

Must Have Guides™

100 Great CV Tips

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1. What is a CV?

- * A CV is a document that describes you as an employee. You send it to an employer or recruiter when you're job hunting.
- * 'CV' stands for 'Curriculum Vitae' - this is a Latin phrase that means 'the course of one's life'.
- * In North America, CVs are known as 'resumes'.
- * Employers use CVs to match job hunters with jobs they have available. So your CV must show that your skills and abilities match the requirements of the job.
- * In many cases, an employer may only spend 20-30 seconds or so on a first read-through of your CV, so it has to be impressive and carefully presented - otherwise it may end up in the bin!
- * A CV should be fairly short - try to keep yours to 2 pages.

2. Your CV is a 'marketing tool'

- * Marketing is a business term which involves bringing a product or service to the attention of customers so they will buy it.
- * As a job hunter, you need to bring your skills, experience and abilities to the attention of employers so they will interview you.
- * Your CV is one of the most important ways in which you can 'market' yourself to employers.
- * In your CV, you must show that you have everything an employer is looking for in order to get an interview.
- * To be an effective 'marketing tool', your CV has to impress the employers who read it. So, it must be well laid out and error free to persuade the employer that you should be interviewed for the job.
 - You can also use your CV to market yourself when attending events.

3. CVs and job hunting

- * Before you start looking for a new job, prepare your CV, then check and edit it carefully. Get someone to check it over for you to make sure you've included everything, and that you've not made any errors. Remember, a CV must be 'word perfect'.
- * Once you have a basic CV prepared, you may wish to make up some 'CV templates' to apply for different kinds of jobs. For example, you may be applying for sales positions, and sales management jobs at the same time. So, you should write 2 different template CVs, one for each type of job.
- * It's a good idea to get your CV organized before you start serious job-hunting so that you're well-prepared. But, make sure you allow enough time to get the job done properly.
- * You can customize or tailor your CV templates when you apply for specific jobs.

4. CVs and job applications

- * There are basically 2 ways to tell an employer that you wish to apply (be considered) for a job:
 - sending the employer your CV, or
 - completing the employer's application form.
- * If a job ad asks you to complete an application form, you may still send in a copy of your CV as well (unless the employer tells you that CVs are not accepted).
- * If you only send your CV to apply for a job, always include a 'covering letter' to explain
 - that you wish to apply for the job (include the job title)
 - why you believe you would be the best candidate for the position.
- * Make sure that both your CV and cover letters do not contain errors.

5. Planning your job hunting

- * Serious job hunting takes a lot of time. Don't expect that you'll get a job with your first application! Many people need to spend several months making applications before they are offered the right job.
- * So, before you apply for jobs, plan your job-hunting carefully by:
 - getting yourself organized: get supplies of paper, envelopes, stamps, folders, pens, pencils, staples and so on.
 - plan how much time you can spend on job-hunting, and when you will do it.
 - get a colleague or friend to help you find jobs to apply for, as well as doing things like help you check your CV and prepare for job interviews.
 - find a quiet place where you can do your paperwork.

6. Networking

- * In job hunting, 'networking' is about using contacts to find a job.
- * Your 'network' is all the people you know, eg friends, family, professional advisers (eg your accountant or bank manager), your work colleagues, neighbours, friends etc.
- * Use your network to get information about
 - different kinds of jobs
 - where jobs are available
 - other contacts who may know about the kind of job you are looking for, or where jobs are available.
- * Give your CV to people in your network, or people you meet at '**networking events**' such as training courses, exhibitions and other meetings.

7. Types of CV

- * There are 3 main kinds of CVs:
 - the '**Chronological CV**'
 - the '**functional CV**', and
 - the '**hybrid CV**'.

(Each is described more fully in the following 3 tips).

- * You may need to use a different kind of CV when you're applying for different kinds of jobs. For example, if you're trying to get a new job in the same kind of industry in which you've been working for some time, then you might choose to write a 'chronological CV'.

However, if you're trying to change careers (one of the most difficult things to do in job hunting), then writing a functional CV may be more effective for you.

8. The 'Chronological CV'

- * This is the most popular type of CV. It's the one which most people still use.
- * It takes the reader through your career in reverse 'chronological' (time) order, that means it starts with the work you've done most recently and ends with the earliest work you did.
- * The focus of this kind of CV is on your work experience: the work you've done, the employers you worked for, what you did in each job, and what you achieved.
- * This type of CV is the one that most employers expect to see, and are most comfortable with reading and understanding.
- * Use this kind of CV when you're trying for jobs in the same kind of area that you already work in, or have experience of.

9. The 'Functional CV'

- * This kind of CV highlights your skills and abilities, rather than your work experience.
- * Use a functional CV when
 - you're trying to change career
 - you've changed jobs or careers frequently
 - you have gaps in your work history which you don't want to bring attention to
 - you've just left school, college or university, or
 - you're returning to work after a break (eg after raising children).
- * Be aware that some recruiters don't like this kind of CV as they feel it hides essential information that they're looking for. Also, some employers find functional CVs difficult to follow or understand - so you may not please everyone with this kind of CV.

10. The 'Hybrid CV'

- * This type of CV is a kind of mixture (a 'hybrid') of the chronological and functional CVs.
- * It gives details of your skills and expertise, as well as your work experience.
- * In many situations, you may find this CV provides the right balance of good structure with enough detail to impress an employer.
- * As with the other types of CV, keep the hybrid to 2 pages long, split, for example, as follows:
 - **on page 1:** include your contact details, your career objective, a personal profile, your key skills and major achievements.
 - **on page 2:** list your career history, education, interests and referees.

11. Career change CV

- * Changing careers is a difficult thing to do, particularly when you've been in the same line of work for some time. But it can be done successfully, and many people now have several careers during the course of their working lives.
- * To change careers, we advise you to use a functional CV that concentrates on your skills rather than on your work experience. This is important because you need to show a new employer that you have skills which can be transferred to a new kind of job.
- * Before you write your career change CV, find out as much as possible about the industry and the job you wish to do. Think about doing an 'informational interview' with someone who already works in the field (ring them up and ask them for about 20 minutes of their time to discuss their job).
- * Ask employers for feedback about your CV, then amend it.

12. Writing a CV

- * Writing a CV is a time-consuming business, even when using special software to help you.
- * Set aside plenty of time to complete your CV, check it thoroughly and get someone else to check it for you too.
- * It's best to write a basic, or 'template' CV before you begin job-hunting in earnest. Then you can 'customize' it for different jobs you apply for - make sure you allow enough time for this too so you meet deadlines for applications.
- * Review your CV regularly, even if you're not job-hunting - then you'll be prepared if an interesting job turns up, and you'll save time when you want to start serious job-hunting.
- * Remember that only a 'word perfect' CV will do - otherwise you will not be offered any interviews.

