



Want2get on?

Career Coaching

Fulfilling your great potential

Two different types of winning CV – and how to write them

Let me guess – you're not reading this worksheet on CV's because you really want to, but because you have to? Let's face it, even though CV's are incredibly important they have to rank up there on the boredom scale along with party political broadcasts and a Michael Gove auto-biographical book launch event.

I shall try to make this worksheet interesting but even if I don't it will be much more useful than attending any event with Michael Gove!

To get started I need to find out a bit of information about you. Read the description in the boxes below and decided which of them fall into.

Which box most accurately describes your situation?

A)

I have a seamless work history with no or very few gaps.

I've got some impressive job titles to show off.

I can show off names of prestigious employers.

I want to change jobs but also want to remain in the same sector or the same sort of role.

B)

My work history is patchy or has one or two gaps on it that I want to hide.

I have experienced a long period of unemployment that you want to take an employer's eye off!

I have done lots of job-hopping or changes in career direction that I want to disguise.

I want to start a new career or enter the job market but have little relevant experience.

The 'rule of thumb' for CV writing is to choose the format that best displays you: your skills, experience, achievements and qualifications. The job of a CV is *not* to say everything about you (it's not an autobiography) but to say just enough to get the attention of an employer.

Even though you cannot lie or invent on a CV, like a good decorator you can paint over the cracks and disguise facts about you that you'd rather an employer didn't know. You can even choose words to make them think that you're more experienced than you actually are – you're not lying, you're merely being economical with the truth!

Which box do you fall into?

Since CV's are so boring I'm going to try to make the following as easy and as quick to follow as possible before you pass out. I'm going to present two basic CV's, one based on the two boxes above, A) and B). These are fictitious but true-to-life examples and I've put notes against each section to see what the learning points are.

Here we go...

Box A) Suited to a Chronological CV – for those who have a seamless work history with no or very few gaps, have some impressive job titles to show off, with names of prestigious employers and want to find their next job that is roughly the same as their current one:

Roger Colledge

153 Abergavenny Mews, Kingston, Surrey, KT1 3SD 07555 123 4567 Roger.Colledge@Yahweh.com

SENIOR ACCOUNTANT

I am a skilled accounting professional with 15+ years of experience, currently working towards obtaining CIMA registration. I possess strong understanding of all aspects of accounting and financial management. I have a proven ability to manage multiple assignments while meeting tight deadline schedules. I possess a reputation as a self-directed professional with excellent problem solving, analytical and communication skills.

I also have a proven track record of performing work in an ethical manner while consistently maintaining the integrity of all financial data. I have strong relationship-building skills and effective collaboration with management, co-workers and clients. I am now looking to take my financial managements expertise into the third sector charity, especially working with the homeless.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complex Expense Reporting & Reconciliation • Budget creation, Forecasting & Cost Analysis • Accounts Payable & Accounts Receivable • Research, Investigation and Resolution • Vendor Relations & Customer Service • Financial Statements & Preparation • Not-Profit Accounting Principles | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Ledger Entries & Audits • Data Entry, Receipts & Invoices • Month-end Reconciliation & Analysis • Reporting & Documentation • Analytical & Critical Thinker • Business Accounting Process Improvements • Microsoft Office Proficient |
|---|--|

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTANT **Chartered Housing Group Ltd** **August 2013 – July 2015**

Formerly known as Elmtree Housing Trust, Chartered Housing Group is an award winning provider of affordable homes and services across over 12 boroughs in the South East. Managing 9,000 homes across two subsidiaries with assets of £562 million, annual turnover of £58 million and 247 staff.

Responsible for preparing, developing and analysing budget and management accounts information, and preparing statutory accounts.

- Producing monthly management accounts and forecasts together with an analysis and commentary for 22 budget holders and for reporting to Boards and committees.
- Preparing annual budget and statutory accounts for review by Group Financial Controller.
- Providing support and advice to budget holders, making recommendations and advising on commercial business impact.

Key Achievement – I implemented a new document management and finance system that enhanced the authorisation workflow by 35% - 40% and shortened the time taken to turn around documents by 20%.

Key Achievement – After a senior manager terminated a contract early, the supplier demanded a breakage payment. Due to my intervention I was able to reduce the termination of contract cost by 20%.

Key Achievement – Over 5 years I managed the successful transition of a paper-based record system to an electronic version that generated a cost saving of £50K to the department.

SENIOR FINANCE OFFICER **Chartered Housing Group Ltd Ltd** **June 2009 - August 2013**

Responsible for all financial aspects relating to Registered Care Homes and Supported Housing; including budgeting, internal reporting, and reconciliations.

Commented [CH1]: Make sure your name is big and bold. Don't give any more space over to this section – this is all you need to give at this stage.

