The CV Checklist

HELLO
My friend

I created this guide for those who are ready and willing to make the updates to their CV but are not sure how or where to start. For those who like a little structure and want to understand the *why* behind *what* they need to do to update the pages and get the call.

Working through this checklist will:

- Make you confident applying for roles
- Give you a CV that is clear, concise and modern
- Give you a document that articulates all your skills and talent
- Allow you to write in a way that makes the hiring manager curious *not* confused
- Ensure you don't miss anything out OR add too much
- Maximise the real-estate on your 2 pages to showcase and impress

Use the contents page to decide if you want to walk through each step or jump to the most juicy. There are no rules!

Take what you need and leave the rest; you're the expert here!

Jaz

HOW TO MAKE
the most of this guide

- This checklist is in no particular order, you can choose to review each point or zoom into the parts that are most relevant for you.
- Save a *copy* of your CV as it is, as it's great to have the detail and full history somewhere.
- If you have more than 15 points to apply to your CV it may be easier for you to open a blank page and start from scratch.
- You may have downloaded a CV template you can apply these tips regardless of the type or vibe of the file you are using.

WHAT DO
people say?

Thank you for the CV tutorials. It has helped me secure an insurance role in central London. I would 100% recommend it to anyone struggling with how to write a good CV. **- Joel**

Thank you so much for the amazing career consultation session I had with you today. I will absolutely follow all of your recommendations in my career search. Your help, kindness, patience, and everything you have done are greatly appreciated. **- Amani**

I found that once I began to apply the knowledge that Jaz had given me everything began to change, from the look of my CV to the way I conduct myself during an interview. My CV has never looked so good and I have had more companies contact me and take an interest in me now than in the last 6 months. I am grateful for my session with Jaz and if you are thinking about working with Jaz it just do it you won't regret it**. - Janet**

CV CHECKLIST
bingo

1 2 PAGES	2 THINK ABOUT YOUR FONTS	3 FROM PRESENT TO PAST	4 SUB-HEADINGS & SECTIONS	5 TARGETED PROFILE
6 REMOVE THE REPETITION	7 OK...AND?	8 SPELL CHECK	9 CONNECT WITH THE COVERING LETTER	10 MORE THAN THE DAY JOB
11 KEEP IT RELEVANT	12 EDUCATION VS EXPERIENCE	13 LINK(S) FOR CONTEXT	14 A SPRINKLE OF NUMBERS	15 YES, BUT WHAT DID YOU DO?
16 INTERESTS MAKE YOU INTERESTING	17 OUCH, MY EYES!	18 DON'T GIVE AWAY THE POWER	19 KEEP IT HONEST	20 DON'T COVER THE COVERING LETTER
21 FORMATTING IS YOUR FRIEND	22 FILE TYPE OR NO FILE TYPE	23 IT'S HOW YOU SAY IT (OWN IT)	24 KEY PROJECTS FOR THE WIN	25 UPDATE REGULARLY

Keep it concise. You'll have time for the detail in the interview.
*Top tip:Keep the extra bits and tell those stories on LinkedIn.*

1 two pages

Even those with 20+ years of experience do not need to spill into 4 pages. Sticking to 2 pages shows you respect the recruiters time and have made the effort to only include the most relevant skills, talent and experience.
It is often easier to do a complete brain dump, and I do recommend you keep all versions of your CV in case you ever need to reach back for those transferable skills in a career pivot but that should NEVER be sent out.
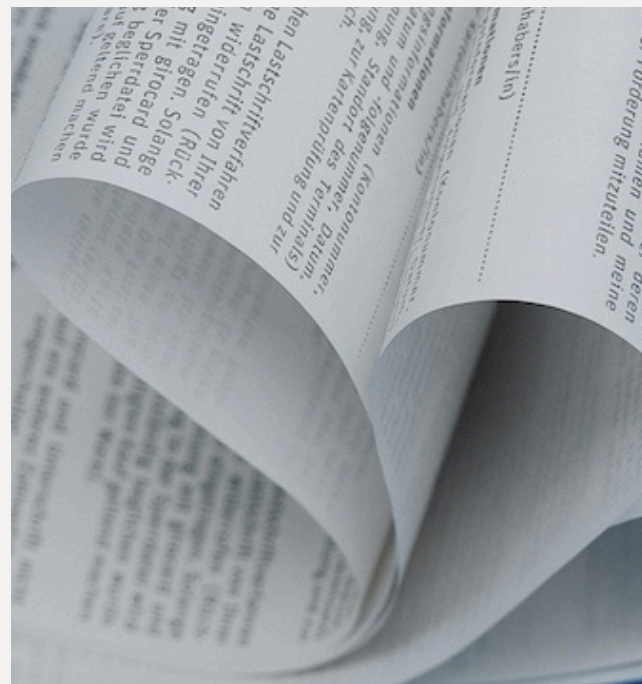
2 think about your fonts