13. Getting help and advice

- * Writing about yourself (which is what you're doing when you're putting together a CV) isn't easy. You'll write a better CV if you get help and advice about what it should contain, and what you should say about yourself.
- * Other people can often see your skills and abilities more clearly than you can. Ask colleagues and friends for their opinions about your skills, abilities and personal qualities.
- * Get help to check your CV. You can often overlook things just because you have become 'too close' to the task, and the finished product. Other people may be able to pick up errors and omissions more easily.
- * Take criticism constructively, and act on advice you get - it will help you to write a 'winning' CV.

14. CV writing agencies

- * There are specialist agencies (many of whom advertise on the Internet) who will write your CV for you from information which you provide.
- * Agencies charge a fee, which can be considerable (in some cases, £150 or more).
- * It's not really necessary to pay an agency to do the job for you - most people can write a CV to be proud of and which will get interviews.
- * However, if you're applying for a job you really want to get, you could find an agency to check over your CV. This might be particularly helpful when you don't have friends or colleagues you can call on to help check your CV.

15. Time management

- * Writing an effective CV takes time (even when using special software). So, make sure you allow enough time to do the job properly.
- * We advise allowing up to 10 hours to complete a 'template' CV and get a customised copy ready to send to an employer.
- * Set aside time to:
 - assemble information about your career history
 - buy stationery
 - do a first draft CV
 - check your CV carefully and edit it, then check it again
 - get some friends, family or colleagues to check over your CV and to give you their comments about it, and make suggestions for ways to improve it.

16. Planning your CV

- * Apart from planning how much time you'll need to produce your CV, you also need to do some other planning.
- * First, think about what you're trying to achieve in your career - what kind of job or industry you'd like to be working in. Find out as much as possible about the job you'd like to do.
- * It's useful to write a career plan - what you want to be doing in the short term (the next 2-5 years), and what you would like to do in the long term (the next 10 to 20 years). Review your plan regularly, and check how your career is progressing.
- * Then, you can decide how to write your CV to achieve your ambitions. For example, if you're looking to change career, then you might need to concentrate on your transferable skills, rather than your work experience.

17. Getting supplies

- * To do job-hunting effectively, and to write your CV, you'll need some supplies:
 - A4 white printer paper (at least 90 grams per metre squared)
 - Large A4 envelopes
 - First class stamps (to send your CV via the postal mail)
 - A diary
 - A pack of document wallets (folders) to keep job ads, job descriptions and copies of application forms etc together (use one for each job application)
 - Pens and pencils
 - Stapler
 - Hole punch
- * It's essential to type your CV - a handwritten version really isn't good enough. It's best to use a computer to write your CV - if you don't have one at home, you can use one at your local library.

18. Your Career Plan

- * Knowing what you want to achieve in your career will help you decide when to apply for new jobs, and the kind of job you need to do next in order to develop your career successfully.
- * So, write a career plan that sets out the kind of work you need to do in the next 2-3 years, the next 5-10 years, and the next 10-20 years. Your career plan can be a simple document that you up-date regularly.
- * Don't be too rigid about your plan - be prepared to change it, because new technology can often mean that jobs become obsolete and are no longer needed by employers.
- * Keep up-to-date with developments in your field so you can amend your career plan as necessary. Attend regular training courses, and keep in touch with professional associations.

19. Career history

- * Your career history is all the paid and voluntary work you've done during your life.
- * You should keep a detailed record of all the work you've done in a document and up-date it regularly, say every 3-6 months.
- * Include in your career history:
 - your job title(s)
 - your duties and responsibilities
 - your achievements in your job (make sure you quantify them where possible)
 - details about your employer: company name, address, your bosses name, the dates when you began and ended each job.
 - training courses you've attended
 - details about your remuneration (your pay and benefits such as bonuses, medical cover, pension etc).

20. Your first CV

- * If you've never written a CV before, it's a good idea to get some help from teachers, or older relatives or neighbours about what to include in your CV, and ask them to check it once you've completed it.
- * Because you won't have much full-time work experience, you should concentrate on voluntary work, part-time jobs you've had, your school or college achievements, and any special interests or activities you were involved in.
- * Include a career objective in your CV to show employers that you've thought carefully about what you want to do, and how you want your career to develop.
- * Make sure you ask permission from 2 people who know you well to act as your referees.

21. If you haven't written a CV in a while ...

- * These days, things change very quickly - so don't assume that you can write your CV in the same way you did years ago.
- * Start by writing or up-dating your career history - particularly if you've not done it for a while (or have never done one!).
- * Concentrate on things you've achieved in your career to date and write them down in your career history - make sure you quantify them wherever possible, eg "Saved the company over £500,000 by reorganising dispatch".
- * If you're thinking about changing career, identify your major skills and abilities, and how you've acquired them. Think about retraining, or getting some new skills.
- * Get some help from a friend or colleague to help you check your CV, and to make sure you're 'selling yourself' successfully.

22. CV Layout

- * The way you lay out and present your CV is the key to getting a recruiter to read it through, and be interested enough in you to invite you to an interview. However well your CV is written, a recruiter will not bother to read it if it's not presented professionally.
- * To produce a CV with a great layout:
 - leave plenty of white space (blank areas of the page)
 - don't use boxes or lines to separate sections
 - use clear headings in at least 12 point font size
 - use bold text only for headings
 - use bullets to highlight items
 - don't include drawings, cartoons or 'clip art'
 - use italics sparingly
 - don't underline text
 - keep your CV to 2 pages if you can.

23. Think about the employer!

- * While you're writing your CV, always keep the employer you are sending your CV to in mind - your CV must make the employer believe that you can do the job you're applying for.
- * Much of the time, you'll need to 'customize' your CV for each new job you're applying for.
- * If you're applying for a specific job, read the job advert and the job description carefully and then change your CV to match the requirements of the job.
- * It's fine to have a 'template' CV - one which has all your basic details on it, which you can then amend for each new job you are applying for.
- * If you're going to put your CV on-line, then you can use your template CV as long as it would be suitable for a wide range of jobs.

24. What to include in a CV ...

- * Your CV should be made up of a number of different sections such as: contact details, career objective, personal profile, career history etc.
- * Which sections you include on your CV depends on
 - the kind of job you're applying for
 - the type of CV you're writing
 - what stage you are at in your career, eg you will have different sections if you've been in work a long time, than if you're just starting out on your career.
- * All CVs should contain:
 - your name - at the top of each page
 - contact details (phone number, postal and email addresses) – at the top of every page
 - educational qualifications.

25. What NOT to include in your CV ...

Although you need to decide what to include on your CV, we advise you **not** to include details about your

- * age or date of birth
- * physical characteristics
- * race or religion
- * whether you are married or not, and how many children you have
- * sexual orientation
- * political beliefs.

Almost all of the above are irrelevant in terms of your '**ability to do the job**' which is what employers should be concerned about.

26. Always tell the truth

- * You may have some problems in writing your CV. For example, if you don't have certain qualifications which the employer is looking for, or there are gaps in your career history because of redundancy or periods of unemployment.
- * However tempting it might be, don't lie on your CV. If you do, you may be instantly dismissed when the employer discovers your lie.
- * Remember that some things, such as where you worked previously and your educational qualifications, can be checked very easily and quickly. So, lies can often be discovered even before you attend for an interview.
- * Also, make sure that you don't exaggerate or write anything on your CV that misleads the employer or recruiter - although not actual lies, these may also lead to dismissal.

