

10 Phrases that could ruin your CV

There are so many facets that go towards making a good CV and you may be wondering which aspect is causing your CV to struggle to make an impact?

With barely 30 seconds to impress a recruiter, could your CV be failing because it's so chock full of meaningless phrases and throwaway buzzwords that it simply doesn't do your career history justice?

We have listed the top ten phrases we constantly see repeated in offending CVs. If you spot any of them in your CV, don't worry, there are some quick fixes below to help you get you back on track.

Let's kick off with a classic.....

1. I have a strong work ethic

And? Why on earth do candidates think this would set them apart from the others? Avoid using this phrase all together anywhere on your CV. Instead, give an example where you have gone the extra mile; working late to meet a deadline or going out of your way to clinch that sale. I'm sure the recruiter will be smart enough to understand the inference.

2. I'm a team-player

We see this one mentioned on so many CVs with nothing to give it any substance. Demonstrate how you collaborated with colleagues to meet an objective, how you understood your role in the task and how you delivered. Again, avoid using the phrase itself if you can.

3. I always focus on the bottom line

Another cringe worthy bit of terminology that is meaningless unless you can really demonstrate how you contributed to the success of the business. Remember, this doesn't always mean adding pounds, shillings and pence, you could illustrate how you saved the organisation time and resources which all go towards that bottom line saving.

4. I'm self-motivated

I'm never really sure what point someone is trying to get across when they stipulate this little gem on their CV. By self-motivated do they mean they are motivated enough to simply get out of bed every morning and do a day's work? Avoid this phrase. If you have enough examples in your CV where you demonstrate hard work then sound bites like this can always be avoided.

5. I'm detail orientated

As opposed to what? If you state this as one of your core skills and then have a typo on your CV or covering letter don't expect much sympathy.

6. I'm a hard worker

Really? Oh, that's a relief. With your CV sitting on the maybe pile, don't expect this little bit of insight to see your CV move onto the yes pile. Don't just put it down as one of your key attributes; instead demonstrate it throughout your CV with details of why you consider yourself to be a hardworking individual.

7. I have great communication skills

So do dolphins. Why have you got good communication skills? Is it motivating teams, presenting to large audiences, creating a press release or newsletter? Again, this is a piece of terminology candidates either put down on a CV or say in an interview, without any real thought of what it means.

8. I have a proven track record

Like so many of the points above, this one is all about the detail. Anyone can say they have a proven track record, so prove it. Give specifics, give numbers, give details – "I ran a promotion that had an ROI of 3:1, creating a footfall increase of 120%. Facts and numbers will be far more impressive than yet another sound bite.

9. I like a fast paced environment

In these times of recession and high unemployment, there aren't many organisations that are over-staffed. Work load expectations have increased dramatically over the last couple of decades with even the public sector finally realising they can expect more from individuals for the same money.

This means that the phrase 'fast paced environment' is as good as redundant these days. All businesses should be running at an optimum speed and stating that this is how you like to operate is just a waste of space on your CV.

10. Reference available by request

I'm just as guilty as putting this pointless bit of info on my CV. Prospective employees will obviously be asking for references before they take you on, they won't ponder whether they can ask! Delete this from your CV.