

## Your CV - introduction

Career change can be challenging not only from the perspective of creating a CV, embarking upon a job search and attending interviews, but also because it makes you examine yourself and ask questions that you usually do not have to face. Creating your CV is a reflective and self-analytical process – a time to review your achievements, skills and strengths, but it can also bring you face to face with some of the things that you feel less capable and confident of handling. The section ahead and the exercises included will help you to draw out your skills, achievements and personal characteristics to provide an excellent focus for your Curriculum Vitae (CV) and in addition can be used to help you prepare for interviews.

However, if you do get downhearted or lose confidence in yourself when creating your CV – don't give up. It can be a time-consuming and at times frustrating exercise getting to an end result which you feel truly reflects who you are and what you are able to bring to a new employer. So be kind to yourself during the process and keep positive. You are a unique individual with much to bring to a new employer whatever stage of your career you are at.

### What is a CV?

A CV or Curriculum Vitae to give it its full title is a document which outlines your career history and experience and which summarises details of your skills, abilities, key strengths and achievements. In the USA it is also known as a Resume.

The document is sent to prospective employers as a means of demonstrating what value and contribution you might be able to bring to their organisation if they employed you. The employer is likely to have prepared a job description outlining the key experience and skills they believe they need to fill a new or vacant post. Your CV is an initial way of seeing if your experience and abilities match their requirements.

It is your own personal marketing tool. It is the key that opens the door to an interview. You also generally have only one chance to impress and this document is your way to do it.

### CV content

So what information does your CV need to contain? Often people get confused about what material should be included. People new to the job market are concerned that they don't have enough information to include on a CV and people who have been in roles for many years can find it hard to summarise their years of experience and consequently end up with a long CV which a recruiter may find daunting and not fully read.

Typically a CV will contain the following:

- Personal Details including Name, Address, Contact Telephone Numbers and an Email address. Sometimes people decide to add other personal details such as marital status, number of children, date of birth, the fact that they are healthy and also that they have a clean driving licence. You do not need to put any of this additional information on your CV as your skills and work experience are what qualify you for a role not whether you are married or single or old or young.
- An opening statement summarising your strengths and experience
- Details of your qualifications or educational background.
- Details of your career history – usually shown in reverse chronological order
- Your skills and experience and responsibilities in any given job
- Your key achievements and strengths and where you are able to add value or contribute to a new employer. Review your old performance appraisals and any feedback mechanisms to identify your skills, major achievements and your key experience. Back them up with tangible proof where possible, e.g.:
  - Introduced preferred supplier deal reducing costs of raw materials for Europe by £2.5million; or
  - set up new customer database system to provide key account information to focus on high profit clients only

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In addition you may wish to include some of the following:

- Are you a member of a professional institution? This is important, especially if to join the institution you have had to carry out some study or competency assessment, rather than just paying a membership fee. In addition, if you have played an active role in the association, this should also be noted.
- Are you computer literate and with what level of competence? Can you use Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint and to what level?
- Are you fluent in another language and again to what level? Are you competent speaking it only or speaking and writing it?
- Have you published relevant material or spoken at a conference or similar event that might be of interest to a new employer?
- A few interests or hobbies. Outlining team activities and/or committee responsibilities may show some indication of your team working ability and organisational skills as well as commitment. Also outlining some of your interest and hobbies provides an employer with a more rounded view of you and provides an insight into what interests you outside of work and what types of activities motivate you.

As you can see from the above, that's a lot of information to fit into a few pages.

Do not include your salary or remuneration package or the desired salary on your CV. These should be negotiated at a later date and are likely to be asked at the interview stage or via a recruitment consultant if one is working on your behalf. References are also usually asked for once you have been offered the job.

Your race, date of birth, nationality, marital status, political affiliation or membership of non-relevant bodies is not required on the CV.

The structure and the order in which you portray your details will be dependent upon your own experience. For example, a new graduate might wish to discuss their qualifications and their university experience on the front page of their CV if they have limited or no job experience. Yet, someone who took their qualifications years ago and who has ample experience in a certain role is going to want to demonstrate these abilities and may well provide only a brief summary of their qualifications on the back page of their CV.

## Before you make a start

It can be easy to rush into creating a CV without considering who ultimately will be reading it and what you want the reader to take away from the experience.

For example, when preparing a business presentation, it would be unusual not to consider your desired outcome. You might consider the following:

- What is it that you wish to achieve from giving the presentation?
- What are the key messages that you want to portray to your audience.
- Who will be in the audience?
- You may well consider some of the questions you think members of the audience might ask
- And finally, when you conclude your presentation, is there a call to action or have you let people slip away? What do you want the audience to do as a result of having listened to you?

It is helpful to consider the same process when creating your CV. Before making a start, have a think about the likely readers of your document. It could be a Recruitment Consultant or a member of the Human Resources department that will initially read your document, but ultimately it is likely to be your potential new manager. What do you want their first impressions to be?

So let's have a think about your desired outcomes from creating your CV. What do you want to achieve from writing it?

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You might want the document to demonstrate the breadth of your career history, you might want it to highlight your creativity or you might want it to show off your academic qualifications. However, ultimately you want it to get you that all important interview so that you can actually demonstrate some or all of the above qualities in person. So what approach can you take to help this happen?

To get yourself a face to face interview you need to demonstrate that you match a potential new employer's needs. But how are you going to do this? If you are creating your CV to apply for a specific job that you have seen or been contacted about then make sure that you read any information supplied by either the company or the recruitment consultant. You may well have been provided with a copy of the job description which will provide you with important information about the role and hopefully it will also outline the type of skills and experience which the employer is searching for. If you have this document available, you can then customise your CV highlighting aspects which you know are important to the new potential employer, or certainly make sure that your cover letter emphasises any relevant skills and experience. More on that later in this section.

However, the way the job search market operates means that you may not always know the employer or have very much detail at this stage about what the job entails. You may wish to submit a CV online onto one of the various job sites, such as Monster or Totaljobs or be uploading your CV onto a recruitment consultant's website for future consideration. This naturally means that you need a generic CV that you are happy covers your key skills and experience and which highlights your achievements to date. You want a document that makes a recruiter think – yes this person stands out and I can see what value they might be able to bring to a new company.

See the Outcomes and Perceptions questionnaire appendix at the back of this section to help you consider what's important to include on your CV and what key messages you wish to portray to your audience.

## CV styles

There are a number of styles that you can use when structuring your CV. These generally fall into three main categories:

- The Reverse Chronological CV
- The Functional CV
- The Combination CV

You choose the style and format which suits your needs best and which represents you in the best light, however, certain styles of CV can suit certain career situations and these are highlighted in the sections below.

### The Reverse Chronological CV

The reverse chronological CV lists the positions you have held, starting with your most recent job and working backwards through time and career history. Particular emphasis is placed on the most recent posts held. Generally, it provides an overview of the role and the organisation and lists your achievements and responsibilities. A recruiter is easily able to identify your current role and most recent experience and decide whether your current skills and experience match their needs.

