

# Update your CV, just like your Will!

My Financial Adviser regularly asks me whether I have updated my Will, perhaps because I am 'of a certain age' but hopefully it's also to ensure I have a meaningful document, relevant to my circumstances today in case the unexpected happens. (Or the cynic in me does wonder whether they are trying to upsell a new Will writing service!)

It's the same with your CV, most of us rarely review them until we are asked for them, but I would urge you to rethink. As a team we read thousands of CVs each year and less than one in five show a person's strengths and experiences in the best way.

Now I can understand how this happens. A new opportunity presents itself, and from a desire to impress, the CV is updated quickly with the latest role. But in reality, that never provides enough time to reflect on career highlights and personal skills then encapsulate all of this information into two sides of A4!

A poor CV restricts your chances to sell yourself or to attract those invaluable, early conversations with decision-makers.

Your CV should be a very personal reflection of you. To me, the style of a CV says nearly as much about a person before you meet them, as do all the contents. I firmly believe that agencies detract from a CV if they sterilise it, by re-writing to fit their 'house style', stripping out the individual character.

From experience, it is easy to spot two or three immediate areas for improvement having simply read the CV, but we usually find many more when we have spoken to the candidate as these natural and relaxed conversations draw more examples out which can often make the difference to whether you are shortlisted or not.

We've just been involved in an excellent 'Chemistry at Work' STEM event helping local school pupils as they prepare to think about CVs, and it made me realise how many of these basic CV tips are relevant to all levels of experience. The principles don't change even when you are a 15 year old student to a 50+ C-Level Exec.

- Keep your CV relevant to what you are seeking today. Cut it down as you update it. Three sides are ok but spill over to four and you may lose someone's attention.
- Use bullet points and keep your language succinct.
- Give the greatest emphasis to your current role and other most significant roles. Don't give the same space to every minor role.
- Always be truthful and don't miss out any roles. Dates on your CV should run in sequence with current job at the top.
- Be ready to explain gaps and short roles outlining why you moved on.
- Sell yourself - but don't exaggerate.
- Use a consistent professional font, watch your spelling, and carefully consider your use of bold/italics/bullet points.
- Make sure your personal email is a professional one – if in doubt set up a new one.

Not many people in a permanent role want to openly show that they are updating their CV, but many of the 'best' candidates do quietly keep an eye for their next career step, and most people try to start a new job search whilst in a secure role. So if you are thinking about something new, before you start looking take some time to review your CV.

For anyone considering their next career move, we'll be happy to talk and offer any advice we can.



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