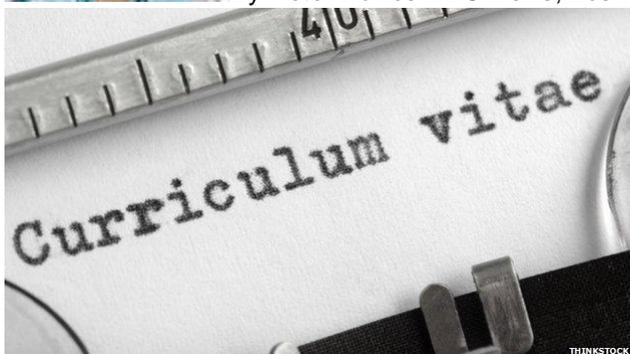


Botox your CV and online profile



By Peter Bowes BBC News, Los Angeles



A good CV or resume is critical for the start of any job search

In many countries getting a job has never been more difficult and with online applications and social networking to contend with, the world of job seeking has changed dramatically in just a short period of time.

So you have to have the best possible resume, which can be on paper or even on your own personal website.

You also have to be aware that everything that can be found about you online could be the thing that gets you the job or gifts it to one of your competitors.

The task of pulling together all the information is not for the faint-hearted.

Jobseekers soon realise that building a digital profile, while promoting themselves in social media, is a full time job, in itself.

Lisa's four secrets of CV success

- Put the most important information first - your best career achievement. It might have happened 10 years ago, but you want it to be at the top.
- In the USA stick to two pages. If you can't condense everything into this, you're going to give employers the impression you've had too many jobs.
- Most resumes are read initially by a computer, so key words are important. Look for the job ads, see which words they are using most and make sure you pack your resume full of those words.
- Style and size of font are so important because you want to make it readable. Make it easy on their eyes. Put the most important things in bold.

These days you're so much more than just your resume on paper," says Lisa Johnson Mandell, author of Career Comeback - Repackage Yourself to Get the Job You Want.

It may seem obvious, but every CV should include:

- Your name, address and contact details
- Your work history, starting with your most recent job
- Your qualifications and education history
- In many countries you don't need to include your date of birth because of age-discrimination legislation

She should know, at the age of 49, Johnson Mandell, lost her job when the website she worked for closed down.

As a Los Angeles-based writer, broadcaster and film critic, she had years of experience - but whenever she applied for a new job, it went to someone else.

After some soul-searching with her husband, she concluded her resume aged her and dwelled too much on the past.

In many countries you don't have to include your age on your CV, because of age-discrimination laws.

"I took off all the work experience that was 15 years or older because nothing was relevant after that," she says.

She also removed the year of her college graduation and focused on her current skills.

The resume became age anonymous and, in its new form, produced instant results.

"I got responses to my resumes within 20 minutes of sending them out and I got job offers within two weeks," she says, adding she was stunned by the results.

The writer now coaches jobseekers on how to give their resumes a makeover.

"These days, people's attention spans are short," she says.

"If you can't sell yourself and put the best stuff you've got in the first third of your resume, they're going to get bored and toss it.

"Nobody has time to really dig into a resume and look at the details.

"They want to know right at the beginning, 'What can you do for me?'"

Making social networks count

Tips from an employer

- Stand out from the crowd. Make your resume look unique.
- Appeal to a recruiter's personal side. Everyone uses the same generic terms, "I'm a go-getter, I'm a multi-tasker." It's going to be your individual experiences that's going to make me want to hire you.
- Talk about your personal interests, because we don't hire a salesperson, we hire individuals.
- Sad to say, but age matters. A lot of the time, the younger set are more willing to put in the time and the effort to make something happen. I think older people have to try to be more aggressive.

Michael Vaccaro is a recruiter with the home improvement division of Sears

Michael Weiss, a Los Angeles-based marketing consultant, says the resume should complement a jobseeker's digital profile.

This can include a personal website and a presence on networking services. The net effect should be to make an individual stand out from the crowd.

"When you are looking for a job, when you're out there, the goal is, 'How do I differentiate myself?'" says Mr Weiss.

But he adds that jobseekers should not feel the need to have a presence on every social media platform, because there are too many to choose from.

"It's forced people to step back and think about the strategy of the story they want to tell," he says.

"There are different stories that you are going to tell on Facebook, that you are going to tell on Twitter, that you are going to tell on Tumblr, that you can't tell on Instagram. It's different for all of them."

Above all, Mr Weiss says, people must tell a constant story, and it is up to individuals to decide how they should present themselves.

It may be acceptable to present a less corporate image on a personal Facebook page, while maintaining a professional profile on LinkedIn.

"It all comes down to your personal brand," he says.

These jobseekers are getting advice from a woman who transformed her CV - and her employment prospects

"You really want to be accurate online, you don't want to embellish stories, you don't want to undersell them, you don't want to oversell them, you just want to be right on point.

"The other thing you want to do, is you want to be authentic. You want to be real. You want to be who they expect you to be and I really want people to focus on being current.

"Social media is 24/7, 365 and the door to your story is always open. If you have something posted from a month ago, you already look old."

Mr Weiss also warns job-seekers - especially new graduates - that they should clean up their digital profile.

Party photos posted on Facebook during their years at college may not be appropriate for someone trying to enter the corporate world.

"I know it was a lot of fun, I know you had a great time, but you didn't have a filter on for four years or eight years or however long you've been on there."

Mr Weiss adds: "I think there's a responsibility on yourself in applying a filter when you post content.

"I think there's also a responsibility to yourself to know that there's stuff out there that you need to find, just in case."