



MAKING A GOOD FIRST IMPRESSION ON POTENTIAL EMPLOYERS BEGINS NOT WITH THE FIRST HANDSHAKE AT THE INTERVIEW, BUT WITH THE QUALITY OF YOUR CV, SAYS MIKE RICHARDS OF MR RECRUITMENT.

CRAFTING THE PERFECT CV

We are often asked to give our definition of the perfect Curriculum Vitae (CV) by both candidates seeking their next roles and clients searching for the next member of their treasury teams. A CV should focus upon real events and actual achievements, rather than quoting generalised attributes such as 'flexible and motivated'. Clients want clear proof of practical situations where candidates have demonstrated the ability to overcome obstacles through a positive attitude and strong treasury knowledge.

A CV is also your passport to getting the first interview for the role you want – it convinces an employer that you deserve the opportunity for a face-to-face discussion where you can both discuss your background in greater detail.

Once in the interview situation, your CV is used as a tool to guide the interviewer through your background and explore areas where you match their current requirements. They want to see how you can solve their current issues, improve the department, what extra skills you can bring and how you will add value to the treasury and finance functions. It is desirable to emphasise the relevant aspects of your experience that address their current problems; these are generally listed in the relevant job description. For example, if they want someone with good all-round cash/treasury management experience then an explanation of your current responsibilities for pan-European cash management and how you have addressed problem areas with your current employer will be extremely useful.

It is essential to be truthful and realistic in the explanation of your experience. Employers also want to know that you will be a 'safe pair of hands' and a cool head in an emergency. The finance director and head of treasury must be confident in your ability to manage the company's cash, leaving them to deal with other finance issues. An employer wants to know you have the right qualifications and the ability to grow with the organisation and satisfy not only their current, but also their future needs.

It is recommended you tailor your CV to suit the position that you apply for. An up-to-date, basic CV is a good starting point and will enable you to produce a comprehensive, targeted CV quickly and efficiently. It should be a neatly presented document that accurately reflects you and your experience and should also be accompanied by a covering letter which persuades the reader that your skills are right for the company and the position you have applied for.

The best CVs are succinct and direct. Generalised attributes such as 'motivation', 'commitment' and 'flexibility' are all 'givens' and such phrases as 'ambitious, flexible, and motivated team-player' should be avoided.

Mike Richards is Managing Director at MR Recruitment.
mike@treasuryrecruitment.com
www.treasuryrecruitment.com

CV tips and pitfalls

Key elements to include on the most successful CVs include:

- Name and address – detail your home and current work address.
- Contact details – be sure to include email addresses, telephone and mobile phone numbers.
- Educational background and qualifications achieved.
- Employment history – in reverse chronological order with the current/most recent role first and be sure to include dates worked, for whom, in what position, location, main accountabilities and achievements.
- Computer, IT and treasury systems used.
- Additional skills/courses attended.
- Activities and interests – some consultancies do not approve of including this, but it often gives an interesting area to discuss outside of the work arena and can be a useful ice-breaker.
- References are useful but do not necessarily need to be completed as they are generally requested at a later stage, i.e. when you have been offered the position.

Common pitfalls include:

- Basic spelling errors, especially from those who list one of their key attributes as being 'attention to detail'.
- The wrong choice of typeface, ie Verdana or Arial Black are sometimes harder to read than clearer, business-like fonts such as Arial, Courier or Times New Roman.
- A layout with an assortment of columns and rows that is difficult on the eye. A plainly laid out easy-to-read business document is a real advantage.
- When it comes to CV length, a general rule of thumb is that one page is too short to give adequate detail, while anything above four pages is too long and will need to be shortened. Opinions on this subject differ between consultancies, but two-to-four pages is the recommended length.