This CV is useful if you have followed a certain career path with similar roles throughout your career and it highlights your progression. Increased responsibilities and your key achievements are demonstrated throughout culminating in your most recent position. It is a useful structure and format if you want to step straight up to the next role in your chosen career path. This type of CV is straightforward to read as jobs are presented chronologically.

On the downside, your skills and experience can get buried and the CV turns into a long list of responsibilities and job titles. In addition, gaps in your employment history will stand out.

See the reverse chronological CV example appendix at the back of this section.

If you don't want the next move up the career ladder or if you wish to take a role in a different environment or perhaps you are looking to get a completely different job in a completely different field then the functional CV may be better suited to your needs. Details on this type of CV are outlined below.

## The Functional CV

The functional CV highlights the skills you have acquired and used in previous jobs. It combines all the skills you have in a particular area, no matter which employer or job you gained these from and categorises them under skill headings such as Communications Skills or Project Management Skills.

See the functional CV example appendix at the back of this section.

If you are looking for a change of career, the functional CV is a good way of outlining to a new employer your transferable skills. If you also have some gaps in your employment history, these are less easily detected than in the reverse chronological CV.

On the downside, your last job won't be on that all important page one so an employer may have to search harder to define your career history, which makes your opening statement all the more important.

## The Combined CV

As you might expect the combined CV takes elements from both the above styles of CV. It is the most common used form of CV. It is a good way of highlighting career achievements and career history.

See the combined CV example appendix at the back of this section. Also in the appendices you will find examples of graduate CVs and an executive CV.

## Evaluation

It is up to you which style of CV you prefer to use and the best way to evaluate is by the amount of interviews you are being invited to attend.

## Creating your CV

OK. So you are ready to create your CV. You've had a think about what you want to achieve from your CV, considered how you wish to be perceived, thought about the sorts of things that the document should include and you've contemplated the different styles. You may be starting with a blank sheet of paper or have dug out an old version of your CV to rewrite or update. So where are you going to start? You already know that the CV is your marketing tool and you have only a few pages to get your key messages across.

Let's start with the basics. It can be tempting to create your CV in a linear fashion, i.e. you see other people's CVs or you have an old version of your own and think that you'll use that and you'll logically work from the start to the finish. Using your old CV as a source of information can be helpful, provided that it is in good shape already. But even then it is wise to review it, update it and ensure that it portrays you in your best light. You may have chosen a format previously that does not highlight your key achievements or a version with no opening statement. If you have an old version of your CV, it might be worth starting afresh anyway and using the details on the old version as guidance for the new.

If you do decide to work logically from start to finish how are you going to write an opening statement when actually this is a summarised version of your whole CV? How are you going to start listing your achievements without focussing on the roles and responsibilities you held? And, how can you determine and bring out the highlights of your career if you have not yet detailed them? So let's have a rethink about where you start.

You may have had many jobs with different employers during your career or have been in the same job with the same Employer for many years, or you could be a new graduate looking to get your foot on the career ladder. Whatever your situation you know that the document needs to highlight your career history, so why not start by listing all the jobs you've had. Make a start by listing your job title, the name of the company you worked for and the dates that you were

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in the job. Remember that gaps on your CV can look ominous. Remain honest, but if you have some gaps think about an explanation you can provide to put the recruiter at ease.

In addition, you also know that it is important to outline your qualifications and educational background. Dependent on your age, you might provide more or less detail about your qualifications. For example if you are just entering the job market as a graduate you are likely to provide more detail about your degree, than someone who undertook their degree 25 years ago. Unless of course the role is highly academic and demonstration of ongoing academic success is a pre-requisite. So again, make a list of your qualifications, the date of qualification and the establishment where you undertook it.

At least now you have a starting point. Next, think about what responsibilities you held in each of the jobs. Perhaps you have old job descriptions or a copy of performance appraisals that might help you recall information about your responsibilities. In addition, your performance appraisal documents might also help you recall some highlights from your career – times when you had performed well and this had been recognised and acknowledged by your manager at the time.

See the CV Template appendix at the back of this section.

So now you have a list of the jobs, your responsibilities within them and your qualifications, but how are you going to ensure that your key strengths, achievements and skills shine through? How are you going to get your key messages across to ensure that you are the candidate who is selected for interview?

## Key messages

How do others get their message across? What is it that means a recruiter selects one candidate over another when on paper their backgrounds look similar?

Think about how you choose to make a purchase yourself. How might an advertiser persuade you to buy their product instead of buying from their competitor? Effectively this is what you are trying to do – you are trying to ensure that the employer wants to buy what you have to sell and not an alternative candidate.

## Buying a washing machine

The grid below shows what types of things you might consider when buying a new washing machine. You know that there are lots of different brands to choose from and also you may have some criteria in mind that you need to be fulfilled by the new machine, so you are already discarding machines that don't match what you want.

## Possible criteria considerations when buying a new washing machine

<p><b>Aesthetics/First Impressions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What does it look like?</li><li>• What size is it?</li><li>• It is white or another colour?</li><li>• Is it pleasing to the eye?</li></ul>
<p><b>Performance &amp; Abilities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What's the load capacity?</li><li>• How many spin cycles does it have?</li><li>• How efficiently does it use water?</li><li>• How noisy is it?</li><li>• Will it get results at lower temperatures?</li><li>• How many cycles does it have?</li><li>• Are you able to use it to utilise any off peak electricity contracts you have?</li></ul>
<p><b>Credibility:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is it a well known brand?</li><li>• Does the manufacturer have a good reputation?</li><li>• What do the professional reviews say about the machine?</li><li>• What do other customers say about the machine?</li><li>• Has the company been in business a long time?</li><li>• How long has the company been making washing machines?</li></ul>
<p><b>Budget:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Does the machine meet your budget?</li><li>• Does its performance merit its price?</li><li>• Might you be persuaded to pay more for it because overall the machine will save you money, i.e. on water bills, electricity bills etc.</li></ul>

When considering the above example, you are defining your criteria based not only on the look of the machine, but also on its performance and abilities and credibility. You may decide to choose a brand that has a good reputation and has been in business for a long time and of course you are likely to have a budget in mind of how much you are prepared to pay. You might get edged up slightly cost-wise because a particular machine has some functionality that you really want or you might have to compromise a little to match your budget.

Before coming to a final decision, you may well decide to visit a showroom to see the actual machine. Does it still meet your expectations? When coming to a conclusion, you have considered lots of different aspects but your final decision was based on buying a machine that was an appropriate and credible brand which matched your needs or as close to them as possible.

Using this as a metaphor, an employer is using a similar process when looking for a new candidate.

When your CV arrives to review the recruiter is making an assessment of whether you are likely to be someone that meets their needs.

Here is the table again, but this time, it is compiled from a recruiter's perspective and what they are looking for from your CV.

