

Career Advancement Program

How to Improve Your CV or Resume

Your CV/resume serves as a snapshot of you and of your work experience. Some host organizations view hundreds of CVs each day in order to find their ideal candidate.

Before you read the below tips, please be sure to use the **CCI CAP CV sample resume** as a guide when creating your CV. Once you have your CV created, check out the below tips for additional assistance. The below tips will assist you in creating a neat, clean CV that will make you stand apart from the competition!

- **Use a bulleted style to make your resume more reader-friendly.** Given that employers screen resumes for between 2.5 and 20 seconds, they will find your resume a lot more readable if you use bullet points instead of paragraph style. It's much easier to read.
- **List information in order of importance to the reader.** When listing your experience, what's generally most important is your title/position. So list in this preferred order: Title/position, name of employer, city/state/country of employer, dates of employment. Education follows the same principle; thus, the preferred order for listing your education is: Name of degree (spelled out: Bachelor of _____) in name of major, name of university, city/state of university, dates of attending and Grade Point Average (GPA).
- **Eliminate "responsibilities" words from your resume vocabulary.** Never use expressions like "Duties included," "Responsibilities included," or "Responsible for" on your resume. Your resume should be accomplishments-driven, not responsibilities-driven. Job-description language is not what sells in a resume. Accomplishments-oriented language tells employers how you've gone above and beyond in your jobs, what makes you special, how you've taken initiative and made your jobs your own.
- **Eliminate clutter from your resume.** Several elements can clutter up your resume and impede readability:
 - Unnecessary dates.** Don't list dates that don't add anything to your resume; for example, dates you spent involved in college extracurricular activities. If you were involved in these activities during college, the reader can pretty much guess your dates of involvement.
 - Parentheses.** Jobseekers have a particular tendency to set off dates of employment with parentheses. It's easier on the reader if you just use commas.
 - The line "References: Available upon request."** This statement is highly optional because it is a given that you will provide references upon request.
 - Articles.** Those little words "a," "an," and "the." Generally speaking, resumes aren't written in sentence form, but in concise phrases that have become an accepted shorthand that employers understand. Articles tend to clutter up that shorthand; your resume will read in a more streamlined manner without them. Consider these "before" and "after" examples:
 - BEFORE: Recruited to manage the women's division and oversee the opening of the Madison Avenue Store.
 - AFTER: Recruited to manage women's division and oversee Madison Avenue store opening.



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- **Use strong, concrete verbs to describe your jobs, and don't mix noun and verb phrases.**

For example, DO NOT mix noun and verb phrases per the below:

Managed and controlled all aspects of company's West Coast presence. [verb]

Complete ownership of inventory and financial standards. [noun]

Full P&L responsibilities. [noun]

Analyzed market and forecast sales, prepared corporate budgets and monitored results to achieve ROI objectives. [verb]

Instead, DO be consistent with verbs:

Supervised inventory and financial standards. [verb]

Completely oversaw profit and loss aspects of operation. [verb]

- **Also avoid the weak verbs, "to be," "to do," and "to work."**

"Collaborate(d)" is often a good substitute. Instead of: "Worked with Marketing Department to launch promotional campaign," say "Collaborated with Marketing Department to launch promotional campaign."

- **Focus on describing past job activities that highlight the skills you would most like to use in your next position.** Don't spend a lot of time describing all that clerical stuff you did in a past job if you have no intention of doing clerical work again. Even if you've mastered skills that are in great demand, don't emphasize them if they're not the skills you would in the position you are applying for.

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