

# HEADSTART

DIGITAL WORKSHOP SERIES

by

wade macdonald





# CV WRITING

## Headstart Digital Workshop

# INTRODUCTION

## **Chris Goulding – Managing Director**

Managing Director of a specialist staffing business supplying professional finance, data science and HR staff to a range of businesses from FTSE 250 organisations, through to the SME. We have specialist consultants supply to private and public sector clients as well as public practice.

Personally I have recruited in the Thames Valley and surrounding area for 21 years, primarily within finance. I spent 18 years working for a corporate recruiter, before moving to Wade Macdonald nearly 7 years ago and have presented on subjects including CV writing to many professionals institutes across the South.

# Getting started

Prepare beforehand..... Think about....

Why do I want a new job?

What do I want from my next job?

What do I actually want to do?

Understand your financial worth – the market could be changing

Practical considerations such as locations

Not every job is the right job!

# What Is The Purpose Of A CV

The purpose of your CV is to showcase your experience in order to gain an interview.

This is your opportunity to 'sell yourself' and make the employer see you as a well qualified, professional, concise and thoughtful individual who is taking your career seriously.

Statistics show that most recruiters (whether internal or external) spend less than 60 seconds reading a CV during the sifting process.

# Structure / order of your CV

- Address / Contact Details In The Header – Do not leave this out!
- Name
- Personal Statement
- Key Skills / Achievements
- Professional Qualifications / Education
- Career History – most recent job first
- Hobbies / Interests / Charity Work – We will examine later!
- References available on request.

Spend time looking at CVs on the web (LinkedIn) of individuals with a similar background / experience to you and incorporate aspects you believe would enhance your “sales document”.

# Length of your CV

- It is commonly thought that two pages is the correct length
- **HOWEVER!**
  - One page is fine if you are at the beginning of your career.
  - Three pages is fine if you are very experienced.
  - The most important thing is that your CV is concise and relevant.

# A good personal statement

- Generally your personal statement should be one paragraph made of four or five sentences.
- It should explain who you are, what skills you possess and what you want from your next role.
- Avoid clichés and try to make it pertinent to the job being applied for.



## Example of a good personal statement

A highly motivated CIMA qualified finance professional with 15 years post-qualified experience gained from a variety of multi-national organisations. An accomplished business partner, supporting stakeholders up to senior executive level across a multitude of regions. A strong man-manager who will support, challenge and advise depending on the circumstances. Proactive and innovative in approach with a focus on achieving personal and business objectives. Seeking an opportunity within a forward thinking, growing SME where I can utilise the skills I have gained, working in a senior management team to push the business forwards.

# Skills / achievements

- Your personal statement will have covered many skills off, so focus on achievements. However, depending on the role you are applying for it could also be appropriate to add some IT skills. Use of specific computer systems and depth of knowledge are always helpful e.g. SAP Super user, Excel including VBA/Macros.
- Achievements and awards are in many ways more important than a list of duties.
- Do not duplicate too much with your personal statement or your job responsibilities. In achievements think about cost savings, process improvements, cultural achievements, prizes won etc.
- Four to six bullet points is normally enough, you do not want to push the first job you display on your CV on to the second page.

# Professional qualifications / education

- Highest qualification first.
- Some training qualifications that are an adjunct to your main role should be highlighted e.g. 6 Sigma black belt or Prince 2.
- If you have a professional qualification with first time passes mention it – remember this is a sales document.
- If you are part qualified, list exactly where you are at and when you intend to complete the qualification.
- Do not list every GCSE / O-Level achieved unless it is very recent and relevant.
- There is debate over whether to add the years of education – I always would because if someone really wants to work out your age they will anyway.

# Job History

- A description of your employer is very relevant e.g. industry sector, turnover, number of employees.
- Reporting lines can add value, especially if you report to someone more senior than your job title might suggest.
- Try and use recognised job titles – eg don't be a Potato Accountant!
- Ensure the months of employment are added not just the years.
- For your most recent roles list your main duties and your achievements.
- Once your roles are not relevant to the one you are applying for simply put the name of the employer, the dates and job title without duties / responsibilities.
- Use bullet points for your duties and achievements not paragraphs.
- If a role is temporary make sure it is clear.
- Only add reason for leaving if it adds something to your CV.

