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CURRICULUM VITAE (CV) SELLING TOOLS: PROFILES, OBJECTIVES, GOALS, HOBBIES, ACHIEVEMENTS AND SKILLS

All Curricula Vitae should include personal details, employment history and education. In addition to these three key areas there are also a number of other sections that can be added. This article discusses some of these sections and their relative merits. When adding any of these to a CV one should ask oneself the question, 'Will this make me more attractive to an employer?'

1) The Profile

What is it: The profile section of a CV is where one gives a brief statement about oneself such as what drives you, maybe key attributes or reasons for being hired.

Why do people include it: To highlight a key attribute not mentioned elsewhere on the CV; to reinforce suitability for a role; because it is on the CV template they are using; to fill space.

Positives: If very well written it can catch someone's eye and give them a good introduction to your character. For certain job or industry sectors where particular personality types are highly sought it can be a good way of aiding demonstration of these traits.

Negatives: It is rarely read. In reality as most CVs are skimmed through by employers they will not bother to read this section. It can also distract from key aspects of your CV such as employment history particularly if this has been demoted to the second page. If poorly written, it can decrease your chances of success.

Overall: The case against is quite compelling so we advise you to use a profile section with extreme caution. Ensure that it is grammatically correct, brief and realistically has something to say in addition to the rest of the content of your CV.



2) Career Objectives

What is it: A brief section outlining ones career goals.

Why do people include it: To show they are driven and ambitious or that their goals are in line with the employer's expectations of their existing personnel.

Positives: If the goals fit an employer's criteria this section can be a very effective additional marketing tool on a CV.

Negatives: Unless a jobseeker is confident in their knowledge of what the employer wants, it can backfire. Employers may be put off because the career goals you have outlined on your CV do not fit their requirements.

Overall: Be sure that your career goals are realistic and in line with the likely expectations of the employer. This section could actually count against you in interview if pitched wrong (i.e. you may be too ambitious for the company or worse, not ambitious enough).

3) Life Goals/Objectives/Goals

What is it: A section similar to "career objectives" but broader. Often includes a combination of work and life goals such as "I want to be a senior manager by the age of 35 and also have the ambition to run the London Marathon".

Why do people include it: To add depth to their character and to show they are driven and ambitious.

Positives: Can be effective for particular sectors where a work/life balance is encouraged or where high achievers in both work and personal life are a valued commodity.

Negatives: As per career objectives although a purely social goal should not do too much damage unless an employer wants a high level of devotion to work. Just be careful of the objectives that are included: for example saying that you want to travel the world is a fantastic objective to have in life but could very possibly be a reason why an employer would not hire you (as they would be concerned that you would leave as soon as you had the money to travel).

Overall: Not a particularly necessary section but can provide a good talking point in interview. Is a way of reinforcing a "go-getting" personality for careers where an employer is likely to be impressed by this.



4) Hobbies

What is it: An outline of activities conducted outside of the workplace.

Why do people include it: Popular convention. To show there is more to them than just work.

Positives: Some employers really like this section as out of work drive shows a depth of character that really appeals.

Negatives: Many employers won't read it. It is only worth including if you have something to shout about. Listing hobbies as; "reading, playing sports" is not going to have any impact at all on an employer. However, saying that you have run a marathon, climbed Mount Everest or have had articles published might.

Overall: Only worth including if you have something to say. However, do your research first. If an employer puts high value on work life balance then a hobbies section could be essential. Is also worth including for space issues, if your CV is a little light on text a developed hobbies section can minimise the impact of this to an extent without necessarily damaging your chances of success (as many employers won't read this section anyway).

5) Key Achievements

What is it: A list and summary of achievements performed at work and outside of it. It can be included generally in one of two places: towards the beginning of a CV with a list of key achievements throughout ones working and social life or specific to each job (i.e. each job description on your CV has a "key achievements" section).

Why do people include it: Employers want successful employees. Demonstrating your success will undoubtedly be persuasive to a business. It also provides a reference to your career to date such that you are able to show not only that you worked somewhere for 5 years but that you accomplished something while you were there.

Positives: It can be a very compelling argument to an employer (dependent, of course, on the achievements included). Examples of work done gives credibility to your character and employment history.

Negatives: Can take up too much space, achievements can be too lightweight to create an impact, is arguably less conventional than other CV formats.

Overall: One of the most worthwhile of the six typical additions described here. As long as an achievements section is well worded, regardless of its positioning on a CV, there is rarely a reason not to include it (although you could incorporate achievements into the description for each job on your CV).



6) Skills

What is it: A skills section is generally a brief addition to a CV outlining relevant skills.

Why Do People Include It: As with many of these sections because of a template a jobseeker is using; to demonstrate that one has skills beyond one's experience; to highlight particular relevant skills.

Positives: Can really make life easier for the employer and can make it clear that you have some of the relevant skills for the job. For example, if an advertisement for a role requires specific software packages, a skills section highlighting one's proficiency in these packages may be a good idea.

Negatives: The skills must be relevant; giving a list of irrelevant information will not be appealing to an employer. By implication if there are omissions in the skills section that an employer has asked that a jobseeker be proficient in, it might make it more obvious that there is a lack in this area (and hence might be better to leave the skills section out altogether).

Overall: A useful section to highlight relevant skills such as computer software package knowledge. Should always be relatively brief.

In Summary:

There is really no right or wrong answer to which section to include and which not to. As perhaps is evident from this article if you know the likely temperament and preference of the employer and company to which you are applying this can help you with the decision on how to structure your CV. Research is therefore and as ever, extremely important when it comes to CV structure particularly for highly competitive positions.

About The Author:

The Interview Company.com is an interview and job application advice resource. We provide training on writing CVs and cover letters, interview technique and the whole caveat of ways you can ensure that your CV is seen by a potential employer.

We can also conduct mock interviews; much tougher than a standard HR interview, ensuring that you are well prepared for any situation you might face when applying for a job. For more information please consult our website: www.theinterviewcompany.com or call 0113 2777 583 to speak to an Advice Consultant. We offer competitive and affordable prices from £20.

