

CVs AND APPLICATION FORMS


OVERVIEW

CV writing is a huge subject and thousands of books have been written about it. Most IAG advisers will already have many resources they can use with clients.

For the purpose of this unit we will assume that clients have access to the basics of CV preparation from their IAG adviser. Our main focus here is to look at the specific needs of the older jobseeker when preparing a CV or an application form.

Included in this unit:

- Issues affecting the older jobseeker
- Which CV format to use
- Useful websites featuring:
 - transferable skills
 - examples of chronological and functional CVs
 - examples of action words
 - examples of before and after CVs in different job sectors
- Application forms
- Client Handout No.1 - Top Ten Tips for your CV

 **Important:** Before helping clients prepare their CV or application forms, clients should have undertaken the self-awareness exercises featured in this guide. Units 1–9.

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ISSUES AFFECTING THE OLDER JOBSEEKER

■ Attitude

Many older people looking to change their job or wishing to re-enter the workplace have already resigned themselves to not being successful because of their age.

■ Lack of self-awareness

Lack of self-awareness can act as a barrier for many older workers. They may not have taken the time to look at themselves and what they have to offer in any great depth. Some have dedicated time to bringing up a family, looking after older parents, or are working full-time. Their own personal needs may have fallen down the priority list.

■ Lack of self-belief

It is said that if you think you can't do something, then you probably won't do it. Self-belief is often lacking in older workers. The beliefs people hold directly affect their actions, and can limit their results. If they firmly believe they can't do something, they won't go the extra mile to overcome the obstacles.

■ Unaware of current job market trends

Many older workers may have spent years in steady work and are now unaware of the reality of today's competitive job market. Having to compete with graduates and migrant workers means they have to raise their game and market their skills carefully.

■ Lack of self-marketing skills

When attempting to re-enter the job market or change careers, this client group may struggle to market themselves to a potential employer. They often feel uncomfortable when asked to 'blow their own trumpet'.

■ Lack of employability skills

Job seekers need employability skills to impress employers. Older workers have many skills but are often unaware of them. Unit 8 Employability skills - will help clients assess their skills.

SOLUTIONS

Often, it is *only* when clients actually see their skills, personality preferences, achievements, strengths, values, career drivers and other positive factors written down in their **Career Development Plan** that they fully appreciate all they have to offer a potential employer.

Clients should feel confident in their own abilities before they start preparing a CV or completing an application form.

The **CV Builder** on the advice resources website can help clients prepare a CV.
www.advice-resources.co.uk

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WHICH CV FORMAT TO RECOMMEND?

? Chronological or functional?

Many recruiters prefer to receive CVs in chronological order. The reason for this is that CVs designed in this way are easy to read; busy recruiters can find the information they require in a short space of time. But not all candidates benefit from the chronological CV format.

If clients have had lots of short term jobs or work gaps, then a functional or skills based CV can often show candidates in a more positive light. This format will highlight their skills and can have more impact.

? Who will benefit from a chronological CV?

The chronological CV lists achievements and responsibilities against each job role. Career history is presented in reverse order, starting with the most recent. This format is good for clients who have a formal history of experience or:

- clients with few gaps in their employment record
- clients who have been in similar types of jobs for a number of years
- clients wishing to highlight their job responsibilities and experience.

? Who will benefit from a functional CV?

The functional/skills CV is more descriptive and focuses on skills and direct experience. It is suited to agency workers, contractors and others who have moved around a lot or held a number of unrelated jobs or:

- clients with a varied past with many different jobs
- clients considering a different type of job in a different sector
- clients with a broken work history for a variety of reasons, eg bereavement, maternity/paternity leave, prison time, family commitments
- clients who have been in the same company for many years and need to highlight skills
- clients who have taken time out of the workplace to care for others or have gaps in their employment.

USEFUL INFORMATION

Examples of both CV formats can be found here:

CV Tips www.cvtips.com/CV_example.html

Examples of before and after CVs in different job sectors

Professional Resumes

www.professional-resumes.com/resume-samples-professional-resumes.shtml

Example of transferable skills

Quintessential careers www.quintcareers.com/transferable_skills_examples.html

Action words by profession

Quintessential careers www.quintcareers.com/action_skills.html

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APPLICATION FORMS

Application forms can actually work to the advantage of older workers. Application forms allow employers to compare candidates easily, as they are all answering the same questions.

CHALLENGE

Usually the page most candidates find difficult in an application form is the one asking them to describe why they think they are suitable for the job.

It usually says something along these lines:

“Please use the space below to give details of your skills and experience from your education, employment and personal life which you think are relevant to this job. Continue on another sheet if necessary.”