Commented [CH2]: The Profile or Summary

This section is called the profile or summary and should say a number of important things. It's like a brief written hand-shake and a good profile grabs the attention of the employer. I would write in the 1st person (e.g. I am...etc) – it sounds less stuffy than using the 3rd person (e.g. Able to... etc)

- 1) The first line should give a quick snap-shot of who you are professionally and say what you're currently doing.
- 2) Describe your main 'assets' – those skills you need to highlight, making sure that an employer understands your value and how you could be a great asset to their company
- 3) Give a statement of intent – what would you now like to see happen with your career, the sort of company you would like to work for and performing which role

Commented [CH3]: Areas of expertise

This section does what is says on the lid. It's a good idea to give a one-stop view of your main skills and abilities. **MAKE SURE** that whatever you talk about here (and throughout your CV) is relevant to the job you're going for. If there's a mismatch between what you have to offer and the job / personal specification, then your beautifully crafted CV will be destined for recycling!

Commented [CH4]: Professional Experience

The idea of a CV is to make it **as easy as possible** for the person reading your CV to understand if you're worth meeting.

General Rules

I would follow this sort of format, giving a brief summary of your employer, bulleting your duties and carrying on to give example of key achievements. This will hopefully go a long way to creating a strong feeling of success to your CV.

How far should I go back?

Make sure that you start with your most recent employer and go back probably no more than 20 years – if you go back that far! Give more details to your more recent jobs or to those jobs that are more relevant to the one you're applying to.

- Processing all income and expenditure documentation, including payroll in respect of the Registered Care Homes.
- Producing, reporting and presenting monthly management accounting information.
- Preparing annual budgets in conjunction with the Supported Housing Co-Ordinator, Registered Care Home Managers and the Care Services Manager with continual review and adjustment throughout the year.

Key Achievement – As part of the implementation of the finance system, I introduced how-do-guides and provided training for the staff and budget holders to ensure they could use the facility, which resulted in a 25% increase in departmental productivity.

FINANCE OFFICER **Chartered Housing Group Ltd** **Nov 2001 - June 2009**

Responsible for the collection of placement fees and associated administration related to service provision in Residential Homes, including assistance in budget control.

- Ensuring that income from placement fees were maximised and correctly accounted for.
- Monitoring the implementation of financial procedures within the Residential Homes.
- Managerial responsibility for Homes Officer from Nov 2001-April 2006.

Key Achievement – I initiated and managed the introduction of a software product that revolutionized a support payment process within the college. It resulted in a dramatic increase of 50% in system efficiency.

BOOK-KEEPER/ADMINISTRATOR **Floodlights Ltd May 1997 - Nov 2001**

Manufacturers of paper and plastic sticks for various applications including medical, pharmaceutical, retail and industrial markets also production and sale of machines and parts.

Responsible for maintaining all aspects of accounts and assisting Manager.

- Weekly payroll, cash flows, credit control, all book-keeping, and stock take including adjustment.
- Preparing VAT and Inland Revenue returns.

I managed cash in this company where cash flow was very tight by negotiation, relationship building and communication with creditors and credit control.

One achievement while working at this company was to reduce the debtor days outstanding to the lowest figure in the company's history.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Association of Certified Accountants 1991 - 1995

BSC (Hons) Chemistry with Business Administration, Kingston University 1984 - 1986

A levels – English and Chemistry, 8 GCE O Levels - including English and Maths 1980 - 1984

REFERENCES AVAILABLE ON REQUEST.

Commented [CH5]: You will want to list this with the most recent first, giving few details the further back in time you go. Give more details for qualifications that are particularly relevant to the role you're applying to.

Box B) Suited to a targeted CV – for those whose work history is patchy or has one or two gaps on it that I want to hide, experienced a long period of unemployment that you want to take an employer's eye off!, have done lots of job-hopping or changes in career direction that need to be disguised or finally, who want to start a new career or enter the job market but have little relevant experience:

Paula Smith FCCA

SENIOR ACCOUNTANT

I am an experienced and qualified accountant who, before being made redundant from Lambeth College, was the Head of Finance from 2004. I have a proven track record in project management and in the development of technology and systems that lead to improved financial systems and to increased organisational productivity and efficiency. Dedicated and adaptable with over 15 years of experience of managing teams of various sizes, I am now seeking a new exciting management position in the not-for-profit sector.

SUCCESS & ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Excellent manager** - During my time at Lambeth I implemented a new document management and finance system that enhanced the authorisation workflow by 35% - 40% and shortened the time taken to turn around documents by 20%.
- **Target driven** - Over 15 years working alongside the 8 consultants I ensured that 100% of project milestones were successfully met and that the data was complete and accurate on transfer.
- **Successful negotiator** - After a senior manager terminated a contract early, the supplier demanded a breakage payment. Due to my intervention I was able to reduce the termination of contract cost by 20%.
- **Technological visionary** - Over 5 years I managed the successful transition of a paper-based record system to an electronic version that generated a cost saving of £50K to the department.
- **Experienced trainer** - As part of the implementation of the finance system, I introduced how-do-guides and provided training for the staff and budget holders to ensure they could use the facility, which resulted in a 25% increase in departmental productivity.
- **Systems manager** - I initiated and managed the introduction of a software product that revolutionized a support payment process within the college. It resulted in a dramatic increase of 50% in system efficiency.