I'm using Montserrat, and also enjoy Raleway, Arial, Tahoma and Verdana. These fonts are modern, rounded and most importantly easy on the eye for the main body text of your CV. If you want a more personality filled font on your CV, save it for the header a.k.a your name and make sure it is big enough to be legible. Squinting to read your name is NOT the first thing you want a recruiter/hiring manager to do.
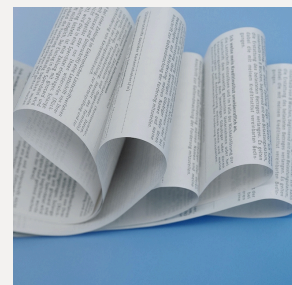
The order should be intentional.
It's part of the storytelling

3 from present to past

Your CV should tell a story.

The first and strongest way it does that is to be told in reverse order, on the front page it's important to have your most recent experience(s) and then list backwards from there.

If you are making a career pivot you may want to create a subsection for "relevant experience" that may be a few years back but super-relevant to the new role and *then* list from your current role backwards under "other experience".

4 subheadings & sections

Make it easy for the reader to navigate, serve up headers to grab their attention.

- Skills
- Experience
- Interests
- Key projects
- Qualifications

The list goes on...

5 targeted profile

You want to work in "fashion, media or communications"? Are you sure?

It's important to be clear and direct with what you want. Try to avoid listing disparate industries or roles and choose an umbrella term instead if appropriate e.g. a role in the creative industries. If you are very very open then just describe the type of organisation.

6 Remove the repetition

I mean this in 2 ways:

Repeating the same words

Repeating the same words - How many times have you used the word "creative" or "innovative" or "organised" throughout your CV? Be honest, hit CTRL+F and truly see. Highlight your repeated words and use a thesaurus to switch it up. You are not a one-trick pony so there will always be an alternative that fits what you are trying to say.

Repeating the same tasks

yes, I know... if you have been in the same role at different companies you WILL do much of the same tasks (that's kinda the point) but you don't want to waste space by repeating the bullet point. Make sure with each chunk of experience/role you are only noting the things that you did differently or a level-up to in the last role. E.g.

Instead show the development of the skill in each role, add in the nuance of the same task done differently in a new department or team.

2021-Present	Representative of the {insert team} on the internal project for operational efficiency. Providing ideas to change hours of work, tools, systems and training to improve ability to provide service.
2020-2021	Led the initiative to update operational processes creating efficiencies in the {insert team} leading to a £??k reduction in operating costs
2018-2020	Had first experience being part of an inaugural {insert team} establishing operational process and service deliverables.

Not trying to be rude. Just thinking what the hiring manager is thinking...

7 ok...and?

- Is your CV boring? Would you feel interested enough to interview you?
- Are you writing more about other people's things e.g. 2 sentences describing the course instead of a hyperlink
- Are you giving away words to things that aren't *as* relevant? e.g.listing the modules from the degree you completed in 2014
- Are you putting yourself in the center of the story?
- What did YOU do in that project or role?

The list goes on, but take a moment to have a conversation with yourself or even get a second opinion from someone who knows you and ask them these questions.

8 spell check

It's important that you do this **consistntly becase if you spel** things wrong it says you don't have attention to detail or care about the quality of your CV.

So, how can I expect you to be detail oriented and quality conscious when you are in the role?

see what I did there?!?!?

