

How to add value to your CV

By  Juliette Attwell

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This week we take a look at how to add value to your CV as well why it is good to ask questions in your interview.

I've recently stumbled upon your column and have found it very informative - thank you!

Here's my question:



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I have what is considered a weak CV. I don't have much experience, there are gaps in between employment, and the jobs that I have had are not specific to what I would really like to be doing, which is copywriting.

Since I haven't been able to get any writing jobs, I have been applying for anything that might provide me a steady income (however little it is) and something to put on my CV.

This is the problem I've come across - I'm too old and/or overqualified for basic entry-level jobs, and under-qualified for the rest.

How can I get a foot in the door when no one seems to be willing to take a chance on me? I'm a mature, responsible, hard-working family man, and willing to put in the time and effort to excel at whatever kind of work comes my way. I've also tried contacting several recruitment agencies, but to no avail.

Any advice or feedback would be appreciated! - Donald

Hi Donald

Thank you for following my column and for your question.

I have had a look at your CV and do understand your concerns. However there is a lot we can do to add value to your CV.

Remember that your CV isn't static, you need to try and target it to one particular area/role/industry and change it accordingly. Try to fine tune your CV directed at the position you want. Think back to your last roles and highlight areas that you were involved in that are similar to copywriting e.g. "wrote, edited and implemented the monthly newsletter", "strategically developed and wrote content for advertising" flyers etc.

A potential employer will want to see your responsibilities relative to the role available. Try to add more content, have at least half a page explaining your responsibilities, don't shy away from explaining well. You don't need to keep this short or abbreviate anything - content is king!

In short, try to highlight your experience to match the job that you're applying to. Don't just blanket your CV across a number of positions and hope for the best, it's not going to work.

Make sure that you add your best, most detailed CV to all the job portals, this way potential recruiters can pick it up if it matches what they're looking for.

If you are applying to copywriting positions, I would suggest trying to make the bulk of your CV portfolio based. Give the reader an instant feel of how you write and give them examples of previous work. In the end, all they will be interested in is if you can write well and not necessarily whether your previous jobs are relevant.

I really do hope this helps and that you find your dream job too.

All the best!

When in an interview, is it good to ask questions when the floor is opened to you? I never know whether it's etiquette to ask questions. - Moreng

Hi Moreng

Thanks for your question.

The very short answer is a big fat YES!

Remember the interviewer will be assessing your levels of engagement, interest and passion for the role and company. By asking questions you show that you are inquisitive, eager to learn and open to information - all qualities that are highly sought after by employers.

The key is to do your preparation beforehand. Research the company and come up with a few questions before the interview such as, how big is your current staff compliment? What is your average staff turnover per annum? Who are some of your top clients etc.

I would suggest not asking about salary as one of your questions, this may come across as if you're only interested in the role for the remuneration. Try to keep your questions about what would be required in the role and about the company. The key is to be yourself, if you are really interested in the position, they questions will come naturally.

I hope this helps and best of luck!

Remember to always love what you do!

Juliette

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