## Possible considerations when reviewing a CV

<p><b>Aesthetics/First Impressions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What's the first impression of the CV?</li><li>• Does it look ok?</li><li>• Is it in a suitable format?</li><li>• Does it look appealing and easy to read?</li><li>• Are there any glaring spelling mistakes or errors?</li><li>• How long is it?</li><li>• Is it structured so that key points are easy to identify?</li><li>• What makes this CV memorable?</li><li>• Does the opening statement grab my attention?</li><li>• Do I want to read more?</li></ul>
<p><b>Performance &amp; Abilities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Does the CV match the criteria needed for the job?</li><li>• Are the key achievements highlighted?</li><li>• Are the achievements written to demonstrate measureable and tangible benefits?</li><li>• Does the CV outline appropriate skills to do the job?</li><li>• Am I able to identify what value could be added to an organisation?</li><li>• Are key strengths highlighted?</li></ul>
<p><b>Credibility:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Does the CV demonstrate a relevant employment history?</li><li>• What's the length of service in each role?</li><li>• Does the CV provide details of an excellent track record of this type of work?</li><li>• Does the CV give details of relevant qualifications for the job?</li><li>• Does the CV reflect personal characteristics?</li><li>• Are there any gaps in employment?</li><li>• Are references/referees available to support what's documented?</li><li>• Does "Brand You" meet what's required?</li></ul>
<p><b>Budget:</b></p> <p>An employer has a salary in mind when recruiting. A recruitment consultant may already have ascertained your salary or you may have applied for a vacancy where the salary was advertised so you know that it meets your needs. But the following questions may arise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Do the performance, value, experience and skills of an individual as outlined on the CV merit the salary and benefits package on offer?</li><li>• Might some negotiation need to take place?</li></ul>

Have you managed to get the key points and messages across in the same way that an advertiser does to get its messages across to you?

Effectively, what you are trying to do is to create yourself as a Brand – "Brand You". If you want to know more about personal branding – what it is, how you define "Brand You" and how you use this concept, then see the Guide to Personal Branding Appendix at the back of this section.

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If the recruiter believes from reading your CV that you are a possible match, then you could be selected to attend for an interview. Effectively this is the visit to the showroom to see if what is on paper is indeed the same when meeting face to face.

So you know that it is really important to ensure that the right messages about you come through in your CV. And you understand that one of these messages is your achievements, but that's easier said than done.

If you have taken some time to reflect on your achievements, but are struggling to identify or pull these into a workable format, why not take a look at the next section on listing your achievements and skills to gain some ideas.

## Your achievements, skills and strengths

You now know that self appraisal is part of the process of creating your CV and one of the most positive approaches is to make a list of achievements in your last role and in earlier positions. The effort is well worthwhile because once outlined; these can be used on your CV and also help you to identify your transferable skills. Listing achievements and their benefits is important in a CV, so an employer can see how you have added value to an organisation. Review your most recent appraisal, if you have one, as this may also help identify your achievements.

Below is a table outlining example achievements, the skills that were used to achieve the outcome and in addition the benefit that the organisation received as a result of the achievement. This particular example has been prepared by a departmental sales manager.

The final column can sometimes be difficult to complete but persevere as this column provides you with real tangible results to add to your CV.

Achievement	Skill	Benefit to Organisation
Increased Sales Team	Organisational Recruitment Persuading people Negotiation Clear thinking	40% profit rise due to increased sales
Trained four new recruits	Interpersonal Patience Technical knowledge Putting things across in layman's terms Assessment & Judgement	All still with the company and achieving sales targets. One promoted to Regional post.
Sourced new display material for national new product launch	Technical Negotiations/Tender Judgement on quality Able to work to budget Ability to see things through	Effective sales promotion to launch major new line in UK with an increase of X% market share gained in 6 months.
Delivered 95% of orders for X parts on time in full throughout the year, generating £Xm sales	Organisational Planning Manufacturing expertise Financial Resourcing Decision Making Quality assessment Problem Solving Customer Service	Increased revenue by X% for the business. Saved £X on rework. Gave X% more capacity to take on new orders.
Reduced department employee turnover from 30% to 18% per annum.	Analytical Retention Initiatives/Innovative Communication Policy development	Saved £800K in replacement recruitment/retraining fees for the business.

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Now it's your turn, try out this exercise by completing the List of Achievements appendix at the back of this section.

## Top three achievements

Once you've completed the exercise above, you may be surprised to see quite how much you really have achieved. Often people comment that it is only when they do this exercise that they begin to see how much they have accomplished in their careers.

Look through the achievements you have listed and the skills you have demonstrated. Decide for yourself which of these gave you the greatest satisfaction, which made you feel the most proud, which was the finest moment of achievement and which added most value and benefit to a prospective employer.

Typically, you should list your top 3 greatest achievements in your career to date on your CV somewhere near the top of the document. To help you get the wording just as you want it on your CV complete the Top Three Achievements Appendix at the back of this section.

## Skills inventory

In addition, by completing the List of Achievements, you will also have identified numerous skills that you needed in order to make the achievement. These can be helpful, particularly if you are writing a Functional CV and also if you want to understand fully what skills you possess or how you might transfer these to use in another role or industry.

## Strengths

In order to get the full picture of your achievements, skills and strengths, you may also wish to complete a SWOT Analysis which helps you to identify your Strengths and Weaknesses and which also reviews possible opportunities available to you and also potential threats which might affect your job search. You may already have completed the SWOT Analysis as part of the Managing your Career section, however, if not, you can go to that section now and complete the analysis now.

## Personal achievements

In addition to work achievements, you may also wish to consider any experience and skills that are outside the workplace. These may be relevant to the role or are abilities which demonstrate certain capabilities or skills e.g.

- You are a school governor
- You project managed or built your home
- You manage or coach or play in a sports team
- You are a member of the parish council
- You lead an event or committee
- You successfully brought up children

Again, have a think about whether there is anything else you wish to market about yourself and which demonstrates additional skills that you could utilise with a new employer.

## Creating an opening statement

So by this point you should have created the majority of your CV. But as highlighted already, now that you are close to completion, you need to focus on your opening statement. The opening statement is a summary of what you believe is important for others to read about you. It generally includes an overview of your skills, experience, qualifications and what you particularly are able to bring to a new organisation. It may well include some of your key achievements as well as some of your personal characteristics.

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It is also the summary which a recruiter might read to then decide if they are going to read the remainder of your CV. So you need to grab the attention of the recruiter or potential employer. If your opening statement is lacklustre, vague and not thought through, then why should anyone bother to continue to read your CV? The opening statement is a reflection of who you are and if you have not put the effort into this part of your CV, it could be interpreted that you will be the same in the workplace. This part of your CV can be quite difficult to compose. Often people struggle to summarise their skills and experience, particularly if they have had a lengthy career and in addition forget to inject something of themselves into the summary. This type of summary gives a professional overview but lacks the insight of what the person is actually like.