27. Dealing with gaps in your career history

- * You might have gaps in your career history because of
 - unemployment
 - taking time off work to raise children
 - extended periods of travel
 - redundancy
 - working in temporary positions
 - taking advantage of special events, eg a round the world yacht race.
- * Don't ignore gaps in your career history. Always list and explain them.
- * In general, most employers will think you're more honest and truthful if you explain gaps in your career.
- * Use a functional CV to de-highlight gaps.
- * Never be tempted to lie to cover career gaps.

28. Main sections for your CV

- * CVs are set out in a number of sections to make them easy to read, and to help recruiters find the information they are looking for quickly.
- * Which sections you include depends on the kind of CV you're writing, as well as things such as how long you've been working, and the kind of job you're seeking.
- * Most CVs will include the following sections:
 - contact details
 - career objective
 - career history
 - educational qualifications
 - interests and activities
 - referees.

29. Contact details

- * Write your contact details at the top of the first page of your CV, including your
 - name
 - postal address
 - home phone number
 - mobile phone number
 - email address
 - web site address (eg if you have samples of your work displayed on a web site).
- * Your name should also be written at the top of other pages of your CV - but don't include your contact details again.
- * Make sure your email address is appropriate - don't use something like 'creepylad@cringe.com'. And only include your work 'phone number if your employer doesn't mind you getting calls at work.

30. Your career objective

- * Below the contact details section of your CV, you can include your career objective - what you're trying to achieve in applying for jobs.
- * Your career objective can show the employer that there is a good 'fit' between what they are looking for in an employee, and what you are looking for in your career.
- * You should edit your career objective for each job you apply for, unless the job is basically the same.
- * Career objectives are essential for new entrants to the job market (for example, people leaving full time education), as well as people who wish to change careers, or those who have had a career break.
- * Keep your career objective brief and to the point. Aim for no more than 2-3 lines of text, or about 40-50 words.

31. Personal profile

- * On the first page of your CV, you can include a profile which gives a brief summary of your abilities and experience.
- * You can also call your profile a 'summary', 'professional summary', or 'personal profile'.
- * If you wish, you can combine your profile with your career objective and give the section a different title, eg the title of your job, such as 'Electrical engineer'.
- * The idea of a profile is to grab the recruiter's attention by showing that you have the skills and experience to do the job - that way they are more likely to carry on reading your CV and to offer you an interview.
- * A profile should be brief and to the point – no more than 3 lines of text, or about 40 words.

32. Skills

- * One of the most important questions an employer needs to answer is "Have you the skills to do the job?" So, listing your skills which are relevant to the job you're applying for is a good idea.
- * Some of your skills will be 'transferable'. These are skills which you can use in a variety of different jobs. Examples include leadership, organizational skills, communication, and computer skills.
- * If you're writing a functional CV, you will be focusing on your skills rather than your work experience. You'll need to use this type of CV when you're changing careers, or when you don't have much work experience, or have gaps in your career history.
- * When writing about your skills, choose 4 or 5 which the employer is looking for (check the job ad or the job description for clues), and then write about those skills in detail.

33. Achievements

- * Achievements are things that you've done well. They can be things that you've done well at work, or in spare time activities, or voluntary work.
- * Your achievements tell an employer what you can do for them.
- * Wherever possible, quantify your achievements. For example: "Brought a new camera to market in record time, saving the company over £1 million in development and roll-out costs".
- * Sometimes, you might think you haven't achieved very much in your working life. But think carefully, and you may be surprised what you come up with. Ask friends or colleagues to help you.
- * You can include your achievements in a separate section on your CV, or as part of your career history.

34. Work experience

- * One of the biggest sections on most CVs is the 'career history' or 'work experience' section.
- * Your work experience shows the jobs you've had together with your responsibilities and achievements.
- * When you're writing a 'Chronological CV', you will focus on your career history rather than your skills and abilities.
- * If you're writing a 'functional CV', you should only include a career summary rather than a detailed career history.
- * Always include dates for the jobs you've had during your career, and mention the name of the employer together with the kind of work they did.
- * Record each job you've had in your 'career history' document.

35. Responsibilities

- * Record your responsibilities for each job you've had in the 'career history' section of your CV.
- * Make sure you remember the responsibilities for each job you've had by updating your 'career history' document regularly.
- * Don't confuse responsibilities (things you had to do in your job) with achievements (things you did well for your previous employers).
- * The career history section of your CV should list each job you've had, followed by your responsibilities in that job, and then your achievements in that job.
- * If you're writing a 'Functional CV', you only need to include a summary of your career history and so will not need to include responsibilities.

36. Education and qualifications

- * Whatever type of CV you're writing (chronological, functional or hybrid), you'll need to include a section which details your qualifications.
- * Always start the qualifications section of your CV with your highest qualification, eg bachelor (or first) degree, masters degree etc.
- * If you've just left school, college or university, you'll also need to include details about the institution and courses you attended.
- * When you've already had a long career, only include your highest qualification on your CV, and you should think about the relevance of, say, your degree which you might have obtained some years ago.
- * Explain educational acronyms (eg GCE) if the employer might not know what the term means.

37. Hobbies and interests

- * Most employers like to know that you have interests outside of work, especially when your interests can help you develop as an employee, eg public speaking (which would help you make presentations in a job).
- * Don't invent interests - you'll almost certainly be asked about them in an interview, and the interviewer might just be an expert in the field!
- * Don't list more than 3 interests, otherwise it might seem like your job is really your hobby!
- * If you don't have any interests outside of work (really?), then don't include this section on your CV.
- * Never list interests such as 'Drinking down the pub with my mates', which of course will put off many employers.

38. References

- * Some employers will check references before you are interviewed for a job, but most will check once they are ready to employ you.
- * You usually need to provide names of 2 people to act as your referees - but you may sometimes be asked for more depending on the kind of job you'll be doing.
- * Make sure you always ask people you know to be referees for you - never assume they will be willing to do it for you. And keep them advised of which jobs you're applying for.
- * Include the names and addresses of your referees on your CV if you know who they will be. If not, just put the phrase "Supplied on request" in the referees section on your CV, and then be ready to supply contact details when required.
- * Never use a referee who might say something negative about you.

39. Language and grammar (1)

- * You don't have to use normal prose on CVs. For example, you don't always need to write complete sentences as you would do in a covering letter, for example.
- * Use short sentences, and start a new one for each new point you want to make. This makes sure you avoid complex sentences which employers might find confusing.
- * Always use positive words such as 'created', 'transformed', 'reorganized' etc. And use words such as 'quickly', 'efficiently' and 'flexibly' to add power to your achievements.
- * Avoid clichés (over-used words or phrases), and if you need to include technical language or 'jargon', explain the words you use.
- * Always get a relative, friend or colleague to check the language you've used in your CV before you send it to an employer.