SKILLS & ABILITIES

- **Communication skills** - Excellent interpersonal skills, able to cultivate good relationships with customers and colleagues. Effective verbal and written skills. Competent at resolving customers' complaints.
- **Analytical and evaluative skills** - Practical expertise in the implementation of accounting principles; in the completion of annual budgets for pay, non-pay and mid-year forecasts; in the preparation of annual accounts for audit and publication; in the production of monthly management accounts for senior management and other budget holders. Successful implementation of finance and document management systems within given timeframe and budget. Planning and managing the training needs associated with the introduction of new systems.
- **Project Management** - Successful implementation of finance and document management. Planning and managing the training needs associated with the introduction of new systems.
- **Technical skills** - Highly proficient computer skills with a sound understanding of Excel, Word, PowerPoint and Access. System administrator of the finance and document management system at a FE College.
- **Interpersonal skills** - Excellent ability to build teams and manage complex dynamics. Capacity to resolve conflicts. In-depth understanding of a variety of cultures. A supportive team player prepared to take the lead and make decisions.
- **Soft skills** - Proven ability to prioritise and meet deadlines; easily adaptable to changing situations. Punctual, precise and disciplined. Experienced in dealing with people from different social backgrounds.

Commented [CH6]: The Profile or Summary

The same rules apply as in previous example.

Commented [CH7]: Success and Achievements

This targeted CV emphasises success and achievement in an immediate attempt to create a positive impression.

Quantifiable examples

Make sure the make the examples as quantifiable as possible, i.e. where possible make sure to attach a quantity to the example: a % increase or decrease, a specific number etc. If you do, you will stand a better chance of creating a believable and credible example.

Your skills must offer a match

It is also vital that the skills that you're highlighting are based on those needed to do the job. Keep as close as you can to the personal / job specification. If you don't have access to this, then make an educated guess.

The closer the match between what you're offering on your CV and what the company is searching for, the better chance you will have of being selected for a job interview.

Commented [CH8]: Skills and abilities

Similar to the above section, make sure that the skills and abilities that you highlight are those that are needed in the job specification. Don't start talking about anything else!

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Head of Finance at Lympton College 2004 – April 2015

Responsibilities include:

- Create monthly budget monitoring reports that are automatically generated and emailed to budget holders to maintain budgetary control.
- Strategic oversight and management of the all the finance department's systems.
- Direct line management of finance team: annual performance appraisals and any disciplinary matters.
- Preparation of monthly management accounts and related commentary for governors & management.
- Manage the day-to-day relationship with external organisation and professional advisors.
- Prepare statutory financial accounts for presentation to the auditors. Discuss and finalise the accounts with Vice Principal before approval by the governing body and publication.
- Review and updating of finance regulations, policies and procedures.
- Preparation and monitoring of Finance's Self-Assessment Report and Service Standards.

College Accountant, Lympton College 1996 – 2004

Responsibilities include:

- Management of finance staff
- Preparation of monthly management accounts for review by Director of Finance
- Work closely with the Vice Principal to prepare annual budget for the College
- Allocation of budgets to various departments and assisting the budget holders to manage their resources within the constraints of the college's overall budget.
- Responsible for ensuring the maintenance and integrity of all systems utilised in Finance Department.
- Preparation of reports for senior managers and budget holders and advice on finance related matters.

Management Accountant, Lympton College 1994 – 1996

Responsibilities include:

- Preparation of monthly management accounts for review by Director of Finance.
- Working closely with the Director of Finance to prepare annual budget for whole organisation.
- Allocation of budgets to various departments and assisting the budget holders to manage their resources within the constraints of the college's overall budget.

Management Accounts Team Leader, Bristol Hospital 1992 – 1994

Responsibilities include:

- Management of five management accountants, including dealing with all employee relation matters.
- Oversight of the monthly budget reports for medical and support services consisting of 20+ departments.
- Preparing annual pay budget for areas under my remit & presented to Chief Management Accountant.

Management Accountant, Bristol Hospital 1990 - 1992

Management Accountant, Cardiff Street SHA 1988 - 1990

Financial Planner, Reading Regional Health Authority 1986 – 1988

QUALIFICATIONS

Association of Certified Accountants 1992 - 1996

BSC (Hons) Chemistry with Business Administration, Exeter University 1984 - 1988

A levels – English and Chemistry, 8 GCE O Levels - including English and Maths 1980 - 1984

MEMBERSHIP OF PROFESSIONAL BODIES

Association of Certified Accountants - 1997 to date

REFERENCES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

11 Channel View, Seacombe Bay TL12 8EE Tel: 07522 1234656 Email: paulasmith@yahweh.com

Commented [CH9]: Professional Experience

Follow the same advice as in previous section

Commented [CH10]: Qualifications

Follow the same advice for previous CV example

Commented [CH11]: It doesn't really matter where you place the contact details – as long as they're visible!