

Creating a high impact CV

Skills that this session will develop:

Communication - Business Literacy

By the end of this session the mentee will be able to:

- Describe the key information that a CV should contain
- Create a CV that will impress employers

Session Preparation:

1. Mentee to send their CV to the mentor in advance of the session, so the mentor can review and create some initial discussion points to improve the CV.
2. Mentor to reflect on what has worked and not worked for them in the past. The mentor can potentially share their CV (with personal details redacted) to share on screen with their mentee so they have relevant and real examples to discuss.

Session Plan:

Together, review the tips below and adapt the CV to reflect the advice given:

Tailor your CV to the job you are looking for

- If you adapt your CV to match the requirements of the job description, you will stand a much better chance of being shortlisted. Employers look at a lot of CVs, so it is easy for them to see who has taken the time to adapt their CV to their company/industry, and who is sending generic CVs that try and cover all bases. You don't have to re-write the whole CV, just adapt the details so they're relevant.

Use bullet points

- Recruiters spend very little time looking at CVs. They don't want to read paragraphs and blocks of text to find information. Use succinct bullet points when writing your employment history and skills to make it easier for them to see you are the right candidate.

Use active verbs

- Instead of using the 'I' pronoun, such as 'I did this, I did that', use positive action words to lead bullet points e.g. 'Initiated, demonstrated, created', which will seem much more dynamic.

Provide evidence to substantiate your claims

- You need to prove you have what they need. So instead of your CV saying you have 'good communication skills', give an example of where you demonstrated this to good effect e.g. 'write a monthly blog on developments at our sixth form as part of our social media strategy'.

Ensure your spelling and punctuation is correct, and your formatting is consistent

- If you want to demonstrate that you are professional and have a good eye for detail, it is imperative that your CV doesn't have any basic mistakes or oversights on it. If you don't show good attention to detail on a CV you have had lots of time to put together, it will put doubt into employers minds that you have the attention to detail needed in a professional career.

Keep your CV to one or two pages

- You can go to a second page if you need to, but a concise and well-presented CV will always be more appealing to an employer than a CV that waffles on to a third page. Margins can be widened and font size 11 can be used to help keep the length down.

Making the most of skills

- Don't forget to mention key skills that can help you to stand out from the crowd. These could include: communication skills; IT skills; problem solving or speaking a foreign language. Skills can come out of the most unlikely places, so really think about what you've done to grow your own skills, even if you take examples from being in a local sports team or joining a voluntary group – it's all relevant.

Making the most of interests

- Under interests, highlight the things that show off skills you've gained and employers look for. Describe any examples of positions of responsibility, working in a team or anything that shows you can use your own initiative. For example, you may have run your sixth form newspaper, or registered with The Brokerage to develop your skills and build your knowledge about careers in financial, professional or related services. Include anything that shows how diverse, interested and skilled you are. Don't include passive interests like watching TV, solitary hobbies that can be perceived as you lacking in people skills. Make yourself sound really interesting. The CV is the make or break of your job application. Everything in it tells a potential new employer something about you.

Use a simple structure

- Name and contact details
- Education (include predicted grades)
- Work Experience (making it clear what is a part-time job and what is work experience)
- Achievements/Extra Curricular (include that you are a registered candidate with The Brokerage!)
- Interests