40. Language and grammar (2)

- * You don't need to use first person pronouns in your CV. For example, instead of saying "I managed a team of 10 people", you can simply say "Managed a team of 10".
- * Use the present tense to describe the job you're doing now, and the past tense for your previous jobs.
- * Avoid using articles (a, an, the). For example, instead of saying "I supervised the staff on a regular basis", you could say "Supervised staff regularly".
- * Don't try to use words that you wouldn't normally use - it will make you sound too formal or pompous. Use your own 'voice' as professional writers say.
- * Avoid using the 'passive voice'. For example, instead of saying "staff were supervised", say "supervised staff".

41. Presentation

- * The way you present your CV is extremely important. It must reach the employer in word-perfect condition.
- * Make sure there are no marks on the paper, and that the paper you print your CV on is perfectly flat and not curled at the edges.
- * Leave plenty of 'white space' (blank areas of the page) on your CV. This makes it easier to read.
- * Don't include drawings, clip art or a photograph of yourself.
- * Use only standard fonts such as Arial, Times New Roman, Verdana or Geneva. Don't use 'wacky' fonts, or ones that look dated (like Courier).
- * Never fold your CV. When posting it to an employer, put it in a large C4 envelope.

42. Printing your CV

- * Always print your CV on one side of the paper only - never print 'back to back'.
- * Make sure your printer cartridges have enough ink - check for any areas where the print is not clear. If possible, use a high quality laser printer.
- * Use only black ink for your CV - don't use coloured text (blue or red for example) as it won't fax or photocopy clearly, (your CV may be faxed between recruitment agencies and employers).
- * Save the planet and some cash at the same time - always check your CV on screen several times before you print it out.
- * Print a copy of each CV you send out for your own records. Then you can re-read it before an interview to make sure you remember what you told the employer.

43. Paper for your CV

- * Always print your CV on A4 size paper. Never use any other size of paper, even if you want your CV to 'stand out from the crowd'.
- * Use only white paper for printing as your CV may be faxed or photocopied several times by employers or recruitment agencies - white paper scans and faxes best.
- * Save paper whenever possible by checking your CV on-screen several times before you print it out. You can also save money by emailing your CV as an attachment (which most employers now prefer).
- * Don't use copy paper to print your CV. Use higher quality paper with a weight of at least 90 grams per meter squared (ask at your local stationers). This will make your CV look much more professional, and will be easier to fax or copy.

44. Fonts

- * Fonts are kinds of characters used for printing, and in electronic documents you type on a computer. The kind of font you use for your CV can affect the way it looks, as well as the impression you give the employer. So, choose your font wisely.
- * The best fonts to use for your CV are Arial, Times New Roman, Verdana and Geneva.
- * **FONTS LIKE THIS CAN BE DIFFICULT TO READ**, and you may give the employer the impression that you are not a very serious candidate.
- * Only use one font throughout your CV. If you mix fonts, your CV will look unprofessional.
- * Use 12 point font size for headings, and 10 point size for the main body of your text. If you wish, you can use a larger font size for your name (which should appear at the top of each page of your CV).

45. Customizing your CV

- * Customizing or 'tailoring' your CV is about changing it for each new job application you make. Even experts disagree about whether you need to tailor your CV, but we think it's best to read the job advert and job description, then amend your CV to fit the employer's requirements.
- * You don't need to change all of your CV to tailor it for a new job application - you may only need to change your
 - career objective
 - achievements, and
 - personal profile
- * If you're trying to change careers as well as looking for a job in your current field at the same time, you will need to prepare templates for both a functional CV as well as a chronological CV which you can then tailor to send to different employers.

46. How long should your CV be?

- * In general, try to keep your CV to 2 pages (when printed on A4 size paper). This is long enough for most people to include the details which an employer needs to form an opinion of you.
- * If you have recently left college, school or university, you may be able to fit your CV on just one page.
- * When you've already had a long career, you can keep the size of your CV to 2 pages by summarizing jobs which you had in the early part of your career.
- * If you can't get your CV onto 2 pages, look at ways of saving space, eg by combining your career objective and profile.
- * You can also save space by leaving out the names and addresses of your referees and writing "Supplied on request" in the referees section.

47. CVs and scanning

- * Recruiters and employers may scan your CV (use a machine to read it electronically) to keep your details in a database. So, it's important that your CV is formatted in a way which helps the machine to read your CV accurately.
- * One way to do this is to send your CV as a plain text file, without bold and italics. Newer scanning machines can scan formatted CVs. So, you can always contact the employer to ask them which format they would prefer to receive.
- * If you're printing your CV and sending it to an employer by postal mail, it can still be scanned. Just make sure the print is clear.
- * You can also insert a plain text version of your CV in the body of an email when you're sending your CV to an employer electronically.

48. Checking your CV

- * Never send out your CV without checking it several times for errors such as typos, incorrect grammar and miss-spelt words.
- * To save money and trees, check your CV several times on-screen before you print it out.
- * Get a friend, colleague or relative to check your CV before you send it to an employer or recruiter.
- * Always spell-check your CV - but remember that spell checkers can't detect all spelling errors and typos. Use a dictionary if necessary.
- * Make sure your CV shows the employer that you have the skills, abilities and personality described in the job ad' or job description.
- * Check that your achievements are quantified, and that you include at least one achievement for each skill listed in the job advert.

49. Editing your CV

- * When you've got your details into a basic or 'template' CV, you'll need to edit the information in 2 ways to:
 - perfect the wording and contents, and
 - tailor your CV to the job you're applying for.
- * You can amend your 'template' CV for each job you apply for.
- * You can have several CV 'templates' when you're applying for different kinds of jobs. For example, if you're in selling, you may wish to apply for positions as a sales executive, or positions as a sales manager.
- * Remember that editing and amending your CV is time-consuming. So, make sure you set aside enough time to do the task properly. And when you've edited your CV, get someone to check it again for you.

50. Putting your CV on-line

- * There are a number of ways to put your CV on-line - that means making it available for recruiters and employers via the Internet.
- * You can put your CV on:
 - your own web site, or
 - a jobs web site such as www.monster.co.uk
 - a company's web site through their careers portal.
- * Remember that putting your CV on-line means that anyone and everyone can access it - including your current employer!
- * It also means that your personal contact details (including your email address) are available for anyone to see - this might mean you get more spam emails.

51. On-line job sites

- * There are a large number of job sites where you can check availability of jobs, as well as put your CV on-line.
- * Remember that if you put your CV on a job site, it will be available to all employers, including your present one. So, consider your employer's reaction, and think about whether it will be ok for recruiters and employers to contact you at work.
- * Don't forget to remove your CV from on-line jobs sites once you have found a new job (unless you're still considering other positions).
- * Some job sites will notify you of job vacancies automatically. So, check your email regularly to get your application in as soon as a vacancy arises.