So how are you going to go about creating your opening statement? You can use your CV as guidance on what you wish to include in the statement but you want to ensure that as well as including major skills and achievements and pointing out your strengths and experience that you inject some of your personal characteristics into the statement. You want the statement to be memorable (in a positive way) and to appeal to the recruiter.

So what is it that makes you special? What is it that is going to help you stand out from the crowd and what is it that is going to help you get an interview?

Outlined below are some points that will help you pull together your opening statement.

## Personal characteristics

Characteristics develop through many influences and stages of your life. How you were raised as a child, school history and work experience all play a part in shaping development. Inevitably, therefore, people show different characteristics and handle personal relationships in the working environment in a variety of ways. This is what makes us all as individual and unique as we are. You will no doubt have some personal characteristics that you are proud to possess and others that you would prefer to keep under wraps. However, sharing a little of your personality on your CV gives it a more personal feel and tells a recruiter who you are as well as what you do.

If you are asked to describe your boss or another colleague at work, you probably wouldn't talk about what they do; you are more likely to talk about how they operate and how their characteristics and work style impact upon you personally. So if asked, you might well mention aspects of their personality like they are very hardworking or they are approachable and always willing to help others or that they are very inspirational or motivating.

So have a think about how you are in the workplace. What would others say about you if they had to describe you? Take a moment to brainstorm and list the things that naturally come to mind when you think about yourself in the workplace. It might also be helpful to ask those close to you or trusted work colleagues and friends to define what makes you you and add their input.

Once you have your list, identify your top five. It might be that you wish to highlight these in your opening statement.

You may wish to take a look at the check list below to help you if you are finding it a little difficult to outline your personal characteristics or ring those characteristics that best apply to you.

## Personal Characteristics Table

Tenacious	Thoughtful	Outgoing	Strategic
Results Focussed	Adaptable	Assertive	Tactical
Practical	Modest	Controlling	Flexible
Reserved	Trusting	Quick to act	Enthusiastic
Factual	Receptive	Self-confident	Diplomatic
Organised	Co-operative	Persuasive	Sociable
Thorough	Innovative	Competitive	Strong Negotiator
Methodical	Supportive	Persistent	Animated
Ethical	Creative	Detail Conscious	Inspirational
Approachable	Decisive	Influential	Realistic
Analytical	Driven	Commercially minded	Supportive
Open	Loyal	Motivated	Develops Others
Competitive	Calm	Ambitious	Academic
Consultative	Positive	Humorous	People Focussed
Task Orientated	Team Player	Visionary	Logical
Reasonable	Good Listener	Rational	Optimistic

## Unique selling point (USP)

If we think back to the example of buying a new washing machine, ultimately what an advertiser is trying to get across in their marketing communications to you is what is their Unique Selling Point – their USP? What is it about their product that makes it special and makes you want to buy it? Dyson Vacuum Cleaners do this very effectively in terms of the way their product looks. When their products arrived in the market place, they looked very different to other vacuum cleaners; they were and still are fun colours and a cooler design. This made them memorable and helped them to stand out from the crowd. Although they still did what other vacuum cleaners did, they had a Unique Selling Point.

In relation to compiling your CV and in particular your opening statement, you too are trying to identify your USP. What makes you memorable? What makes you stand out from the crowd? Do you have something special to offer? This might be in the form of what you have achieved in previous job roles or that you have a specialised skill to offer. For example, you may have altered a manufacturing process that saved the company lots of money once it was implemented or perhaps you were considered to have highly effective customer service skills due to your high levels of empathy and your desire to help others or perhaps you were the go to guy in your department because you always knew the answer to the queries or questions that arose.

Have a really good think about what it is that you have been praised for in previous jobs, what others in your department or company really valued about you and in particular what you really enjoyed doing or what energised you at work. Often we will give our best when we are doing something we love or are passionate about. Write down some of these aspects as they may help you identify your Unique Selling Points that you can then incorporate into your Opening Statement, there is a Creating Your Unique Selling Point Questionnaire appendix at the back of this section.

Begin to formulate your Opening Statement, using your work and personal achievements, your personal characteristics and in particular describe your unique selling points. Discuss it with others so that you end up with a sharp, clear statement. This statement tells employers who you are, what your skills, qualifications and experiences are and it highlights what you particularly have to offer. This statement may also help you at interview when asked "Why should you be given this job over other candidates?" or "Why do you want this job?" but more of that later.

There is an Opening Statement Template and an Example Statement in the appendices at the back of this section to encompass your ideas and to compile a final statement.

Hopefully, by reading these sections and working through the exercises, you have a CV to use as your marketing tool. Before you send it to anyone, why not read our quick guide on the dos and don'ts of CV creation.

## Your CV – the dos and don'ts

### Do

- ✓ Spend appropriate time creating and developing your CV
- ✓ Focus on achievements and results and make sure that key messages are on the all important front page
- ✓ Use action words to describe positive achievements
- ✓ Quantify the benefits your achievements brought to an organisation
- ✓ Ensure that your CV reflects your personality
- ✓ Think about things from the employer's perspective. What are they looking for? Keep it relevant and simple
- ✓ Be prepared to adapt your CV if needed dependent upon the role you are applying for
- ✓ Check your spelling. This can be done using the automatic spell check on your computer or by reading and re-reading the document
- ✓ Get someone you trust or even a couple of people to read the document. If possible, ask them to read it as if they were an employer and you were a potential candidate. Ask for their feedback on the document. Find someone with an objective opinion. Your wife or husband hopefully thinks that you are brilliant already so may not review the document objectively!
- ✓ Ensure that the presentation of the document is professional and appropriate to the types of roles you are applying for. A more creative CV maybe appropriate if you are applying for roles in creative industries, more than, say if you are applying for a job in a bank. If you are sending the CV by mail ensure that it is printed on good quality paper
- ✓ Make sure that it is easy to read and the font is easy on the eye.
- ✓ Ensure that you have a suitable format that assists your reader, for example by using headings and bullet points and making sure that sentences are not too lengthy.
- ✓ Ensure that if you send it by email, it can be opened with ease by the recruiter.
- ✓ Ensure that if someone wants to print it, it is in a printable font and it is formatted correctly. What you see on your computer screen may not in fact be the same as what prints on paper. Save the document as a PDF and send it in this format to be sure
- ✓ Keep it concise and accurate. A recruiter wants to quickly be able to ascertain whether you are suitable for the role and not have to read through reams and reams of paper
- ✓ Keep your CV to a reasonable length. You should be able to document your experience on two to three pages of A4 paper
- ✓ Be honest. Although you want to sell yourself – ensure that you are truthful and that you haven't overly exaggerated your qualifications or career achievements
- ✓ Offer a short, justifiable explanation for any gaps on your CV
- ✓ Keep your language simple - avoid jargon, clichés and non-standard abbreviations
- ✓ Read it to make sure that the key points you want to portray are coming through

