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A well written CV gets you interviews for all the jobs you're interested in, versus getting interviews for the jobs only a few people are interested in. It's probably the single most important tool in your job search!

CVs are as different as people, so writing a great CV isn't always easy. However, we've listed some ideas that should help you get the best of your efforts. Your consultant at Madison Maclean will be happy to work with you to sculpt the right message, and ensure your CV is as powerful as possible.

Firstly, remember to write your CV with y our reader in mind. Write it for the job that you want, and not just for the job that you do now.

A good CV should describe your interests, work experience, responsibilities and achievements as concisely as possible. Writing your CV in bullet point format with sentences starting with a verb is the perfect way to do this.

Your CV should start with a Profile that serves as a brief executive summary of who you are, what your experience to date has been and what you are interested in going forward. A small paragraph (3-4 sentences) should be plenty. This is the first part of your CV that a hiring manager will read, so it is important to be as 'punchy' as possible.

When discussing your past work experience, it is important that you weight your CV accordingly. Hiring Managers will be interested in your recent work experience, not the roles you did 10 years ago. As such, place more emphasis on the last 3-5 years of work experience and try to consolidate previous experience where possible (if a Hiring Manager is interested in previous roles, you can elaborate further during the interview process).

We recommend you focus on two core areas when writing up your work experience: Responsibilities and Achievements. By putting these two areas under separate subheadings you can then clearly distinguish between the two.

The Responsibilities section should:

- Include bullet points that describe what you do on a daily basis

- Highlight your technical strengths whilst ensuring that you make more reference to your core technical skills rather than your secondary skills

- Describe all parts of the SDLC that you are involved with from analysis, design, development and support

- Include a high level description of the system you work on so the reader can see how complex it is (eg) Who are the users? How many users are there? Is it globally distributed?

- Highlight the methodologies you work with

- Use appropriate adjectives: is your code server-side or client side development?

- Include any relevant business knowledge/exposure

- Cover roughly 80% of the work experience part of your CV

The Achievements section should:

- Only include genuine achievements; completing a project within budget and time scales is not an achievement!

- Highlight your personal achievements rather than the team's achievement

- Cover roughly 20% of your CV

The Academics part of your CV should include the dates of study, the field of study, the place of study and your grades. If your University experience is no longer relevant, then including a full overview of modules studied/thesis titles etc. isn't necessary.

Including an Interests section on your CV is an opportunity for you to highlight what you like to do out of work, whether this is cooking, throwing a frisbee, or developing your own projects in your spare time. It's worth having this section on your CV as it allows for further talking points besides work during your interview. Include personal websites/github accounts if you wish.

Key things to avoid

- Technical summaries: a good CV should highlight your technical strengths within the responsibilities section

- Incomplete dates: ensure that you put both the month and year of your employment dates on your CV

- Use of 3rd person descriptions

- Over use of jargon/acronyms

- Discussing technologies/business areas that you are not familiar with. If it's on your CV, then expect to be quizzed on it during an interview

- Avoid the use of tables/pictures/over complicated formatting

- Describing what the team does; your CV should focus on your responsibilities and accomplishments