52. Your CV as a web page

- * You can publish your CV on-line on your own web site. This can be particularly useful when you work in a field such as graphic design where you need to show employers examples of your work.
- * If you have your own web site, you can put your CV on your site as a web page (in HTML format), or as a downloadable Word document, a PDF file, or as a plain text file. These options ensure that anyone interested in your CV will be able to read it.
- * When you send out your CV to employers, you should include your web site address so they can see samples of your work, or read other information which you may not have space to include in your CV - for example, you could do an on-line interview where you answer questions which an employer may want to ask you.
- * As with a CV, you need to make sure your web site is impressive and free of errors - make sure you get someone to check it for you.

53. Faxing your CV

- * Most employers and recruiters now prefer to receive CVs by email - it's quicker and easier for them. If an employer doesn't specify how to send your CV, prefer email or postal mail to faxing it.
- * So, you may not need to fax your CV to an employer very often. But if you do, make sure you follow some basic rules:
 - always fax a covering letter in the same way as you would if you were sending your CV by postal mail. Include the covering letter on the 'cover' (first) page of the fax.
 - tell the employer how many pages you're faxing (including the cover page)
 - make sure the print-out of the fax is clear - detail can sometimes be lost when faxing if the text is not printed clearly.

54. Emailing your CV

- * Most employers will now accept your CV by email - and many prefer to receive CVs this way.
- * Email your CV to an employer by attaching it as a Word document (doc format), as a PDF file (Adobe Acrobat format) or a plain text file.
- * If you want to make sure that you preserve all the formatting of your CV, it's best to send it as a PDF file - this type of file is 'locked' so it will not be changed by the employer's system in any way.
- * In the body of the email you send to the employer, write a 'covering letter' (as you would do if you were sending your CV via the post) explaining why you are applying for the job.
- * Follow any specific instructions that the employer gives in the job advert.

55. Including a photograph with your CV

- * Many people ask about including a photograph with their CV - our advice is NOT to do so.
- * In research which has been done, almost all successful CVs (which resulted in an interview) did not include photographs.
- * If you send in a photograph, you may be saying to the employer "judge me on my looks, rather than my skills and abilities".
- * Employers should judge you only on your ability to do the job, not on your personal characteristics such as the way you look, your race, sexual orientation, marital status etc.
- * For some kinds of jobs, such as a fashion model, your appearance is critical. In these cases, it's perfectly acceptable to be asked by employers to send in your photograph, and you must do so.

56. Making your CV stand out from the crowd

- * The best way to impress an employer or recruiter, and make your CV 'stand out from the crowd' is to make sure it
 - is well formatted
 - looks professional
 - describes your skills, experience and abilities clearly
 - is error-free
 - matches your skills, experience and personality to those the employer is looking for (read the job ad' or job description)
 - shows the employer what you can do for them by describing your achievements.

57. Unusual CVs

- * Many people think that making their CV look different will attract the employer's attention, and they will be offered an interview.
- * For example, some people have been known to send in a CV designed as a cheque (for a job in a bank), or in the shape of a house for an architect's position. Other job-hunters use highly coloured paper, diagrams, drawings or 'clip art'.
- * In almost all cases, employers find these 'unusual' CVs at best amusing, or at worst, irritating.
- * So, don't be tempted to use a 'wacky' or unusual format for your CV - it simply won't work, and your CV will almost certainly end up in the bin (if the employer can fit it in!).
- * Make your CV stand out from other applicants by making sure it looks really professional, and is error free.

58. Covering letters

- * Include a 'covering letter' with your CV which tells the employer
 - that you wish to apply for the job
 - the title of the job you want to apply for
 - why you want the job
 - why you think your skills and experience make you suitable for the job.
- * Always address your letter to a named person - avoid using 'Dear Sir' if possible. If necessary, call the employer to ask for the name of the person you should send your CV to.
- * Don't forget to include your name, address, the job reference number (if there is one), and the employer's full address.
- * Type your name at the bottom of the letter and sign it above. Then check your letter carefully to remove any errors.

59. Delivering your CV

- * You can 'deliver' your CV to employers in a number of different ways:
 - by postal mail
 - as an attachment to an email (as a PDF file or a DOC file)
 - by hand
 - by displaying your CV on your own web site (either as an html page, or by allowing visitors to download it as a PDF or DOC file)
 - posting your CV on a jobs web site (such as workthing.co.uk)
 - by fax
 - giving copies of your CV to colleagues, family or friends to pass on to employers or recruiters
 - handing out your CV to potential employers at careers fairs, exhibitions and other 'networking' events.
- * When applying for a job, always follow the employer's instructions about how to send them your CV.

60. Posting your CV

- * Many recruiters and employers prefer to receive CVs by email - this method saves time. But if you want to send a printed copy of your CV to an employer, or the employer specifically asks you to post your CV to them, remember these points:
 - never fold your CV - always put it in a large enough envelope so you can send it flat rather than folded.
 - always use first class post (it shows you are eager to get the job and are not counting the cost)
 - make sure you include a covering letter (1 page maximum) addressed to the person who needs to see it (phone the employer to ask who you should send it to)
 - note down when you posted it, and check with the employer that they have received it.

61. Delivering your CV by hand

- * When you live near to an employer's offices, you might want to deliver your CV by hand. It's a good way to introduce yourself, if only to the receptionist (who may be asked for her views about job candidates).
- * Delivering your CV by hand also gives you the chance to check-out the employer's premises. It might tell you that you wouldn't want to work in that kind of environment.
- * Some busy organizations don't like to receive unplanned calls from job-hunters. So think carefully about taking in your CV by hand.
- * When a job advert says that a job needs to be filled urgently, taking your CV to the employer by hand can be good way to show them that you've taken notice of their needs, and have responded professionally.

62. The Job Ad'

- * When you're sending your CV to an employer in response to an advert you've seen, make sure
 - you read the ad carefully several times, and jot down on paper what the employer is looking for
 - you tailor your CV to match the employer's needs
 - you include in your CV the key words which the employer uses in the ad' in case your CV is scanned by a machine looking for those words
 - your career objective matches the job you're applying for
 - your profile describes the person the employer is looking for.

63. The person specification

- * The person specification is a list of the personal qualities and attributes which an employer is looking for in an employee. You may be sent a copy when you ask the employer for details about a job vacancy.
- * Usually, employers make up a person spec for each job they are recruiting for. However, not all employers use person specs.
- * Items on the person spec are listed as 'essential' (meaning you must have this ability or attribute), or 'desirable' (a personal characteristic which would be 'nice to have' but is not essential. When you're applying for a job, you must be able to show that you possess all of the essential requirements on the person spec.
- * Read the person spec several times before you customize your CV to show the employer that you have all the qualities they are looking for. Use the spec as a checklist to make sure you cover everything.

64. The job description

- * Like the person specification, you will normally be sent a job description by the employer.
- * The job description lists all the tasks and responsibilities which the job involves.
- * Read the job description through several times, so you know exactly what tasks the job involves. Then you can tailor your CV to show the employer that you have the skills and abilities to do the required tasks.
- * If you're not familiar with some of the tasks on the job description, for example when you're changing career, try to get more information from someone who knows about the job in detail. To do this, try doing some 'informational interviews'. Or, contact the employer for more information.