### Don't

- × Let your key skills, experience and achievements get lost in the document or worse still not even include them
- × Rush through the process of creating your CV and undersell yourself
- × Send out a document with grammatical mistakes and spelling mistakes
- × Skim read it yourself and think that will do. It probably won't do
- × Ramble on – avoid long-winded sentences and paragraphs
- × Send a CV that's pages and pages long. It is very unlikely that the recruiter will read to the end of the document
- × Leave employers second guessing about gaps on your CV. If you don't explain, you are unlikely to get the chance to do it at interview
- × Use complex language and jargon
- × Lie or over-embellish the truth. An employer expects you to show integrity, and it is up to you to present your achievements and experience in the best possible light. Many employers do check

# what's next for me?

And finally – read it again. This time, try and put yourself in the shoes of an employer and ask the following questions:

- What is your first impression of this candidate?
- Is it easy to scan through and pick up key points?
- Can you easily identify their key achievements?
- Is it easy to identify what benefit this person brought to previous roles?
- Is it easy on the eye and easy to read?
- What are the key messages that come through on the CV?
- What questions come to mind when reading the document?
- What might you like to know more about this person?
- What would you like to know less about?
- Is any important information missing?
- If so, what?
- Would you give this person an interview based on reading this CV?
- What would stop you giving this person an interview?

Now let's move onto creating your cover letter so that you have something to alert the employer or recruiter to the wonderful CV that's attached

## Your cover letter

### Writing a cover letter

A cover letter can be as simple as a reminder of why your CV is attached or a comprehensive application in its own right if this is what has been requested. For instance, in a recent job advertisement a traditional baking firm asked candidates to send a detailed letter of application, hand written and in ink!

The first stage then is to ensure that you have read an advertisement carefully and considered what is appropriate. The purpose of a cover letter is usually as a polite addition to your CV or application thanking the recipient for taking the time to consider the attachment. This is often now an email but it is a formal communication and you should adopt a formal style even if this is not your usual way of writing an email.

### What should be in your letter?

A basic cover letter should be addressed directly to an individual either by name or Dear Sir or Madam if the requirement is to send a CV to the Human Resources or Recruitment department.

You can start with a simple phrase such as "I am writing with reference to..." and then add in why you are writing: an advertisement you have seen, a conversation you have had or a request for further information. In most instances, try to keep the tone of the letter formal but light. Outline the role or area about which you are interested, give a short summary of your experience and enthusiasm for the role. Close the letter by reinforcing your willingness to have a further conversation, in person, to support your application.

If you feel that you want to elaborate upon your experience in support of your application do not simply repeat the contents of your CV. Your CV is a *general* overview of your experience but you are applying for a *specific* role so make the cover letter specific too. Tailor what you are writing about your skills and experience to the role and explain why you are enthusiastic about the role and the business. Try to imagine what the person receiving your CV would pay particular attention to in it when recruiting for this role and highlight those things for them succinctly.

Most cover letters are no more than a single page and some, despite your best efforts to craft them into the perfect accompaniment to your CV, do not get read. Regardless, this has to be as carefully thought-out as your interview answers will be when you do manage to meet face to face. If you can, get a trusted friend or colleague to have a look at one of your cover letters and offer their comments to make it as good as it can be.

You can find an example cover letter in the appendices at the back of this section.

## Editing a saved template

It is sensible to produce a basic template for your cover letter that you can modify for each letter or email that you send containing your CV in response to an advertisement or conversation that you have had with a recruiter or employer. This template should cover basic information and layout to which you add specific details relating to the role that you are applying for or the opportunity you have discussed.

It can be tempting to simply edit a previous letter or email but it is far too easy to leave in details that you do not want to send or that are not relevant to this role so that the letter feels generic and rushed. It is better to start each letter with a fresh perspective and focus specifically on the company or business sector to which you are applying.

In addition if your CV is being sent by email with a covering note, ensure that you write a draft of the email without the name and address of the recipient, check it carefully, add your CV as an attachment and *then* address the email. All too often a half-finished draft or one without the CV attachment gets sent minutes before an apology note and the finished CV arrives. It is far too easy to accidentally press "send" if you start with the recipients address and you don't want a half-finished note as your first impression.

## Your cover letter – the dos and don'ts

### Do

- ✓ Review the advert and look at the requirements of the job and then send a covering letter with your CV or application form highlighting what skills and experience you believe match the employer's or recruiter's criteria
- ✓ Explain what vacancy you are applying for, what date you saw it advertised and where – you may find that the employer or recruiter is advertising a number of positions
- ✓ Use the name of the contact person if it is provided and ensure that you spell the name correctly. If a name is provided, there is no excuse for you to spell it incorrectly.
- ✓ Use Dear Sir or Madam if you have no contact name to use and remember to use the correct salutation at the end of the letter. It is Yours sincerely if you have a named contact and Yours faithfully if you have addressed the letter Dear Sir or Madam
- ✓ Ensure that the letter is customised to the job and the company you are applying to
- ✓ Make the letter as personable as possible. An employer wants to feel special and that you have taken time and attention to compose your letter and that they are not just receiving one of your standard letters.
- ✓ Ensure that you have provided your contact details on the letter so that you are easily contactable
- ✓ Provide your remuneration details if the employer or recruiter has asked for them, but if the salary stated for the vacancy is lower than you are currently earning, advise that you are flexible on the wage (if of course you are – there is no point applying for a job where you believe that the salary is not acceptable to you). If there is no request for salary details **then don't give them**. Typically, salary packages are negotiated upon receipt of a verbal or written offer although it is always wise to get an understanding of the salary and benefits package so that nobody's time is wasted.
- ✓ Give an indication of your availability for interview if you know it
- ✓ Keep the letter positive and friendly and show your enthusiasm
- ✓ Check the letter for spelling and grammatical errors

### Don't

- ✗ Send out a generic standard template without checking its relevance to the role applied for
- ✗ Include details about another company or job role, where you have forgotten to remove these details when editing an older letter
- ✗ Just say "Please find enclosed my CV. I look forward to hearing from you". This is not a cover letter

Now that you have your CV and cover letter prepared, let's move onto Your Job Search to review where you should be focussing your attention to get that fabulous new job.

## What's important - Your CV

### 1. Recognise that

- Your CV documents your career history, qualifications, skills, experience and achievements
- It is your marketing tool and is the document that enables your skills and background to be matched to the needs of an employer
- Spend time and effort creating it as it is the key to your future career

### 2. Before you make a start

- Think about what first impression you want to make when someone reads your CV
- Consider how you want to be perceived from your CV
- Remember that your new boss will be reading your CV. What do you want them to think?

### 3. CV styles

- The Reverse Chronological CV suits those who are looking for the next career move in a dedicated career path
- The Functional CV suits those who may wish to veer into a new career or industry and who wish to demonstrate their transferable skills
- The Combination CV is a mix of the two and is the most common and frequently used form of CV

### 4. Creating your CV

- Creating your CV may not be a linear process
- Your CV is your way of communicating your key messages to your audience
- You only get one chance to impress a potential recruiter – make a lasting but positive impression

### 5. Achievements, skills and strengths

- Identify your work achievements and their benefits to demonstrate your value and worth to a new employer
- Take a look at any personal achievements and consider whether these add value to your CV
- When listing your achievements, think about the skills you used to deliver them. These are your transferable skills and can be useful in many industries and job roles
- Think about where your strengths lie. Ask others if they agree to see if they hold the same view as you.