Like salt and pepper, your CV and covering letter are a dynamic duo

9 connect with the covering letter

You do not send your CV to someone alone, it should be connected to your covering letter, note or email much like a married couple:

- Your CV profile should be elaborated on in your Covering Letter
- Your Covering letter should tell the stories you don't have space for on the CV e.g. That project that took 6 months of your life and gave you 4 new skills and introduced you to 2 new softwares that this new role happens to list as required
- For the pivoters ; your Covering letter can be used to pluck experiences in a non-chronological order, I alway say name drop 2-3 previous experience max touching on the things you did there that make you perfect for this new role
- The CV is all about you but remember the Covering letter is about you+them so be sure to explain why you are applying for them specifically in the first place and what attracted you to the role

10 More than the day job

This one is for my fellow side-hustlers and I will try to keep it brief. Only you can decide if you want to put your business on your CV. I personally do as I believe there are skills from my business I bring to my roles and it's out-there… if you connect with me on Linkedin (please do) you will see me post about both. I can't make the choice for you but if you DO choose to list it as a work experience or a hobby/interest/project (that's the lighter option) keep this in mind:

- Write the dates, link your site to the name as with your other experience
- Note your key projects and the skills you collected or flexed with each
- Give a little space to explain the mission/purpose of the business if it is not clear on your website

Always answer the question "why should they care?"

11 *keep it relevant*

I'm a fan of Relevant experience and Other Experience as headers so you can Zoom into the roles that provide the most proof that you are fit for this role. In the instance that you have had a linear career and been on a very cohesive path Work experience is absolutely fine. The main thing is to show it's relevant based on the role but also the responsibilities you choose to list and the language you use to do so.

P.s. Use your attention to detail and mirror the language in the job description if applicable. I talk of recruiters and hiring managers aka humans, but sometimes the first gatekeeper is tech aka an algorithm.
What about the older experience you ask? I have worked in hospitality, events management and retail. These wonderful experiences I can still wax-lyrical on are reduced to 1 line each under other experience. They do not take up space on the page as they only serve to let you know I've been working for over x years.

Yes, you can have a CV with more education than experience. It's a journey. It's allowed.

12 education vs experience

It's hard to know when it's time to remove your education from the top shelf (metaphorically). Here are my thoughts around it:

- If you are still studying, put your education first and then move into work experience as you are not expected to have a tonne of the latter
- If you are recently graduated and applying for grad roles keep your education at the top
- If you are recently graduated and in your first job, keep your education at the top
- If you have recently graduated from a post-graduate certification put your education at the top
- If you are neither of the above shift your education to a sidebar or after your experience as you will have enough of it by this stage

13 links for context

It can feel good to spend a few words explaining the awesomeness your impressive current and previous companies do. But don't. A hyperlink to the company website or project (if publicly available) can say what you are trying to. The page space on your CV is precious real estate which should be used to talk about **you, you and you**. Don't give it away to your employer who probably doesn't need the extra PR.

Find new ways to articulate your value, words impact some, numbers impact others

14 a sprinkle of numbers

We like numbers, revenue, conversion, number of customers, number or projects, time of projects, revenue of team, headcount of company, headcount of team.

Numbers can help to tell the story of your impact or the progress of the team and company.

15 yes, but what did YOU do?

Writing in 3rd person is commonplace for CV but remember it should still talk about you. It shouldn't be telling a story without you as the main character.

16 interests make you interesting

You're great at your job, yes. But what else do you do? Do you play sports? Cook a mean lasagne? Sing in a local choir? Have green fingers? Interests and hobbies let us into who you are beyond the role.

17 ouch, my eyes!

I will be the first to tell you a CV should have some personality and a touch of colour. They do not need to be black and white in Times New Roman anymore. However, 4 different font sizes with 3 different fonts is not a good look. Nor is font size below 10. Oh, and then adding a bad quality image of yourself, some company logos and mis-aligned paragraphs. It's all toooo much! Simplify!

Google docs and microsoft let you select templates for Headings, body text etc use those as it makes it easier to keep it all in line.

