

How to prepare an outstanding Curriculum Vitae

CA.Rammohan Bhave*



In today's highly competitive world, getting into a job of one's choice based on one's qualification and experience is an uphill task. This task can be attained by preparing an appropriate Curriculum Vitae (CV). Remember; this is your first impression, as it is the first document that reaches to your prospective employer. Be careful and do not underestimate the importance of a good CV.

1. Title - Bio-data. One makes errors in spellings of Curriculum Vitae. Writing title itself has again gone out of fashion.
2. Sequence - 1. Name, 2 Mobile Number, 3. Email, 4. Education, 5. I.T. Literacy and extra courses, 6. Experience, 7. Achievements, 8. Hobbies, 9. Personal Details
3. End - Left with Date and right with name in bracket to sign above it. With I.T. Revolution writing place has become outdated concept.
4. No. of pages -A professional fresher's CV should not be more than one and half to two pages Subsequently, add half a page for each 2 years (or part of it) experience.

Don'ts : The following points need not be given:

- Father's and Mother's names - these are outdated and irrelevant from professional perspective

- Last sentence "I confirm that above information is true and correct etc etc" not at all needed. One is not writing a legal statement.
- Decimal points in marks - not needed
- Outdated achievements e.g. prize in essay competition during 3rd standard
- Gender & nationality (required for overseas jobs only)
- Native place, Religion and caste, Marital status
- Languages known (unless one knows any foreign language other than English, of course)
- Present Cost to the Company (CTC) & expected CTC
- Passport number and validity date
- DD, MM, YYYY not needed. Only MM, YYYY is enough. Do not write 13th Oct 2006 to 27th Dec 2007 mention "Oct 2006 to Dec 2007"
- Covering letter - with emailed CVs, these have gone out of fashion. If something very specific to be highlighted which is your special Unique Selling Point (USP), then covering letter may be useful to serve some purpose.
- Words like "JUST" showing casualness, "no" "not" showing negativity.
- Pursuing a course - does not add value, unless at least some preliminary or entry or first level or first group is completed.
- Strengths - do not write. But rather state them indirectly by examples of experience or achievements in CV.
- Weaknesses - Interviewer will find any way some of them. But you should be able to show cool, humble and improving mode likes for same.
- References - write them only if very strong. Or else leave them for giving in interview when asked for or while filling company's standard form
- Height, Weight and Chest unless specifically asked for.
- Colour of eyes, hair and skin
- Last but not the least,
 - a. drop everything on which you cannot speak on,
 - b. drop everything on which speaking in interview will go against you,

** The author is a Strategy & IFRS consultant*

- c. drop everything, speaking on which will appear a time-waste for interviewer.

Which should be focused for contents

- A. Experience
- B. Achievements
- C. Education - Degree and above

How to write experience?

- First make or convert all points into bullet points, with sub-titles. (it means - no full sentences, starts with verbs like completed, e.g. Cost Audit - done for sugar company etc)
- Put yourself in interviewers' shoes and think.
- Rank all points in order of importance from interviewers' view point

How to write achievements?

- Write 2-4 achievements
- If there are no academic achievements, write two experience based achievements
- Achievements to some extent should be highlighted in such a way, so as to arouse curiosity, so that interviewer asks questions on them, and then candidate can score on them. After all, interview from candidate's perspective should be an art of driving interviewer towards his strengths. For this, bio-data is vital tool.

How to write hobbies?

Hobbies can be classified in 4 types:

- Having professional synergy- like surfing internet, reading professional books, magazines, journals, chess, traveling (shows exposure).
- Physical/mental strength-peace related - e.g. squash, tennis, badminton, cricket, football, swim, trekking and adventures.
- Social nature hobbies - NGO participation, Rotary, Lions, CRY, Blood donations, Animal anti-cruelty, handicapped children help etc
- Some examples of hobbies not worth stating - reading comics, watching movies.

Maximum hobbies to be stated should be 3 to 4.

Some more tips

- Residential Address can go at the end as a part of personal details. Personal details include postal address, age, birth-date, landline number, family background (optional)
- Mention % only if they are good. If not, put marks in subjects where they are best.
- Stating achievements is a must

- Put table for education, if it is on fast track. If it is on slow track then put descriptive and bullet points
- At least put blue or brown/red colour for few words to highlight and be best at that points
- Better to write computer skills than computer proficiency - (computer is such a vast field, nobody can be really proficient. so better be humble) or say I.T. literacy or I.T. Skills.
- Do not write tally 5.4 - you must know latest version also. So write just tally, but be conversant with latest version by studying from tally website
- Do not make box and table for whole CV
- Have simple name based email id. Don't use collegian id for professional purposes. e.g. manisha_cutiepie@yahoo.com or coolme_deepak@rediffmail.com. Do not use such ids for professional purpose.
- Long career objectives with nothing special (and can be copied by anybody is meaningless to put) Better do not put any career objective.
- If at all put career objective, from which your specialities and USP or differentiators can be identified. Otherwise, DO NOT PUT.
- Any sentence anywhere in CV more than 10 words, just break it or shorten it.
- For a CA CV, mention of "key areas" stated as "Accounting, Auditing" not needed. It is too generic.
- Should you mention college name or university name - mention only one of them, which have higher brand value.
- The date at the bottom of CV should always be latest one.
- 16. Whether family background should be mentioned - generally no. Exceptionally "yes" if it is educationally or industrial/social position-wise is very strong.
- Put cell no. as +91 9989056789 & landline no as +91 22 24041129. Prefix of +91 shows your understanding of global nature, so put it that way.
- "Passed Senior Secondary Examination (Commerce with Maths) from C.B.S.E (2001)." Such Sentences make NO meaning. It should be part of education table. Even if it is bullet point, make it, as "S.S.C - CBSE - 2001". The remaining words are redundant.
- Stated in CV - "won many prizes in public speaking" as achievement. When interviewer asked question which subject you spoke on and

in which year. It was in school in Class 8 on a subject of about water drainage system in Amaravati. Suggestion - do not write such achievements. Better, drop them. Anything, which is, more than 5-7 years old is almost irrelevant nowadays. Of course, this does not apply to unique differentiators.

- If CV is very long, then
 - a. Convert all sentences into bullet points.
 - b. use command find and replace and find all places where “and” word is used and replace it by “&”
 - c. check all words which make no meaning and drop
- The key portion of CV is highlights in exams and achievements in work experience. In case of freshers, it is articleship of CA
- Highlights in exams are represented by rank like all India – topper in city, college, branch, etc, or cleared in first attempt in case of professional exams, or high GPA in MBA or more than 55% marks in professional exams. If such good ranks or good percentages are not there, you may, look for subject marks, which are maximum - say about 80 or 70 or 65 or at least 60. State those with subject name.
- USP - Differentiators must be noticeable - show your CV to friends or relatives or mentors - to know whether these highlights are immediately noticeable or not. Bigger or different font size or colour will achieve that purpose.
- Avoid informal greetings like “Hi” in the email sent enclosing bio data.
- Computer related tips
 - a. Email body with attached CV in word file is the normal way (no power point, excel sheet or pdf)
 - b. Arial or Times New Roman with font size 10 to 12.
- Ensure following
 - a. Making CV short
 - b. Omitting useless and meaningless words
 - c. Avoid anything, which leads to finding negative points by interviewer.