### 6. Creating an opening statement

- The opening statement provides a recruiter with an insight to who you are as a person and what you are able to deliver
- This statement might determine whether a recruiter will read the rest of your CV
- Spend time crafting this statement to ensure that you make the right impression
- Make the statement personable as well as discussing your skills, experience and strengths
- Think about your Unique Selling Points and what makes you stand out from the crowd

## 7. CV - dos and don'ts

Although there are many dos and don'ts associated with creating a CV, What's Next For Me? recommends these top three tips:

- First impressions count – make sure that the layout, format and structure is as professional as the content and there are definitely no spelling mistakes
- Ensure that you have highlighted your achievements and results and what value you can bring to an organisation as well as documenting your career history
- Keep it concise and relevant

## 8. The cover letter

- In some recruitment circumstances the cover letter is as important as the CV
- Ensure that the cover letter is customised to the role you are applying for
- If using a saved template, ensure that you update it for every new application

## 9. Cover letter - dos and don'ts

Although there are many dos and don'ts associated with creating your cover letter, What's Next For Me? recommends these top three tips:

- Customise your letter in relation to the job and company you are applying to
- Keep the letter positive, friendly and enthusiastic
- Make sure that you spell the contact person's name correctly

**My CV – Outcomes and Perceptions Questionnaire**

1. Who is likely to receive a copy of this document and what is going to make them read it?

2. If you were advertising a job that you would apply for, what skills, experience, type of achievement, qualifications and personal attributes would you be looking for?

3. What are the key messages you wish to portray?

4. What is the overall impression you want to create?

5. How might others perceive you from reading your CV?

6. What top three things would put you off inviting someone for interview when reading their CV?

7. Is there anything else that your new boss might want to know before committing to an interview?

8. What makes your CV memorable?

9. Is there a call to action? Does a Recruiter know what you looking for and how to contact you?

**Louise Fuller**

10 March Close, Parkhill,  
Coventry CV34 2JJ

Telephone: 024 75323321 / Mobile: 07832 4448599

Email: [lou.fuller@hotmail.com](mailto:lou.fuller@hotmail.com)

**Career History**

**May 2006 – Present**

**HR Officer - IAC Group Limited** (Automotive Manufacturing, 190 employees with sales turnover of £35 million)

- Reduction of weekly absenteeism from 6% to less than 1%, saving £3500 per month for each percentage saved
- Introduction of motivational tools (suggestion scheme, occupational health, training), reducing employee turnover to less than 1%
- Creation and development of induction programmes which gave new employees an understanding of the plant and products
- Creation of a recruitment and selection policy and procedure which ensures that all roles are advertised to all members of staff, avoiding discrimination or tribunal claims
- Supervisory responsibility for 1 member of staff – Management Support Assistant, who supports the Plant Manager, UK HR Manager and Vice President UK in admin duties, arranging meetings, running HSE BOS charts and booking travel

**Jan 2001 – Apr 2006**

**HR Advisor – Cannons Health & Leisure Group** (2000 employees in 20 facilities with sales turnover of £85 million)

- Advising Leisure Centre Managers on all employee relations issues
- Turnaround on all enquiries handled within 48 hours with no negative impact to business
- Arranging all recruitment activity for each leisure facility with an average fill time of 30 days from posting the advert to sending out the contract
- Trained new HR advisor recruits in processes
- Completed CIPD qualification to ensure quality best HR practice advice was given to the company

**Jun 1998 – Dec 2000**

**HR Administrator – Coventry City Council** (15000 employees and contractors)

- Maintained and improved HR database reducing service turnaround level by 2 days
- Produced statistical monthly reports on absence; disciplinary; grievance; headcount; and recruitment activity
- Completed all contracts within a 5 day turnaround
- Created a new filing system
- Managed all retirement and long service awards
- Managed the car fleet scheme
- Took minutes at meetings such as Union Talks, disciplinaries, grievances
- Assisted with the wage review process
- Dealt with all employee/management enquiries within 48 hours

**Jun – Sept 1997**

**HR Work Experience Placement – PepsiCo**

**Jun – Sept 1996**

**HR Work Experience Placement – Ford Motor Company**

## Education

2007 - Present	MSc Industrial Relations & HR	University of Leicester
2003 - 2006	Graduate CIPD	De Montfort University
1996 - 1999	BA (Hons) Sociology and Law	Coventry University
1993 - 1995	A-Levels (English, Law and Sociology)	Crampion School
1989 - 1993	10 GCSEs Grades A-D	Crampion School

## Training courses

2006	Occupational Testing	SHL Group Ltd
2005	Presentation Skills	Communispond Inc.
2003	Facilitation Skills	Time Management Int
	Annual Law Updates	Local Solicitors
2001	Handling Conflict	CIPD
1998	SAP HR Database Training	SAP

## Personal Details

DOB:	3 <sup>rd</sup> Feb 1978	Driving Licence: Yes - Clean
Marital Status:	Married	Dependents: None
Health:	Good	

## Hobbies

Cinema  
Dragon Boat Racing  
Reading  
Socialising  
Chair of the Marshall Ward charity

## **Louise Fuller**

10 March Close, Parkhill,  
Coventry CV34 2JJ

Telephone: 024 75323321 / Mobile: 07832 4448599

Email: [lou.fuller@hotmail.com](mailto:lou.fuller@hotmail.com)

### **Personal Profile**

An outgoing, professional, dynamic and results focused Human Resources generalist with 9 years experience in manufacturing, leisure industries, and the public sector. A Graduate of the CIPD, currently studying for an MSc in Industrial Relations and HR Management. Specific experience includes disciplinary, grievance, recruitment and selection, absence management, maternity and paternity rights, performance management and TUPE. Builds excellent working relationships with all, can work independently or as part of team, fun and outgoing with real tenacity and pride to do the job well.