65. Broadcasting your CV

- * 'Broadcasting your CV' is when you send your CV to dozens or even hundreds of employers when you don't know if they're hiring or not.
- * Most experts don't recommend this approach to job-hunting because it has a very poor success rate. And if you send your CV by postal mail, it can also be expensive.
- * An alternative method of sending your CV to employers speculatively, is to use a 'targeted' approach where you draw up a list of appropriate employers to send your CV. The difference here is that you need to get a first rate list of potential employers. You can find databases of employers on the Internet - but you usually have to pay for them.
- * Find out the name of the hiring managers you should send your CV to - don't just address it to 'The Marketing Manager' etc.

66. Preparing for a job interview

- * When your CV gets its just reward and you are invited to an interview, you need to prepare for it carefully (use our CD-ROM programme '**Job Interview Coach**' to help you).
- * As part of your interview preparation, you should re-read the CV you used to apply for the job - to remind you of what you told the employer.
- * Use your CV to work out some questions you might be asked at the interview - employers often go through your CV in some detail during an interview.
- * Print out at least 2 copies of your CV to take with you to the interview - one copy for you, and at least one copy for the interviewer in case they have misplaced your original (not unheard of).

67. Multiple CVs

- * One disadvantage of tailoring your CV for each job you apply for is that you will have multiple copies of your CV - each slightly different from the others. So, it's important that you keep a copy of each CV you send out to make sure you know what you told an employer.
- * Print a 'hard copy' of each CV, and keep it in a folder (a cheap document wallet will do) in which you should also keep the job ad, job description, the person spec, a copy of the covering letter you sent, as well as other correspondence and paperwork for the same job application.
- * Being well-organized is an essential skill in job-hunting, and pays huge dividends. For example, think how you would face an employer in an interview if you did not have a copy of the CV and covering letter you sent them!

68. CV templates

- * Before you start job-hunting, it's a good idea to put together a basic or 'template' CV which you can later tailor for specific jobs by copying and editing it.
- * You can make up several template CVs: chronological, functional or hybrid, depending on what you're trying to achieve in your job hunting. For example, you might want to apply for jobs as a salesperson, or sales manager. In this case, you could have 2 templates, one for each type of job.
- * Save your templates in a folder on your computer inside the main 'My career' folder that our programmes create for you.

69. Keep your CV up-to-date

- * It's tempting to forget about your CV once you've found a job. But it's not a sensible idea because the nature of work and business is constantly changing, and jobs quickly become obsolete these days. One day you may be in a growing business, and the next day in one which is downsizing or rightsizing in order to balance its books – you never really know when redundancy may strike. So, it's best to keep your CV under constant review.
- * Aim to up-date your CV templates every 3-6 months or so. Add any new achievements, or skills which you've acquired.
- * While you're reviewing your CV, spend some time up-dating your career history. And think about where your career is heading, and decide if you need to change jobs to keep it on track.
- * Finally, check your household budget to see how your career is paying off financially. Maybe it's time to get a better paid job?

70. Networking with your CV

- * Networking is about using your contacts to get information about a job, or to find out which employers are taking on new staff.
- * There are lots of networking meetings that you can attend such as recruitment fairs, exhibitions as well as more specialized networking events. When you go to these meetings, always take copies of your CV to hand out.
- * Ask your contacts if they can take some copies of your CV to hand out for you. And check with them to see if the company they work for has an employee referral scheme - a widespread practice in the USA that is now coming to the UK.
- * Networking is one of the most effective methods of job-hunting. So, you must spend some time networking. However, don't ignore other methods of job-hunting such as checking job sites on the Internet, reading job ads in newspapers etc.

71. Be the best!

- * To get a job, you have to show you're better than the other candidates. Quite literally, you have to be the best of the bunch!
- * Being the best means showing that you have all the personal qualities, skills and experience that the employer is looking for.
- * What counts in a CV is the way you explain that you're the best person for the job - it's not enough to just be 'different'. So, writing an unusual CV - for example, in the shape of an object, or in glaring colours, doesn't show the employer that you're the best person for the job. And remember that most employers are fairly conservative - they don't respond well to wacky CVs.
- * Your CV can show you're the best by using effective words to show you have everything the employer is looking for. But it also needs to be well-formatted and presented too.

72. Preparing your CV for delivery

- * Never send out your CV (no matter how desperate you are to get a new job) if it's simply not ready. If you haven't checked and edited it, and haven't had time to get someone else to check it for you, don't send it out.
- * If you've decided to tailor your CV for a particular job, make sure you've got time to check it carefully before the deadline for making the application.
- * Even if you're sending your CV by email, print it out before sending it, and check it through again at least 2 or 3 times. You can sometimes spot typos and other errors more easily from a print-out than you can on screen.
- * When you're posting your CV, always send it by first class mail - make sure you always have a supply of stamps.

73. Check that the employer has received your CV

- * If you've sent your CV to an employer via the postal mail, it's a good idea to ring them after a few days to see if they've received it.
- * When you've sent an employer your CV by email, it can irritate the employer to be sent another email asking if they have received the previous one. But you can always 'phone to check they have received a CV by saying something like "I have a couple of job interviews lined-up, and wondered if you had planned to contact me about my CV which I sent you recently".
- * Don't keep calling the employer every few days - if you do, you'll quickly be regarded as a nuisance. Once you've discovered that your CV has been received, call after another 2 weeks or so, and then perhaps every 6-8 weeks after that. If you're determined to work for a particular employer, send an email giving more details about your skills, or to say you are still keen to work for them.

74. Getting feedback

- * One of the most important things you need to do is to get some feedback from employers and recruiters about your CV.
- * If you don't get an interview for a job you've applied for, 'phone the employer and say you would value some feedback about your CV. Most employers (if they are not overwhelmed with work) will be happy to provide a few notes for you. Make sure you write down what the employer tells you, and use their suggestions to amend your CV.
- * Don't take up too much of the employer's time - you're only asking for a few notes or suggestions, not a complete rewrite of your CV!
- * Always send a letter or email to the employer thanking them for their time and comments. If you're really keen to work for the employer, try sending a copy of your CV with the updates in place.

75. Highlight your achievements

- * Employers need to know what you can do for them. Since you've not worked for them before, they can only decide what you can do by assessing what you've done for other employers. So, your achievements (things you've done particularly well) in previous jobs, or at school and university are important in persuading an employer that you are the best person for the job.
- * There are two ways to highlight your achievements. You can include them in the work experience section of your CV, or you can list and describe them in a separate 'achievements' section.
- * Try to make your achievements sound impressive by using appropriate words. For example, instead of saying "Achieved targets", say "Achieved highly optimistic targets of £250,000 ahead of deadline".
- * Don't exaggerate your achievements, but don't make them sound matter-of-fact either.

