your best bet is to use a functional CV. It is a CV that makes more of your skills rather than your job history. And it allows you to emphasise the transferable skills that you have developed and used in other settings.





## Your CV structure

- **Open your CV with an objective:** What you would like to do next? This is hugely important but so often forgotten. Just a sentence or so outlining what it is you want to do, and the reader can see at a glance what you are looking for. Make a recruiter's life easier and he or she will thank you for it. It also helps them see what else you might be able to do.
- **Personal profile:** This is about how you work. Provide a few sentences that paint a picture of you at work. It helps the reader understand your 'intangible qualities' and how you would fit into their organisation. It is also a useful exercise for you to consider your strengths and weaknesses.
- **Select achievements:** Consider three or four key things that you rank as an achievement. Explain not only what you did and how you did it, but also the benefits to the company. Where possible, quantify the achievement. Use the bold key to highlight the impact any achievement had on the company. Why? Because it tells the reader how valuable you can be.
- **Career history:** Pick one approach, e.g. job title, company, dates worked, or company, dates, job title, and stick to it. The point of this section is to tell the reader your key responsibilities in each role, and so establish your credibility. The use of bullets is always good, as it cuts down on romantic prose that makes the reader pick his way through sentences.
- **Education and professional qualifications to establish your credentials:** New graduates will need to state their subjects and declare grades, as they may have no work or life experience as such to base their strengths or experience on. List only academic subjects with no stress on grades. This will be different for experienced candidates.
- **Professional training:** List out useful training so that the reader is made aware of your capabilities. If you have been through many courses, be selective and spell out the key qualifications you now have or the skills you have gained.
- **Last but not least, a little about yourself:** You don't need to say too much. You have already painted a picture of yourself at work, outlined your strengths, told them some selected achievements, and listed your work experience. Keep something back for when you meet at the interview!

## Layout and design

1. **Keep it simple:** That means avoiding borders, fancy font types, colour, and pictures. And don't bind your CV. Use a universal font like Arial, Verdana, Times New Roman, Helvetica or Tahoma (which is the only totally universal font as it also reads on Mac systems).
2. **Less is more:** You may think that you have to cram as much information as possible onto a page, but this will only turn the reader off. An uncluttered layout with plenty of white space on the page will actually draw the reader's eye to the information that is there.
3. **Don't over-do design:** It may give the impression that you think style is more important than content, or that you're trying to hide something. So steer clear of shading, dotted lines, graphics, icons etc.
4. **Font:** Use a single font, like arial, which is very legible and works well in small sizes. It's easy for the eye to focus on and (research tells us) nice round letters make the reader tune in. Italics are the most difficult type of font or character type to read. Keep it simple. Everything you can do to help the reader will be useful. Finally, rather than use too many different sizes to highlight and make an impact, use the bold command instead, it helps to make key words, phrases, or messages stand out.
5. **Format:** Keep your CV to two pages (the reader will tune out after that) and fill it with information that is relevant to the job.
6. **Content:** Your entire personal - and even career - history is not required. Tell the reader the relevant milestones, what their appetite, and leave the rest as talking points in either cover letters or the interview.





## Common mistakes

1. Attaching photos - unless the position specifically requires it, never do it!
2. Stating salary information - this can only be used to reject your application. If an advertisement specifically requests salary information, put it in your cover letter.
3. Overstating your abilities - don't describe a particular skill as "excellent" when you should be putting something like "good working knowledge". In a bid to impress, candidates often overstate their capabilities.
4. Unexplained gaps in your career history.
5. Wasting time and space elaborating on non-relevant academic or career details if they're not pertinent to the job in question. Just supply the bare facts.
6. Negative information, such as your reasons for leaving. These can be discussed at interview.
7. References - these should be given after the initial interview. Firstly, it reflects better on you if the referee is prepared and briefed. Secondly, references are normally distributed from personnel for legal reasons and can now only refer to basic employment facts where company policies dictate.
8. A CV that exceeds two pages. A CV will be scanned for approximately 30 seconds. Any longer and the recruiter tends to switch off.
9. Large blocks of text and paragraphs too difficult to read. These are often skimmed over. Avoid this at all costs.
10. Spelling and grammar errors. Make sure you get someone to read through your CV.
11. Not orienting your CV to results and achievements. A recruiter will be less likely to see the benefit of inviting you for interview.
12. Putting in absolutely everything - you have to be selective so that what you do put in has the maximum impact.



## Frequently asked questions

- 1. Should you disclose redundancy?**

The majority of employers state it makes no difference if you mention your redundancy or not.
- 2. Should I disclose my current / desired salary?**

If the position states that you disclose salary information, it should be included in a cover letter rather than a CV. Otherwise leave this information out as it may exclude you from consideration.
- 3. Must my CV include referees?**

Both companies and recruiters agree that CVs didn't need referee details. References are taken up later in the recruiting process.
- 4. How important are 'hobbies and interests'?**

Excluding hobbies is another common mistake. Hobbies can also be a conversation-starter with your interviewer, especially if they share the interest - so be honest.
- 5. How long should the CV be?**

The vast majority employers and agencies prefer a two page CV, saying this is the ideal length, but this should be governed by the extent and complexity of a candidate's experience. The main point of a CV is to secure an interview - which is when you can go into your experience in much more depth. Also remember that the more you write, the more likely you are to ramble.
- 6. Do I have to include all the jobs I've ever had?**

No. Your entire career history is not required. But it depends on the stage you have reached in your career. For example, if you are just starting out, then every job and piece of experience will count. If you are further into your career, or looking to make a career change, then not all your experience or jobs will be directly relevant to your chosen career. Tell the reader the relevant milestones, whet their appetite, and leave the rest as talking points either in your cover letter or interview.



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