A Great CV & Cover Letter

How to Prepare a Great CV & Cover Letter

Creating a great CV and cover letter is more important now than ever before. As the job market continues to be challenging and extremely competitive, it's essential to make a good first impression on prospective employers. Let's look at some of the most effective tips for ensuring that your CV and cover letter get the attention they deserve.

The Importance of a Cover Letter

First of all, you should always include a cover letter with your CV or resume. One mistake that some people make is simply sending a CV by itself. Why is it so important to send a cover letter? Your CV, no matter how well done, is still a document designed to be read by many different people. A cover letter, on the other hand, is personal. If someone receives a CV on its own, it looks like you just blasted it out to dozens or hundreds of companies. A cover letter is your chance to make your contact personal. What should you include in your cover letter?

1. Contact Information - This will also be on your CV, but it doesn't hurt to have it here as well. Include your name, address, phone number and email address.

2. Salutation - Make this personal if you know the person's name. Otherwise, you can use their job title. Avoid the generic "To whom it may concern."

3. Body of Letter - Here you should include a paragraph or two introducing yourself and briefly explaining why you are ideal for the position to which you're applying.

Naturally, if the advertisement for the job specifically states not to send a cover letter, you should not include one. Otherwise, however, it's best to take a few minutes to create one.

Tips For Your CV

Here are some of the most important guidelines to keep in mind when creating your CV:

> **Customize It** - Even if you're starting with a CV or resume template, take the time to personalize each copy that you send out. Read the job requirements carefully and tailor your CV to fit the position. Certain skills and experiences will be more relevant for particular jobs and these should be emphasized accordingly.

> **Keep it Brief** - A CV should not be longer than two pages. Employers receive lots of applications and they have limited time to look at each one.

> **Update it Frequently** - Never send a CV that's out of date. You should update it at least annually or whenever you have something significant to add.

> **Fill in Gaps** - Many people have gaps in their employment history. You can often fill these in with other projects or activities that were keeping you busy during this time. This may include taking classes, travelling, volunteer work, freelancing or raising a family. It's better to put something in than to leave long spaces of time unaccounted for.

> **Proofread It** - You never want to send out a CV with typos or factual mistakes. Take the time to proofread it carefully.