You have to be in the driving seat of your career to change direction.
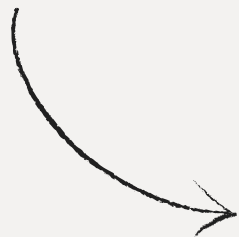
18 don't give away the power

Across the internet you will find 3,256 CV templates with a photo in the top banner. No.

Unless you are applying for a role as an influencer this is not necessary for your CV. Your Linkedin profile should have a professional image which they can seek out if they really really want to.

With the plethora of online job portals it's really important to put your safety first by not putting your full address.

We get told to put it so they understand what our commute may be like but the reality is that that gives the recruiter too much power to decide how long and far you are willing to commute. I also hate the idea of you wanting a role to support you relocating to a bright-lights-big-city and you get sent to the trash because your current full address is 50 miles away.

Another bonus thing never to include... your salary details. Never, no, never.

19 keep it honest

Do not make things up and do not embellish. The phrase fake it til you make it does NOT apply to your CV.

Your prospective employer will ask you about anything that is on your CV so putting yourself in a position to lie about a project you said you were leading but had nothing to do with is not a good look. And more times than not, they will know straight away and it will speak negative volumes about your character.

20 don't cover the covering letter

Your profile at the top of the CV should not be more than 4 sentences. Do not elaborate to the point it is a duplicate of your covering letter. It should be an overview of who you are, what you bring to the table and what kind of role or environment you are looking for. If you feel tempted to cover the covering letter, write it all out then condense it back down (I wouldn't want to waste your *flow*)

21 formatting is your friend

Explore the formatting available to you. They can help highlight certain pieces of information as well as make the most of the space on the page. Bullet points, Line spacing and columns can all be used to create a CV that is modern, efficient and sleek.

22 file type or no file type

Make sure it's Non-editable... always send as a pdf. All the time no exceptions. You may find recruiters want an editable version, make sure you clarify why they want that before sending. I had a recruiter impress me by asking me to remove my name and contact details then send as a pdf.

23 it's how you say it (own it)
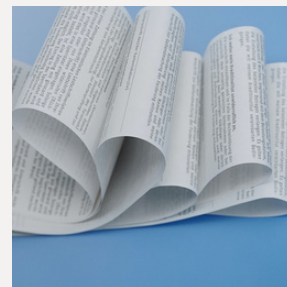
Your CV is all about you so own it and speak confidently about your skills and experience. Don't be bashful; mean what you say and say what you mean. For inspiration check out <u>Stormzy,</u> <u>Ed Sheeran to Burna Boy</u> tell you better than I can. See if you can spot the differences below:

- The company led a new project to become more data-driven with a new analytics tool.
- All the other teams are doing really great things and I'm grateful to be around.
- There was a launch of a new service/product while I was there

vs

- A key part of the project team implementing a new analytics tool enabling the company to become more data driven.
- Involved in great things as part of the customer service team and led on a project that was my idea.
- Managed internal communication as part of the new service/product launch

24 key projects for the win!

Sometimes there are milestones in our career, high-profile campaigns, projects or events that we are part of that deserve to have a space of their own. If this is true for you; add a separate section with 2-3 projects described or add 1 key project per role. These are achievements you can discuss at length in the interview stage.

These also great ways to add some detail to a role you may have been in for more than 2 years, use your key projects to illustrate the increased responsibilities within the role.

25 update regularly

Your CV is a way of expressing your suitability for a role but it's also a great tool to help you record and review your career growth and progress. Even if you're not actively looking for a new role, give it a refresh every quarter to see what you've been up to, add it and give yourself a pat on the back!

Congratulations, you made it to the end!

01   *search & apply*

Don't ditch your dreams; look for specific roles instead of a generic search. Being laser-focused will be more helpful and less overwhelming.

02   *prep for interview*

Interview prep like a professional athlete prepares for a competition. Stay ready so you don't have to get ready.

03   *bring your curiousity*

When they ask if you have questions, prepare them and ask! You'll never know otherwise i.e. hybrid working, leadership styles, why the heck the role exists in the first place.

04   *work with me*

Private Coaching or a **Solo Session** to dive deep on everything noted above so you can feel, filter and decide the steps to your future. For the more nuanced career change.