### **Significant achievements:**

- Reducing employee turnover (28% to 15%) and absence (9% to 4%) through motivational tools and policy use, saving £X,000.00
- Involvement in tendering processes for training, occupational health services and recruitment services, specifically gaining 5% cost reduction with recruitment provider
- Part of the winning team of the National Dragon Boat Championships in 2007

### **Key Skills:**

#### Resourcing and Talent Management

I am experienced in recruitment and selection and have recruited all levels of manufacturing and leisure industry personnel into appropriate roles. Achievements in this area include:

- Creation of a recruitment and selection policy and procedure which ensured that all roles were advertised to all members of staff, avoiding discrimination or tribunal claims
- Involvement in tendering processes for training, occupational health services and recruitment services, specifically gaining a 5% cost reduction with recruitment provider
- Creation and development of induction programmes which gave new employees an understanding of the plant and products
- Arranging all recruitment activity for each leisure facility with an average fill time of 30 days from posting the advert to sending out the contract
- Preparation and implementation of succession planning process

#### Employee Relations

- Reduced employee turnover (28% to 15%) and absence (9% to 4%), through motivational tools and policy use, saving £X,000.00
- Reduction of weekly absenteeism from 6% to less than 1% saving £3500.00 per month for each percentage saved
- Advising Leisure Centre Managers on all employee relations issues
- Introduction of motivational tools (suggestion scheme, occupational health, training), reducing employee turnover to less than 1%
- Took minutes at meetings such as Union Talks, disciplinaries and grievances
- Managed all retirement and long service awards

## Training

- Designed and delivered Induction training
- Designed and trained all managers and HR staff in recruitment and selection policy and procedures
- Trained all new HR staff in HR policies and processes

## Management Experience

- Supervisory responsibility for 1 member of staff – Management Support Assistant, who supports the Plant Manager, UK HR Manager and Vice President UK in admin duties, arranging meetings, running HSE BOS charts and booking travel
- Trained new HR advisor recruits in processes

## General HR Customer Service/Admin Support

- Turnaround on all enquiries handled within 48 hours with no negative impact to business
- Maintained and improved HR database reducing service turn around levels by 2 days
- Produced statistical monthly reports on absence; disciplinary; grievance; headcount; and recruitment activity
- Completed all contracts within a 5 day turnaround
- Managed car fleet scheme
- Created a new filing system for great efficiency and ease of use

## **Career History:**

<b>HR Officer – IAC Group Limited</b> (Automotive Manufacturing, 190 employees with sales turnover of £35 million)	May 2006 – Present
<b>HR Advisor – Cannons Health &amp; Leisure Group</b> (2000 employees in 20 facilities with sales turnover of £85 million)	Jan 2001 – April 2006
<b>HR Administrator – Coventry City Council</b> (15000 employees and contractors)	June 1998 – Dec 2000
<b>HR Work Experience Placement – PepsiCo</b>	June – September 1997
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## **Education:**

2007 - Present	MSc Industrial Relations & HR	University of Leicester
2003 - 2006	Graduate CIPD	De Montfort University
1996 - 1999	BA (Hons) Sociology and Law	Coventry University
1993 - 1995	3 A-Levels (English, Law and Sociology)	Crampion School
1989 - 1993	10 GCSEs Grades A-D	Crampion School

## **Training Courses:**

2006	Occupational Testing	SHL Group Ltd
2005	Presentation Skills	Communispond Inc.
2003	Facilitation Skills	Time Management Int
2001	Handling Conflict	CIPD
1998	SAP HR Database Training	SAP
Annual	Law Updates	Local Solicitors

## Personal Details:

DOB: 3<sup>rd</sup> Feb 1978  
Marital Status: Married  
Health: Good

Driving Licence: Yes - Clean  
Dependents: None

## Hobbies:

Cinema  
Dragon Boat Racing  
Reading  
Socialising  
Chair of the Marshall Ward charity

## **Louise Fuller**

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- Created a new filing system
- Managed all retirement and long service awards
- Managed the car fleet scheme
- Took minutes at meetings such as Union Talks, disciplinaries, grievances
- Assisted with the wage review process
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DOB:	3 <sup>rd</sup> Feb 1978	Driving Licence: Yes - Clean
Marital Status:	Married	Dependents: None
Health:	Good	

## Hobbies

Cinema  
Dragon Boat Racing  
Reading  
Socialising  
Chair of the Marshall Ward charity

## CV Template

[Enter Full Name]

[Address]

[Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ / Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_]

[Email: \_\_\_\_\_]

[Enter your opening statement outlining how you see yourself and your particular strengths and what you feel you have to offer. You might want to indicate your profession and the number of year's experience you have held in a certain profession or industry. You may also want to include your highest academic qualification and key achievements]

### Opening Statement:

### Career History:

[Enter your career history. Work in reverse chronological order - start with your current employer and work backwards]

### Career History:

[Enter start date and end date]

[Enter your Job Title and Company Name]

[Give a brief description of what the Company does]

[Document your responsibilities and achievements in the role and what benefits and value these added to the Company. If you are able to demonstrate tangible benefits, ensure you do so]

# what's next for me?

Appendix 5

A large empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for writing or drawing. A faint watermark of the text "what's next for me?" is visible diagonally across the box.

**Education:**

[Enter details of your education and qualifications. Again Work in reverse chronological order - start with your most recent qualification and work backwards]

Education & Qualifications		
[Date]	[Qualification]	[Educational Establishment]

**Training courses:**

[Enter details of any appropriate training courses you have attended and which you believe are of relevance]

Training Courses:		
[Date]	[Training Course]	[Training Establishment]

**Personal Details:**

[Choose whether you wish to add in any other personal information about yourself, such as Date of Birth, Marital Status, whether you have a driving licence and if so at what level]. Remember these details are purely optional unless of course something is job specific, i.e. you are applying for a position as a Driver and it is essential to know about your driving history.

Personal Details:

**Interests**

[Choose whether you wish to list any of your personal interests] Again this is optional.

[Enter Interests/hobbies]

Interests:

## Guide to Personal Branding

### Brands and brand values

If a friend asked you to help them sell a car you would probably have a rough idea how to go about it and know what questions to ask before you got started. What make and model is it and what colour is it for instance. You would also have some ideas where to advertise it: eBay, classified websites even your local Supermarket.

Every element is important to making the most money and selling it quickly but the key ingredient is what make or brand the car is. If it is a rare Ferrari it is clearly worth more and easier to sell than a rusty Fiat. Brand is the first thing that makes a difference and dictates how best to market the car and where to sell it. It's unlikely your best option for the Ferrari would be a sign in the windscreen outside your house.

The concept of branding was first used in the early 1900s to describe a distinctive series of product and corporate attributes and was taken from the brands that cowboys used to mark their cattle. We are now bombarded by brand advertising every day. We build up our own catalogue of brands we like and don't like based upon personal knowledge, recommendation and quite often even uninformed prejudice. Even an advertising jingle is enough to create a positive or negative view of a brand.

We also use brands to say something about us. Nike or Reebok? Waitrose or Asda? iPhone or BlackBerry? These may be informed choices based on product preference or price but they also tell other people a little something about us as we run past, lift shopping out of the car or make a call.

### So how am I a brand?

After your success helping your friend sell their car imagine that David Beckham has called you and asked you to use your skills to help him work on Brand Beckham. Athlete, sports ambassador, Pop Star's husband, fashion icon, you could definitely list some attributes that would help to sell his brand. Toned physique; how about Armani Underwear? Strong jaw-line; what about Gillette? Married to another fashion icon; let's do a unisex perfume.

Now what if you were a brand? Well, the big news is you already are. You are Brand You and as you're the boss it's time to take stock of how well your brand has been performing. It's also important to develop a marketing plan to ensure that the right people know what you stand for and what Brand You can offer them.