# Hobbies / Interests / Charity work

- Only add this section if you truly believe it is interesting or relevant to the role you are applying for.
- This could also be achievement driven (black belt in karate, county tennis, climbed Kilimanjaro).
- Charity work / volunteering can look good.
- Avoid 'socialising with friends' and 'reading' – most people do this!

# Do's

- Include your academic and professional qualifications and at which stage you are at – put if you have first time passes, it will help separate you from the competition.
- Put your current role first, and bullet point your duties and achievements clearly, not lengthy paragraphs.
- When in your duties and responsibilities don't write in the first person (I did, I have).
- Tailor your CV for the specific role you are applying for.
- Try and keep it as close to 2 pages maximum as possible, but don't stress too much if it is 3 pages (as long as all is relevant).
- Highlight key achievements in your last few roles (process improvements, money savings, new systems implemented etc.)
- When sending your cv to a potential employer by email send it in a word format and title the word document appropriately.
- If you are available for contract assignments make sure the reader is aware – see keyword search software in the point below.
- Be conscious that a number of corporations utilise cv keyword search software.

# Dont's

- DON'T mention marital status or dependants, people can use this to discriminate.
- DON'T write your date of birth on the CV.
- DON'T list hundreds of duties and responsibilities – use headlines and bullet points. Part of assessing a CV is how well you are communicating information about yourself, getting the message across, in a succinct and precise manner.
- DON'T include a photo.
- DON'T write in capitals – it makes the reader feel they are being shouted at!
- DON'T write in too large or too small, a font 10-12 is perfect.
- DON'T use poetic license in your cv as during the interview process you might be put yourself under unnecessary pressure (and jeopardise your chances of securing the role) by the interviewer who hones in on a semi mistruth!

# CV Killers!

- Don't use different fonts, colours or clip art 😊 😞
- Be very careful to check for spelling and grammatical errors as these point to a lack of attention to detail.
- Gaps on CV – Employers will consider the worst (e.g. Jail!!)



# Before sending your CV

## Tailor Your CV To The Job Description

Every CV submission should be tailored to a specific job application.

- ✓ Read the job description carefully.
- ✓ Ensure you have mentioned relevant experience in your duties if you have covered off areas in the job specification.
- ✓ Tailor the personal statement to the job you are applying for.

Ultimately you should highlight what it is about you that would make you interested in interviewing you if you were hiring the role that you are applying for.

# Final checklist

- Ensure consistency of formatting throughout.
- Ensure the voicemail on your mobile is professional and clear as a hiring manager may choose to engage with you verbally as opposed to via email.
- Ensure your LinkedIn page is current and the information you have posted on LinkedIn reconciles 100% with your CV.
- Ask a recruitment consultant who you have a relationship with to give you honest and constructive feedback on your CV.
- Request a number of friends / colleagues to proof read your CV and ask them to both check for errors / mistakes and for any constructive criticism.
- Change all spellings to English as opposed to American spelling.
- An awful lot of people preparing CVs forget their experience of why they reject applications when they are hiring so bring that experience to the table when composing your own CV.
- **Read your cv and honesty and objectively ask yourself “would I see me for an interview?”**

# Remember the free CV checking service

Email me: [chris.goulding@wademacdonald.com](mailto:chris.goulding@wademacdonald.com)

# Contact us

Please feel free to reach out to us. We are always happy to answer any questions and check over your CV.

General email: [admin@wademacdonald.com](mailto:admin@wademacdonald.com)

Switchboard: +441189 560 600

[Our consultants](#) – find a consultant that specialises in your profession.

Our website: [www.wademacdonald.com](http://www.wademacdonald.com)

Our LinkedIn: [www.linkedin.com/company/wade-macdonald](http://www.linkedin.com/company/wade-macdonald)