76. Quantify your achievements

- * Wherever you can, quantify your achievements to leave the employer in no doubt about their significance. For example, instead of saying "Achieved on-target sales", say "Achieved on-target sales of £250,000 in my first year".
- * Remember that employers are interested in
 - selling more goods or services
 - saving money by cutting costs
 - producing new or better products
 - running their businesses more efficiently.

So include quantified achievements in your CV which focus on these areas.

- * When you can't quantify achievements exactly, give a realistic estimate of how much your achievement meant to your employer.

77. Dealing with difficult issues

- * You might have to deal with one or more problems when writing your CV. For example, you might have had
 - time off because of illness
 - a career break, for example to travel, or raise children
 - to face redundancy, or a lengthy period of unemployment

Or maybe you have several gaps in your career history, or have spent a lot of time doing temporary work.
- * Whatever the problems you've had to face, employers prefer them to be explained rather than ignored. But you can often get round difficult issues by using the functional, or hybrid CV formats which don't focus so much attention on your work experience record.
- * Don't give reasons for leaving jobs on your CV - it can give a negative impression, particularly if you were made redundant.

78. Redundancy

- * Bad times follow good times just as surely as night follows day. The high growth company of today, can be the dotcom failure of tomorrow. You only have to look at a daily newspaper to see that even the biggest names in the commercial world don't always succeed. So, making people redundant is something that happens in almost every company at one time or another.
- * Even though employers know this, they still don't look on redundancy or unemployment very favourably, though there are some signs that this is changing.
- * Never say you were unemployed on your CV - use something else which puts your position in a positive light, eg 'career evaluation', or 'learning new skills', and explain how it made you a better worker.
- * If you're made redundant, sign up immediately for 1 or 2 courses to improve or enhance your skills, and try doing some voluntary work.

79. Unemployment

- * Like being made redundant, it's often hard to explain periods of unemployment, even if they arise through no fault of your own.
- * Don't be tempted to lie about your unemployment, or to cover it up by changing dates in your work history - lies can often result in dismissal if discovered.
- * Don't say 'unemployed' as a job title in the work experience section of your CV. Instead, say something positive about what you were doing, eg 'learning new skills', or 'career appraisal'.
- * It's always a good idea to enroll for courses whenever you're unemployed - that way you can always legitimately say you were studying for new skills, and thus cover up a nasty gap on your CV. At the same time, you will be getting new skills that will also help with your job hunting. Try signing-up for voluntary work too.

80. Dealing with ageism

- * Although no employer will admit it, your age may prevent you from getting job interviews. Ageism is more than alive and well in the UK, and in many other parts of the world. And this applies to younger employees as well as older ones.
- * Never put your age or date of birth on your CV. If the employer is determined to know how old you are, let them work it out.
- * If you've had a long career, shorten your work experience to the most recent jobs you've had. And move other jobs to a different section on your CV entitled 'Other experience' - but only if there's experience which is relevant to the job you're applying for.
- * If you've already had a long career, think about applying for jobs with employers who prefer older, and more experienced employees.

81. Children

- * Don't include details in your CV about your marital status or your family, such as how many children you have.
- * Employers often worry that women in particular will take large amounts of time off work in order to look after children. However, this kind of sexism is illegal.
- * What should be important to an employer is your ability to do the job, and not how many children you have, or whether you're married, single or divorced.
- * You may have to face questions about your family situation during a job interview. At that stage, you'll need to decide how to tackle questions about child care, for example. In many cases, you can deflect troublesome questions about your family by asking the employer how the question relates to your ability to do the job - which usually means the question will be dropped.

82. Caring for others

- * Many people have to put their career on hold to look after someone who is ill or physically handicapped, or to raise a family.
- * In many ways, caring for others can be viewed as another kind of employment. So, the way to overcome any prejudice on the part of an employer is to list your caring work as a job, and describe the skills and abilities you acquired during that time. For example, you can focus on things such as organizational skills, planning and scheduling, budgeting, and dealing with financial matters.
- * If you are likely to be caring for someone and out of the 'normal' job market for some time, think about doing some part-time, or voluntary work, and try to keep up-to-date with developments in your career field by attending exhibitions or networking events, or by taking some courses.
- * Be proud of your caring work - treat it as a real achievement.

83. Impress in less than 30 seconds!

- * When your CV lands on an employers desk, it may be one of hundreds they have to deal with.
- * Generally, recruiters and employers do a very quick first sorting of CVs, spending perhaps only 20-30 seconds on each one.
- * This initial screening is really to remove any applicants who don't match up to the employer's expectations. So CVs with errors, or omissions, or ones which are poorly set-out or formatted will be discarded immediately.
- * To survive this first round, your CV has to impress the employer in maybe less than 30 seconds. A tall order! But it's one you can meet by careful checking and editing to make sure your CV is error free, looks really professional, is easy to read, and tells the employer why you're the best person for the job.

84. Match your CV to the needs of the employer

- * Some CV experts recommend that you have only one CV, which you should use for all your job applications. Their reasoning is that you will know exactly what you've said in your CV, and more likely to remember it during an interview.
- * But you will not always be applying for the same kind of jobs. And even if you are, not all jobs of the same kind involve the same work, or require exactly the same skills.
- * In other words, the needs of each employer you'll be applying to will be different.
- * If you want to stand the best chance of getting the job, you must show the employer that you fit their requirements exactly. The only way to do this is to 'tailor' or customize your CV for each new job you're applying for. Use the job ad' and the job description to match your skills and experience with what the employer is looking for.

85. Formatting your CV

- * When you've collected all the information for your CV, and have written it up in the best way, it's time to look at the formatting - the way your CV is laid out and presented.
- * The most important thing you need to do is to make your CV look professional, and easy for the employer to read.
- * When you're formatting your CV
 - choose a font which is suitable for the job you're applying for
 - leave plenty of white space (empty areas of the page)
 - use bold for section headings and your name
 - use italics sparingly as they are not as easy to read as plain text
 - leave large margins around the edge of the page
 - use bullets to highlight important points (such as your achievements).

86. Using bold

- * Bold characters help highlight words and phrases. But don't include too much bold text in your CV.
- * Use bold for
 - your name (which should appear at the top of each page)
 - section headings
 - dates for jobs you've had
 - titles of jobs you've had
 - key achievements, and skills
 - bullets.

87. Using italics

- * Like bold, italic text can make words and phrases stand out. But italics can also be more difficult to read than plain text, or characters in bold. So use italics sparingly in your CV - use it where you have no other way to draw the reader's attention to a point.
- * In many cases, you can use bold text to do the same job as italics.
- * Your CV may look better if you use only bold to highlight text.
- * Be consistent whether you use bold or italics. For example, if you use bold for headings (which we recommend), then don't put some headings in bold and some in italics.
- * If you want to make use of italic text, use it for job titles and dates. Then use bold for your name and section headings.

88. Section headings

- * Most CVs contain the following sections:
 - contact details
 - career objective
 - career history
 - educational qualifications
 - interests
 - referees.
- * Check your CV to make sure you've included all appropriate sections.
- * When you're formatting your CV, make sure that section headings are
 - in bold text
 - 12 point font size.

