



**EXECUTIVE
CONNEXIONS**

Accelerate your career success



The Executive Job Search:

HOW TO CRAFT A COMPELLING CV

PROBLEMS WITH CV'S

The Curriculum Vitae or Resume (I'll use the acronym CV going forward) forms the foundation of your 'personal brand' which you will present to the recruitment market, and is often the first point of contact for your candidate/recruiter relationships. However, the content and structure of a CV is one of the most subjective areas in career management. It's your own due diligence around discussing your options that will ensure you end up with a document that works for you and is read and acted upon by a recruiter, and in the end that's all that matters.

“The subject of the humble CV is as likely to start lively debate as any discussion around politics or world peace!”

OUR EXECUTIVE CLIENTS' MAIN CV CONCERNS

- Too many opinions about what makes a good CV
- Not getting enough interviews
- Difficult to get skills and value across to the reader
- How to get recruiters to take notice of the CV

This report will provide the means to create a strong executive level CV template, which can be adjusted based on the requirements of any given role. The style we recommend is based on what we have learned through frequent conversations with a great many recruiters and headhunters over the years. You'll also see top tips from senior executive level recruiters.

FORMATTING YOUR COMPELLING CV

In this report, I will focus on three essential elements of the executive level CV within this report, helping you to overcome these problems:

1. Crafting an executive summary
2. Adding impact to your career history
3. Establishing your personal brand

QUICK TIP

Adopt a straightforward, easy-to-read layout without any fancy formatting.

What I propose as a core CV template style is simple; a compelling executive summary, followed by the chronological career history – most recent role first. A simply formatted, easy to read CV is what is required 90+% of the time when I ask this question of recruiters, who are in effect the gate keepers for their clients; they haven't got time to be interpreting anything on your CV.

It needs to be sharp, to the point, and have a few 'knock out punches' as I call them. There are a few subtleties around getting this right, but essentially that's the style I recommend to gain more interest and interviews. Let's break it down:

1. CRAFTING AN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The executive summary (which you may refer to as the personal profile), should be around 6-10 lines long and as punchy as possible. It needs to be compelling enough to grab attention of the recruiter or employer in a short space of time. Lose the adjectives and drop the 'I' (this person- neutrality helps to keep things 'high level'). Focus on what you can bring to the market. This succinctness is not only appreciated, but is expected at senior level. At the very end of the executive summary, you can also include an aspirational piece around specific discipline and sector required in your next role. Adopting these tips, you will be well on your way to constructing an executive summary that sells you to the reader and it's worth taking some time to refine this summary and to invite critiques from trusted advisers, as this section is often (but not always, read on...) the first thing that a recruiter will read from your CV.

2. ADDING IMPACT TO YOUR CAREER HISTORY

Firstly, with each company that you have worked for, I suggest you include one or two lines just under the company name describing the size and nature of the organization. This helps the recruiter or HR person to quickly see the types of companies you have worked for; you're actively helping the reader by including this additional information.

Your chronological career history is a key area a recruiter's eye may be drawn to initially. They want to see your key achievements and significant results described here.

These results could be around 'EBITDA' info, P&L, % reduction in attrition rates, or improvements in company culture or processes (human impact), and so on.

Get some hard facts, percentages or figures in each bullet point where relevant. Recruiters' eyes are drawn to this information.

QUICK TIP

Draw attention to your key achievements and results with bullet points and £€\$%

I recommend using the STAR CV format as a logical sequence of describing your achievements:

S is for Situation.

Put your point into context, e.g. 'Against a backdrop of poor performance in xyz...'. This helps the reader to form a picture of the entire situation.

T is for Task.

Provide a high level description of the task you set yourself to correct the situation.

A is for Action.

Outline the steps you took to resolve the situation. (*What analysis did you do? Did you introduce working practices or process improvements?*)

R is for Result.

What tangible result was achieved by the steps taken in the points above?

QUICK TIP

Don't obsess over the two-page 'rule'; three is acceptable at c-suite level.

Applying the STAR format will initially lengthen your CV, but with some astute formatting (try using narrow margins), editing and examination of each and every bullet point (should they all stay? Should some be merged?), you will find that it will 'settle' in terms of volume after a few drafts.

3. ESTABLISHING YOUR PERSONAL BRAND

As far as your personal branding is concerned, the CV is the fundamental linchpin in the entire piece. Following the above processes will give your CV more of a chance of being noticed by recruiters if you apply the ideas, but that also depends on how well you have differentiated yourself to the reader. This is also about getting you onto the “read later” pile, rather than being binned (or the electronic equivalent of these options).

EXECUTIVE RECRUITERS' TOP TIPS FOR CV

1. A **realistic view** of the candidate's aims and what they can bring to a company is most important.
2. Clarity, 2 pages, a **focus on output and achievement** and clear progression.
3. The best ones are **concise** but yet list key achievements and responsibilities.
4. **Facts and figures**; company size, sector and responsibilities then mostly about their achievements in that role.
5. **Make it relevant!** A CV which has been tailored for that job search rather than just an old CV with an additional paragraph on the last role.
6. An impressive CV is one that matches the **client's needs**. Demonstrate understanding of the organisation you are looking for and sound knowledge of the market.
7. **Up-to-date** and relevant online profile and ability for video CVs for the future. There is still no substitute to meeting face to face.
8. Don't submit 'War & Peace'. Use the **STAR approach** - Situation/ Task/ Action/ Results. Speak in 'I did this and it resulted in this'.
9. **Summarise** - use the first 2 or 3 lines to sum up what the client can expect from the candidate then bullet points listing experience and achievements.
10. **Presentation** - no fluffy borders or cramped space. A minimum of a 10 point font.
11. The candidate should present themselves as a '**story**' outlining where they started and where they are now with more detail on the more recent roles.

YOUR COMPLIMENTARY 'CAREER STRATEGY CALL' INVITATION

Dive into new possibilities! Schedule your complimentary Discovery Call to uncover key career blockers and and some actionable tips. Let's explore and ignite your path forward.

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