



## 20 reasons why your CV might get rejected

With a CV, first impressions count. When your CV is in front of a recruiter, it will typically get between 10 and 30 seconds of their time to impress them before they move on.....

To be in with a chance of getting a job interview, you really need to master the art of writing an attention grabbing CV and know how to avoid the pitfalls that could destroy your chances.

We've compiled our top 20 reasons why your CV might get rejected and how to address these.

### 1. A "really cool" Email Address

onehotbabe@hotmail.com is not quite what we are looking for here.... It takes 5 minutes to set up a 'professional sounding' email address via Hotmail, Yahoo, Google or any of the other free email providers.

We have seen some appalling email addresses and they give us an instant negative perception of a candidate. What a shame it would be to be the perfect fit for a position only to fall at the first hurdle because of your 'cute' email address?

### 2. Spelling & Grammar

No real excuses for this, but it's amazing the number of CVs that we see with spelling mistakes and poor grammar. Try to remember that this is a document that represents you and any mistakes will reflect on you and spoil any chance of an interview. Your CV is simply a document that gets you an interview....not a full blown sales pitch.

Check and recheck your CV once again. And then pass it onto a friend who will be able to check it and give you some constructive criticism. One great way to check your CV is to sit down and read it out loud. This will flag up any sections that may be too long or may need more punctuation.

### 3. A Picture or a URL Link

This may be something that is acceptable elsewhere, but including a headshot on your CV might cause some amusement to the recruiter, but will probably just get your CV one step closer to the 'no' pile.

Unless the line of work requires that you have the right image for the role, i.e. acting or modelling, then there is absolutely no reason to include a lovely photo of yourself. A candidate will be judged on their ability to do the job based on their skill, work history and education not because they have a nice smile.

You should also stick to a word format for the CV and not a PDF or a ZIP file, etc. Give the recruiter a valid reason not to open up your CV and they'll take it! And remember that it will be the Word based CV that gets onto the recruiters HR systems and posted on to the job boards.

And if you are a graphic designer or multimedia developer, resist the temptation to simply send a link to download your CV from your homepage. Again, just a simple Word based CV will suffice and you can always direct a recruiter towards some supporting material once you grab their interest.

#### **4. Inaccurate Dates**

You must ensure that when you list your jobs that you have accurate start and finish dates; usually stipulating the month and year will be sufficient. A CV without this information will be rejected because the recruiter will simply think you are trying to hide something.

#### **5. Formatting**

There is nothing worse than seeing a CV on screen or paper and spending ages trying to decipher where each section starts and ends. Poor formatting won't just turn off the recruiter it could also put a candidate at a real disadvantage when it comes to online job boards. Some job boards and specialist recruitment applications will struggle to correctly display a poorly formatted CV and in this day and age most worthwhile recruiters and major employers use a customised system to manage the volume of applications that the internet often delivers.

#### **6. Writing a Novel?**

There are differing opinions on how long a CV should be; some say 2, some say no longer than 3 pages. Most companies who are recruiting will only be interested in the last 5 to 10 years of your career, no longer than that, and obviously the most recent couple of positions will probably be the reason that you have got the interview in the first place.

So, don't waffle! Try and keep your CV to 3 pages maximum. If you have over 10 years' experience at work, keep your work history after this just listed by company and position.

Equally, don't be afraid to shout about your achievements. A CV that looks light on information will be as readily discarded as the one which reads like an autobiographical epic!

#### **7. Too Much Personal Information**

Just like the pointless process of attaching a picture to your CV, including too much personal info that is unrelated to the job is a waste of space and could be harming your chances of getting a job.

You're not pitching for a date, so does a recruiter need to know your age, height, weight, religious or political affiliations, marital status or sexual orientation?

#### **8. Misleading Information**

More and more businesses are now carrying out extensive background checks prior to taking somebody on board. Nearly everybody embellishes their achievements in jobs on their CV, but stretching the truth could land you in hot water. We have seen many candidates trip themselves up, with the most common misleading information being put on CVs being:

- The inaccuracy of dates to try and cover up job hopping or unexplained gaps in employment
- Inflated education achievements, including purchasing online degrees which are worthless
- Inflated salaries
- Exaggerated job titles
- Exaggerated career accomplishments
- Blatant lies in regards to roles and duties

## **9. Fonts, colours and formatting....**

We get so many CVs where people go a bit 'artistic' and use 5 different fonts in all the colours of the rainbow. The golden CV rule is to keep to one single easy to read font like Calibri, Ariel or Times New Roman and to keep the font black. Avoid small or hard to read fonts and colours or background effects. Always keep the font size to at least 10. It is always worth printing out a copy and showing to people for their opinion and then taking that feedback on board.

