

CVs and Covering Letters in Brief

THE CV

The reverse Chronological CV is suitable for most situations. It lists education and work experience in reverse date order (most recent first). Evidence of skills and achievements are built into the CV against the relevant experience.

Format and Structure

- Most UK CVs should be two A4 sized pages, unless otherwise stated by the employer.
- Your best selling points should always come first within a section.
- Allocate space according to importance to the job for which you are applying – expand on areas of relevance.
- You can draw the recruiter's attention to relevant experience by grouping it together under an appropriate sub-heading eg Legal Work Experience, Financial Work Experience, Scientific Work Experience, Technical Work Experience or Relevant Work Experience.
- Use headings which best describe the content of the section. Adapt the headings to fit your needs eg Awards and Achievements, Positions of Responsibility and Achievements.
- Putting lines between sections and the use of boxes or tables with lined borders can clutter up your CV making it difficult to read. Tables without borders can be useful for formatting neatly in columns.
- Use a standard font that is easy to read and looks professional. Use the same font style throughout.

Style

- Keep sentences short and precise.
- Bullet points can look effective and help you to write short, dynamic sentences. If you want to use paragraphs keep them short.

Content

- Must be tailored to the requirements of the reader. What skills and experience are they looking for?
- Spelling and grammar are very important; do not rely on spell checks.
- Personal profiles are optional; they are best suited to speculative applications or in circumstances where you are not using a cover letter.
- All skills claims must be backed up by evidence.

Structuring your examples - the CAR Model

Context – What was the situation – keep it brief, but specific.

Action – What did YOU do? What was your role? What actions did you take? Use action words.

Result – What was the outcome? What did you achieve? What was improved? Qualify and quantify.

References

Unless otherwise stated, provide names of two referees. These will depend on the role, your circumstances and what has been requested. More on references:

www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/students/applicationsinterviews/af/references

THE COVERING LETTER

When sending a CV, you need to include a covering letter. The covering letter is your personal sales pitch, where you introduce yourself as a candidate and discuss why you want the job. It should be professional and business like in style and layout. In brief it should cover:

1. Why you are applying to this company? - What makes them stand out from other similar companies?
2. Why you are applying for this role? - Your motivation for applying, show your understanding of the role.
3. The skills and experience you have that match the job description.

Covering letters should be tailored for each job. If you cut and paste the company name and use the letter for any other employer, your letter will not convince the reader that you want to work for them. Even the least experienced recruiter can spot a 'mailshot' at a glance!

**School of Education
Management and Leisure degree
Position: Sales and Marketing
Developer**

Sample Vacancy:

About our company:

- A leading stag and hen party company
- Exclusive hen and stag weekend organisers to lastminute.com and Alton Towers
- First to offer online booking and individual payments for hen and stag nights
- Tailor-made hen and stag dos with clear pricing and no hidden extras
- Great service, no pressure selling, our sales staff don't work for commission

Vacancy Description:

You will be part of our busy Sales and Marketing Team. Jobs include but are not limited to:

- Sales: answering the main phone, preparing quotes, following up enquiries and taking bookings. Fast learning of our product range to answer pre-booking enquiries. Taking party bookings in selected locations, increasing to more location in the UK and abroad.
- Marketing: online marketing including Search Engine Optimisation, Google (Adwords, Analytics and Webmaster tools), linking strategy, managing and setting up new affiliates, Access database reporting, Email newsletters, Creating graphics with Adobe Photoshop and adding videos to our site, developing company websites.

Salary: £18,000 OTE

Qualifications: Ideal for a Business Studies graduate.

Skills:

- We are looking for a graduate in business studies, preferably with marketing and sales experience.
- The ideal candidate will have a flair for sales, excellent telephone manner and the ability to communicate effectively on numerous levels, building a rapport quickly over the phone.
- Commercially minded individual, capable of implementing a marketing strategy to improve the profitability of Freedom.
- You will have good working knowledge of MS Word, Excel and Access database management as well as being PC literate on Outlook and Email. You will be highly organised, able to work to tight deadlines and produce a high standard of work.
- Conscientious, excellent organiser, with stable career history.