89. Checking for gaps and omissions

- * When you're checking your CV, look carefully for any gaps you've left. It often happens with dates in the career history section. By accident, you can leave months or years between job dates. Many employers read career history sections very carefully to see if you're trying to cover up something. So make sure you check this section thoroughly.
- * Also, check for anything which you've left out. For example, is there a skill which the employer is looking for that you've not mentioned? Compare your CV with the job ad' or job description to make sure you've covered everything.
- * Use your career history document to check that you've not left out some key achievements or skills.
- * Use a ruler to check your CV line-by-line. It focuses your attention to make checking easier.

90. Checking spelling

- * Never send your CV to an employer without checking the spelling several times by
 - using our spelling checker, and
 - reading your CV through both on-screen as well as from a print-out.
- * Remember that spell checkers can't pick up all typos and miss-spelt words. If a word is spelt correctly but is used in the wrong place, a spell checker may not be able to tell you. So it's essential that you check your CV for spelling errors, and places where you have mistakenly used the wrong word.
- * Always get someone else to check spelling in your CV. No matter how many times you check it yourself, you may simply not see a mistake, whereas someone else might.

91. Stationery

- * Only use white paper for printing your CV. White paper is best for faxing and copying, and the employer or recruiter may need to fax or copy your CV several times when they are considering your job application. Don't be tempted to use coloured paper - not even cream, grey or other pale colours - they don't look as good as white.
- * Don't use copier paper to print your CV - use a heavier paper with a weight of 90 grams per metre squared (ask at your local stationers).
- * If you're posting your CV, use a large C4 sized envelope so that you don't have to fold your pristine CV. Folds make your CV look unprofessional, and may make it harder for machines to scan it properly.
- * Remember to include a covering letter, and print it on the same type of paper as your CV. Don't use personalized stationery as this can seem pretentious.

92. Keywords

- * Employers often use machines to scan your CV. Scanning helps recruiters assess CVs faster than humans can. It's used most often by larger employers such as multi-national companies, government departments etc., when there are many applicants for a job.
- * The scanning machine looks for 'keywords' - skills or abilities that the employer has decided are essential for the job. You can get clues about the 'keywords' the employer is looking for by reading the job ad' and the job description.
- * To make sure the scanning machine picks you out as a suitable candidate for interview, you should include the keywords in your CV. For example, if you're applying for a secretarial job, you should include words and phrases such as word processing, computer skills, databases etc..

93. CV screening

- * Screening is the process of sorting through CVs to find candidates who are suitable for interview.
- * Your CV may be 'screened' several times, by any of the following
 - a recruitment consultant
 - someone from the employer's Human Resources (HR) department
 - the hiring manager who you'll be working for if you get the job.

And if you apply for a job on-line, you may be screened (asked a number of questions) before you're even allowed to submit your CV.

- * Since your CV might be read by several people for a single job application, it's essential that it really is error-free, and contains the appropriate information for the job you're applying for. It's also more likely that gaps in your career will be spotted by someone!

94. Use your own 'voice'

- * When writers talk about your 'voice', they mean the way your writing 'sounds' when it's read. You can usually identify who wrote something because of the words they use, and how they put words together.
- * Always use your own words when writing your CV. Even though we recommend that you get some help with it, make it your own by choosing words you use in everyday conversation. But don't use the same words too often in your CV - otherwise it will become repetitive and boring. Use a dictionary, or thesaurus to find alternative words.
- * Write in short, simple sentences, and don't use more than 15-20 words per sentence.
- * When you're checking your CV, make sure it describes you positively and in an interesting way so you don't 'bore your readers to death'.

95. Action words

- * Your CV will be much more effective and interesting if you use 'action' words to describe your experience and achievements.
- * Action words describe things you've done in your previous jobs, or school and college life. For example:
 - managed, organized, created, coordinated, trained, devised.
- * Remember that an employer is trying to match your skills and experience to what they need you to do in the job they're recruiting for. Action words tell the employer what you've done.
- * Check the job ad' and job description to find action words to use in your CV. For example, if the job ad' says 'Management experience essential', then you can write in your CV: 'Managed a team of 10 customer care staff'.

96. Doing your homework

- * Getting a job is more about preparation than anything else. The more work you do preparing applications and for job interviews, the more likely you are to succeed. Trying to save time by cutting corners really isn't the best way to get a job. It takes hard work.
- * Effective preparation means doing your homework, which involves tasks such as
 - finding out about the job and the employer
 - tailoring your CV for each new job application
 - keeping track of your job applications, eg filing copies of your CV; checking that the employer has received your CV, etc.
 - thinking about questions you might be asked in a job interview, and preparing your answers.

97. Keep it simple and brief

- * Your CV will be more interesting, easier to read and usually more successful if you keep it brief and simple.
- * Don't cram as much information as you can into your CV - be selective. For example, include only your most impressive achievements. And leave plenty of 'white space' (empty areas of the page), and use large margins.
- * Use simple action words to describe your work experience and achievements.
- * Write short 'punchy' sentences which will impress the reader, and make it easy for them to remember what you've said.
- * In many cases 'less is more' - writing less is often better than writing too much. And leaving some things out of your CV will give you things to talk about in the job interview.

98. Professional development

- * The world of work is fast-moving and ever-changing. If you don't keep your skills up-to-date, you can find yourself out on a limb, without a job.
- * The best way to avoid becoming a job 'dinosaur' is training and professional development.
- * When you're employed, talk to your manager about training. Most employers will pay for you to go on courses, and help you develop new skills by giving you 'on-the-job' training, for example.
- * If your employer won't help you with training, take responsibility for your career and apply for some courses - you can do them on-line, in the evening, or by post (see www.learndirect.co.uk for advice).
- * Record your training in your career history document. Note down all courses you attend, as well as new skills you acquire in your job.

99. If your CV isn't working for you ...

- * If you don't get interview offers within about 4 to 6 weeks of sending out your CV, or after you've made about 15-20 applications, then your CV may not be working for you. You need to look at it again, and decide how to improve it.
- * First, get some feedback from friends or colleagues. Or think about seeing your local careers advisor. And call some of the employers you've sent your CV to, and get some feedback about it.
- * If you've been sending out the same CV to all employers, start customizing them for each job you apply for. It's more work, but it may have better results.
- * Look at the job ad', person specification or job description for each job you want to apply for, note down what the employer needs, then amend your CV to cover all the employer's requirements.

100. Winners never quit!

- * It might be a cliché (an over-used phrase), but winners really never quit. If you look at the life stories of successful people, they don't often have very many special skills, but they are usually very tenacious - they don't give up easily, if ever!
- * If you want to be successful in your job-hunting, you must believe that you can get the job you want. Then, you must be persistent and tenacious - keep going, no matter how long it takes!
- * You might be lucky and get a new job in just a few days, or a couple of weeks. But on average, it takes at least 6 months, and in some cases, much longer. Of course, writing a great CV should help you find a job more quickly, but a job-hunting campaign is a serious business and takes time.

Good luck!