## **10. Long Paragraphs**

Put yourself in the shoes of the recruiter. They want a nice punchy CV that quickly gives them all the info they need, they don't want to plough through long paragraphs, nor will they probably have the patience to do so.

Your CV needs to be easy for the reader to scan and it should quickly get to the important meaty bits regarding your job history, skills and accomplishments.

Try and ensure that your paragraphs are relatively short and bulleted. Use plenty of white space, which will make your CV easier to digest.

## **11. Ensure your CV is bespoke**

With the advent of the online job board, applying for positions has never been so easy. This unfortunately means that a lot of people have a scatter gun approach to job applications, firing off the same CV over and over regardless of what the role entails.

But gone are the days when it's deemed acceptable to use a single CV to apply for all the job opportunities out there.

And although it may be time consuming, writing a bespoke CV for a particular job application will get you noticed above those that simply spam their CV at all and sundry.

If you can demonstrate via your CV and covering letter how ideally you would fit into a specific organisation, you will have a much better chance of clinching that job interview against the competition.

## **12. Covering letter**

Just like a bespoke CV, a covering letter can often be perceived by candidates as a nice-to-have and not really a necessity. It can however be another key difference between clinching an interview or not.

A well written cover letter will spark an employer's interest and immediately make them more eager to read your CV.

As with your CV, try to ensure that your cover letter doesn't have that one-size fits all, generic feel. You want to keep it punchy, listing your strengths and exactly why you would be the perfect fit for the organisation you are applying to.

### **13. Wrong chronological order**

Another classic faux pas is when candidates put their CV in the wrong chronological order. You should always list your most recent employment and latest achievements within that position.

### **14. Employment Gaps**

In this age of layoffs, staff reduction and redundancy, employment gaps are likely to be something that a lot more people will have on their CV than ever before.

If this is you, the easiest way to trip yourself up is to stretch the job dates to cover an employment gap, but beware, as previously mentioned, more and more employers are doing checks to ensure that what a candidate puts on his CV rings true.

Whether it's a sabbatical or a redundancy or if it's because of health reasons, it's always better to explain the gap on your CV. Leaving any doubt in the recruiter's mind will simply give them a reason to think you are not the ideal candidate for the job.

### **15. Lack of employer info**

Write a quick summary of the type of industry underneath the specific company on your CV, including address and website details, this will help the reader determine if it's a direct or ancillary industry to the role.

### **16. Chancing your arm**

One of the worst chores of a recruiter is sifting through hundreds of unsuitable applications for a particular role. As well as wasting a recruiter's time, you could also give yourself a poor reputation by applying for several positions. And like the boy who cried wolf, when you do come to apply for a position that actually fits your credentials you may well miss out.

### **17. Meaningless Introductions**

Adding as many pointless clichés to an introduction as you can will infuriate a prospective employer and be a complete turn off. So, you're a hard-working, detail-orientated team player, with a strong work ethic who is looking for a new career challenge. Unfortunately you may have well have written blah, blah, blah for all the impact that statement will have made.

We have even come across CVs where people kick off with a Winston Churchill or Shakespearian quote. A guaranteed way to quickly get your CV binned.

A snappy introduction should mention which industries you have excelled in and what skills you would bring to your new role. Don't waste this chance to impress by just rolling out some meaningless sound bites. Stick to the facts such as: I sold widgets to widget users in the greater metropolitan area....

## **18. Weird Hobbies**

Another classic jobseeker mistake is when candidates try to make themselves sound far more interesting than they think they are by listing unusual hobbies. If someone states that they have “an interest in mud wrestling” or “collecting pepper pots” it will hardly give the impression of a balanced individual.

As with most sections on the CV, it's important to create the right balance. You obviously don't want come across as dull by listing reading and calligraphy as the main activities in your life, but equally, stating that you enjoy worm farming in your spare time, won't do you any favours either.

Be honest about you hobbies and interests. Writing anything else will simply see you slip up under interrogation.

## **19. Lack of contact details**

Double check your details. You'd be amazed at just how many CVs we get through from candidates who have inaccurate contact details and are therefore oblivious as to why they are not getting any interviews!

## **20. Writing your CV in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person**

Although actively encouraged by some recruitment agencies, writing a CV in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person is simply seen as extremely annoying by the majority of recruiters.

An example of writing in the third person on a CV would be, “Billy is a strong manager, admired by all his colleagues”. This will just make you sound a bit odd. A much better way of stating the same fact would be to put, “A strong manager, able to lead teams in achieving goals”. I don't think you need to specify who the strong manager is on your own CV!