SOLUTION

Fortunately, your clients will now be able to refer to their **Career Development Plan** to easily match any skills, abilities, experience and knowledge to the job role.

For more detailed information on application forms:

The Careers Advice Service

The **Careers Advice Service** provide a detailed section on completing application forms <http://careersadvice.direct.gov.uk/features/news/appforms/>

TIPS FOR YOUR CV



“Now, what was I doing in 1967?”

Tip No.1 – Keep in the present

When listing jobs do not go back too far. Employers are only interested in what you can do for them now, not 30 years ago. Go back only 10 – 15 years.

Tip No.2 – More than just experience

Experience is good, but accomplishments and achievements are even better. What did you do in your last jobs that made a difference? How can you show this on your CV or application form? Make a list of your accomplishments and compare them to the job description.

Tip No.3 – What do you have that is special?

Compare yourself to younger workers. What do you have to offer that they may be missing? It could be your reliability, or offering to mentor inexperienced co-workers. Respecting others and understanding that everyone is different with their own views can often be a plus point for older candidates.

Tip No.4 – Sing your own IT praises (if you have them)

One concern employers have about hiring older workers is that they haven't kept up with technology. If you have strong IT skills then make sure they are listed high up on your key skills list. Mention any IT qualification you have gained.

Tip No.5 – A tailored approach, prepare, prepare, prepare

Target and tailor each CV carefully to each job application. A *one-size-fits-all* design for every employer won't be enough to make you stand out. Look at the information in the job advert or information pack and take a piece of paper, draw a line down the middle and list all the points featured in the job advert on one side. What skills they are looking for? Do they mention any qualifications? What level of experience are they looking for? Now list all the skills, accomplishments, experience and anything relevant you have that will help you secure the job.

Tip No.6 – Key words

Many organisations now use technology to store CVs; the only hope a job seeker has of being found is to sprinkle relevant keywords throughout their CV. You can find the keywords by reading job descriptions that interest you, then add those keywords repeatedly in your CV.

Examples of keywords can be found in Handout 12.2

Tip No.7 – Performance matters

Employers don't only want a list of your job duties and responsibilities. They need to know how you performed better than other candidates they are also considering for the job.

TIPS FOR YOUR CV

TIPS FOR YOUR CV

Tip No.7 – Performance matters (cont.)

Think about your last jobs:

- What were the problems or challenges you faced?
- How did you overcome them?
- What were the results?
- How did the organisation benefit from your performance?
- Have you received any awards?

This is the type of information employers are seeking from candidates.

Tip No.8 – Market yourself and your skills

List any skills, abilities and knowledge you feel will help you secure an interview. Lots of people may be after this job and you are competing directly with them.

Tip No.9 – Don't undersell yourself!

Remember, you have a lot to offer. If you are in any doubt check all the skills, knowledge and experience you have had, look again at your **Career Development Plan**.

KEYWORDS AND ELECTRONIC CVs

KEYWORDS

CV keywords are words or phrases placed in your CV to help attract potential recruiters' attention. These keywords will be dependant upon the industry you're interested in, the job and person specification. Many companies use software to filter out CVs if specific keywords do not appear.

Computer scanning software is often used to search CVs for the main key words which are required for prospective candidates. This often happens when CVs are submitted online via the internet.

An example of key words used for administration jobs

Positions: administrative assistant, secretary, office manager, executive assistant, executive secretary, customer service representative, data entry clerk, general office clerk.

Other: MS Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access), Windows NT/98/95, event planning, meeting planning, word processing, spreadsheets, database management, multiline phones, switchboards, scheduling, presentations, office support.

Finding the keywords to include

To enable the electronic spiders to find your CV before their human equivalent, you should look carefully through the job advert or job description to find the keywords used. If your CV does not contain the correct keywords it is unlikely you will be invited for an interview.

More information on **keywords** can be found on the following websites:

<http://content.monster.com/articles/3475/17202/1/home.aspx>

www.careerperfect.com/content/resume-writing-help-keyword-resume-tips

ELECTRONIC CV SCANNING

See an example of software used for scanning CVs here:

www.recruitment-software.co.uk/features/rapidcv.aspx

USEFUL INFORMATION

Examples of CV formats can be found here:

CV Tips www.cvtips.com/CV_example.html

Examples of before and after CVs in different job sectors

Professional Resumes

www.professional-resumes.com/resume-samples-professional-resumes.shtml

Example of transferable skills

Quintessential careers www.quintcareers.com/transferable_skills_set.html

Action words by profession

Quintessential careers www.quintcareers.com/action_skills.html



Please note: If you are not able to access the internet ask your adviser to print this information for you.