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Education

2010 –2013 The University of Manchester BA (Hons) Management and Leisure, expected 2:1 (second year 67%)

- Relevant modules: Marketing and Promotion, Events Management, Economics, HRM, Law, Financial Management and Psychology.
- Final year research project on the marketing of temporary exhibitions for the Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester. Awarded first class
- My degree included 3 “Applied Study” placements, which I organised independently and allowed me to put the theoretical elements of my degree into practice.

2002 –2009 Cheadle Hulme High School, Cheadle

- 3 A levels: Business Studies (B), Physical Education (B), Psychology (C)
- 10 GCSEs (5A, 4B, 1C) including Mathematics (A) and English (A)

Relevant Work Experience

Summer 2012 Sales and Marketing Intern, Big Day Events, Wilmslow

- Offered a summer position following the completion of a successful placement at this event management and wedding planning business.
- Gained practical experience of the organisation of complex events, including budgeting, marketing and research, through to planning for contingencies and working with clients and brides-to-be with exacting requirements.
- Learnt first-hand the importance maintaining good relationships with suppliers and venues, whilst assisting with the organisation of several large functions.
- Researched and investigated three ‘competitor businesses. Produced a 10 page report and wrote and delivered a presentation of my findings to the Director and Marketing Team, taking questions from the group.
- Promoted Big Day Events at two large wedding fairs, briefing visitors to the fair about the company’s services, personally securing three new customers.
- Developed Big Day Events’ presence on social media, including Facebook and Twitter.
- Assisted senior event planners in two meetings with key clients, performing background research and compiling a presentation around client needs.
- Dealt with telephone enquiries from current and prospective clients, delivering a high level of level of customer service and receiving positive feedback from my manager.

Jan/Feb 2012 Applied Study Placement, Big Day Events, Wilmslow

- Used initiative and networking skills to organise my course placement at this small specialist events company, whilst visiting a wedding fair with my sister.
- Gained an insight into the organisation of complex events through assisting an event manager with a large country house wedding with over 300 guests.

Other Work Experience

Jan 2011 **Applied Study Placement, Leisure Services, Stockport Council**

- Shadowed several senior managers and sat in on meetings including one regarding the organisation of a summer activity programme aimed at young people.

July 2009 - **Bar Server, The John Millington pub, Cheadle Hulme**

- Responsible for delivering high levels of customer service in this busy pub. Received a customer service award from the Brewery.
- Work flexible hours to meet the demands of the business.
- Supervise food ordering and oversee 2-4 staff members in the restaurant. Selected to attend food brand training by the manager.
- Assist manager with weekly stock takes and frequently given the responsibility of cashing up tills at the end of the night.

2007 – 2009 **Checkout Assistant, Somerfield, Cheadle Hulme**

- Trained to work in all areas of the store.
- Assisted manager with monthly stock takes.
- Trained 3 new staff members.

Other skills

Languages	Basic conversational Spanish and some written ability.
Driving Licence	Full, clean driving licence.
Computing	Highly PC literate with an excellent working knowledge of MS Office (particularly Word and PowerPoint, good knowledge of Excel and Access. I have also used Dreamweaver to edit the website whilst on placement at Big Day Events.

Positions of Responsibility and Awards

- Student Ambassador in the School of Education. I regularly lead tours of prospective students and their parents around campus and answer questions on student life and issues. I have also given several formal presentations.
- Active member of the Management and Pleasure Society. I organised an annual programme of events for the society with another team member, and introduced a popular games night. Working to tight deadlines, I coordinated the printing and sale of tickets for the society's summer ball and negotiated with a local hotel to get a good rate for the venue.
- School prefect and assisted with an anti-bullying campaign which involved organising activities for younger students and delivering a school assembly on the topic.
- Represented my school at netball and played at county level for 2 years. Received a "Good Sport" award from Stockport Council for participating in a coaching scheme for primary school children.

Interests

- I took a gap year before university, spending 6 months travelling with a friend to South America and volunteering with a charity educating street kids in Colombia.
- Member of the Manchester University Netball Society and currently play in the reserve squad. Competed in the inter-university games in 2011 where our team was placed second.
- Enjoy running and recently completed the Great Manchester Run, raising over £300 for a local hospice.
- In my free time I enjoy making cupcakes, reading modern fiction and visiting the theatre.

References are available on request.