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CV hacks that work

Adding digital evidence, putting yourself in the thick of the action and using a professional summary to highlight your unique selling proposition are three easy CV hacks that will help you reach the shortlist, says recruiting experts Hays.

"As a jobseeker it can be tough to stand out, but there are a few tips that can help you quickly and successfully boost your CV," says Nick Deligiannis, Managing Director of Hays in Australia & New Zealand.

"Your CV gives a recruiter or hiring manager a factual and chronological snapshot of your skills and experience from which they can determine if you have the competencies required for the role and are suitable to interview. So to make the interview shortlist, you need a well-crafted CV."

According to Hays, the following tips will boost your CV:

1. Professional summary

Your professional summary is your first opportunity to impress a hiring manager or recruiter, so use it to pitch yourself as an expert. Tailor your summary with relevant keywords, include specific applicable experience and prove your unique selling proposition. Don't waste time listing objectives or generalisations; focus instead on what differentiates you from similar candidates.

2. Add proof

Add facts, statistics and links throughout the experience section of your CV as proof you did your previous jobs well. After all, hiring managers don't want to read what you think about yourself; they want proof that you possess the skills you claim to have.

One simple trick is to combine keywords with an action verb as this helps you focus on outcomes.

For example, rather than writing "I successfully led a team of five", try "I united and motivated a team of five. After one year our customer service scores had increased 55 per cent."

Another is to add digital evidence to bring your claims to life, such as the link to a report you wrote, a presentation you gave or online reviews of an event you organised.

3. Put yourself in the thick of the action

Your CV needs to sell you, not your team, so make your own actions the focus. Using phrases such as "I was involved in" or "I assisted in" implies that you were a bystander not instigator in the task described. Instead, use strong action verbs and own your individual results and successes.

4. Make sure every word works for you

CVs need to be short and sharp, limited to two pages, so make every word count. Remove superfluous words or experience to free up space for the skills and successes that are most relevant to the job you are applying for.

Bullet points are a simple way to highlight key information succinctly while also keeping the document format tidy.

5. Treat your CV as a living document

Once you've created your CV, treat it like a 'living' document by updating it as soon as you undertake any activity that further demonstrates your skills, successes and ability to add value to an organisation. This allows you to respond quickly with an up-to-date CV when a suitable opportunity becomes available.

Career breaks: friend or foe?

64 per cent of women and 49 per cent of men have taken a career break at least once during their working life, but most say it was a challenge to re-enter the workforce afterwards, according to a survey by recruiting experts Hays.

The recruiter surveyed over 1000 people across Australia and New Zealand and found that the reasons for career breaks differ between women and men.

For women, the primary reason for their break was to have children (41 per cent).

This was followed by travel (14 per cent).

For men, it was to travel (25 per cent) or to study or retrain (21 per cent).

Following their career break, both men and women (66 per cent and 69 per cent respectively) encountered some challenges re-entering the workforce.

One of the biggest was how to answer job interview questions about the relevancy of their skills following time out of the workforce.

According to Hays, this highlights an often overlooked barrier people face when attempting to re-enter the workforce following a career break.

"Employers prefer people with recent experience," says Nick Deligiannis, managing director of Hays in Australia & New Zealand.

"Many prefer people with continuity in their work history and view anyone who has been out of the workforce, whether that's for 12 months or five years, as out-of-date."

"To overcome this, jobseekers should show that they kept their skills and knowledge up to date and drove their learning agenda while on their extended break."

"On your CV and online profile list seminars and events you attended."

"Highlight the new knowledge you've acquired in a 'professional profile' at the top of your CV."

"Post about a course you completed or learning event you attended on your professional social media."

"You could even write about how your learning has shaped your thinking or approach to your role."

For more, see the FY 2018-19 Hays Diversity & Inclusion Report at www.hays.com.au/diversity-inclusion.



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