

# CV Dos and Don'ts

It is said that most employers only take **fifteen** seconds to make a decision on a CV; that's a very short time to make the right impression, especially in the competitive graduate market. It is essential that your CV sells you. Our consultants view up to 100 CVs a day. Here are some CV do's and don'ts that they have compiled to ensure that your CV is working for you:

## Dos

- **Insert a 'Career Objective'** at the beginning of your CV. This is a short statement outlining what you want to do. This can be tailored to a specific opportunity, helps give your CV focus and is replacing the cover letter in modern job applications.
- **Include the final year modules from your degree.** Your degree is almost certainly the most relevant thing you have done. Your final year modules indicate your areas of expertise and are likely to add credence to your application. Equally, include a skills section that is relevant to your degree.
- **Use spell check.** We have worked with some clients that will not even consider a CV with a spelling mistake as this shows poor attention to detail. Also check the grammar and get someone else to read through your CV to look for errors and suggest corrections.
- **Think about presentation, layout and format.** Remember that your CV is your first impression. A poorly presented CV is like turning up to an interview in jeans and a t-shirt! Don't overcrowd your CV. White space makes your document easier for the reader. Your CV should project a professional image. Does your CV do that? Think about the font that you use. Colours should be kept to a minimum and photographs are unnecessary. Use bold typeface to emphasise key areas.
- **List your most recent job/qualifications first.** A prospective employer is far more interested in your degree and industrial placement than your GCSEs and your paper round!
- **Include all relevant information.** If you don't list your A level grades it is likely that an employer will assume they are bad. This happened to one candidate we were dealing with and when asked it turned out he had three A's! Also leave out less important personal information such as place of birth or marital status.
- If you have limited work experience **highlight awards or prizes** from University, sports/ society captainships, or positions of responsibility that you have had.

## Don'ts

- **Don't write a seven or a one page CV.** Anything over two pages is excessive; one page looks like you have little to say.
- **Don't write long paragraphs.** Keep it short and simple and use bullet points.
- **Don't use the same cover letter for every application.** A cover letter should be a brief note saying why you are suitable for the specific role that you are applying for.
- **Don't write two paragraphs on your Saturday job in retail** (unless you are going for a retail management scheme) or your love of horse riding. You only have two pages to sell yourself. Keep things like this short and focus on other positives.
- **Don't write about features,** write about benefits. Instead of simply saying that you have done something, state the reason why it might benefit an employer.