While you're at it, you need to make some plans about what you're going to do to make the most of what you have. It is also not just about creating a great brand image with a well-presented CV, nice suit and strong handshake because people quickly see through anything that isn't authentic. It's about projecting the best version of Brand You. Being honest this is not something that's an option anymore because, like every corporate brand, you have competitors and they are already actively managing their own brands and going after the same roles you are. So let's get on.

You have already thought about Brand Beckham and what makes this brand so special and profitably marketable. You need to do the same exercise yourself.

### Defining Brand You

Start with a blank piece of paper and write down your own attributes and what makes you different. These are your Unique Selling Points or USPs. This is also covered in the Your CV Section, under creating an opening statement.

Once you have written down all of the things that make you marketable and unique, write a short statement about your brand, no more than 20 words. That's about half the length of this paragraph!

You can also condense it further if you want to into a marketing tagline such as BMW's "The ultimate driving machine" or Nike's: "Just Do It" but that's a lot harder and can take years for even the best brands to get right.

Now you have a powerful defining statement you need to think about other perspectives and the foundation of your brand. There are two crucial elements: what motivates you and your values. These are the things that are essential drivers of what you do and how you do it.

## **Market research and getting feedback**

Once you have reviewed your motivators and brand values it is really useful to see what other people think about you too. This will enable you to compare your attributes and motivators with those that other people think you have.

What if your colleagues take your good humour as a lack of seriousness or dedication? You may well have some serious thinking to do about Brand You if you thought this was one of your USPs.

You may have received 360-degree feedback in an appraisal where your colleagues have told you how they feel about your performance and how you are to work with. Whether you are still within an organisation or looking for a new role you can draw upon your network to ask them for an honest view of you. This is what commercial brands do. They ask consumers about their products and their brand and review whether buyers reflect back the values they have tried hard to demonstrate.

You want to know whether your unique characteristics and the things you feel have contributed to your success are reflected in the way that your friends and colleagues perceive Brand You. Even asking for feedback is a way of influencing your Brand perception. Remember you are the boss of Brand You and only you can change or reinforce what people say and feel about you. Word of mouth and personal recommendation remain crucial influencers of how individuals are perceived.

There are lots of things you can do to influence and support your brand and they are important to build into planning how you are perceived.

## **Take control**

Draw up a check-list of the elements that can influence how you sell yourself and see whether you really are in control of them all. Your CV for instance is your “door-opener” to a new employer and the brochure that markets Brand You. Is it as good as it could be? Have you had feedback on it from someone you trust? Have you compared it to your Brand statement to see whether your CV does the best job it can to sell you? Does the e-mail address that amuses your friends say what you want it to, to someone whose positive response on an interview you are eagerly awaiting?

## **Be consistent**

Brands you buy repeatedly are brands you trust. People buy a Starbucks coffee because they like the way it tastes and it is guaranteed to taste that way every time. Consistency is crucial and Brand You has to be consistent too. If your network were asked about you would they all reflect the same views about you?

## **First impressions count – wherever they are made**

You always want to make a good impression in a new work team, with a new client and most importantly at an interview. There are numerous tips about your personal appearance and confidence in these environments that help to create a positive first and lasting impression.

But these are not the only place that people come into contact with Brand You for the first time. You must be in control of all aspects of your brand communications.

You may want to rant on Twitter about your neighbour's hedge or your football team's performance or post party pictures on Facebook but remember that employers are looking at the complete picture of Brand You and your digital presence is what they will find before they meet you.

If you are on a professional networking service like LinkedIn (and if you aren't why not?) do your CV and profile match? Do the people that you have recommended, those that have recommended you and the groups you belong to give a consistent first impression for a potential employer?

## **Be visible, take part and remain an expert**

Very few brands are successful in the shadows, pushed to the back of the shelves or available to only a select few consumers. Those brands that are cool by being "under the radar" use this as a brand USP but this rarely works for personal brands, especially those looking for career change and new challenges. You need to be visible and to be active.

In the same way that the windscreen advert rarely sells a car, a CV on a jobsite is never as effective as a personal contact or recommendation. Are you actively involved in new projects or work-related forums making the most of your expertise and keeping your skills on show? Is there more that you could be doing to increase your network and develop more people as advocates of Brand You?

People, even within your network, have surprisingly short memories so it is important to make sure you are being kept in mind. Being remembered for the part you played in a project or team is as important during your job search as it was within a business. This is not just about being active and engaged during your career transition it is about making sure that other people know you are too. And remember that supporting other people and demonstrating that you are part of their network is also a good way to stay in people's minds. An unsolicited recommendation of a colleague often says as much about you as it does about them.

Carefully managing how your social network presence is perceived is as important as a business managing its brand image in the national press.

## **Look for the best current outcome for your brand**

Brands that have continued long-term success and have become synonyms for whole product segments: Hoover, Coke and Jeep for instance have planned their brand strategy for the long-term but delivered their business results one day at a time. In other words they have looked for the business outcome that both supports their immediate business needs and their long-term brand development ambitions.

Being involved in a short-term project or supporting an old friend or colleague by offering your expertise may not ultimately be where you see yourself but it is an opportunity to keep your skills current and reinforce the essence of Brand You to everyone you meet as a result. More importantly many new roles are only the starting point for a business to find out about you and develop you and your role as your brand becomes interwoven with their own.

## **And finally...**

Remember, you are a brand and you are in charge of how it is perceived and who knows about it. You must consistently live up to the brand that you have created. People need to know about Brand You and employers need to wonder how they have managed to be successful without you. You are the boss. Act like one. Make decisions based on what is best for your brand, deliver them and reap the rewards.

### List of Achievements Template

One of the most positive approaches to self appraisal is to make a list of achievements in your last post and in earlier positions. The effort is well worthwhile because this can be used to write a good CV and identify your transferable skills. Below is a blank template to list your own career achievements, skills and benefits.

Achievement	Skill Used	Benefit to Organisation

**My Top Three Achievements**

Fill in the details below to help you get the wording correct for your CV. In addition, interviewers often ask what you believe are your top three achievements during your career or last job, so this is a good exercise to complete to aid your response.

My top 3 greatest achievements to date have been:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Benefits to the Organisation were:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

## Creating your Unique Selling Points Questionnaire

When writing your CV and in particular composing your opening statement, it is important to include aspects that will make you stand out from the crowd and make you memorable. Complete the questionnaire to help you create your Unique Selling Points to use on your CV.

Do you have specialist skills? If so, list them here:

---

What specific experience are you able to bring that others may not possess?

---

When have you felt most proud at work? What did you do or what happened to trigger these feelings?

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Have you ever been rewarded for something at work? If so what?

What aspects of your job do you really enjoy and feel satisfied by?

What tasks at work do you volunteer to do or get selected to do because you are good at them?

What have you been praised for at work or in your personal life?

What energises you at work?

When leaving a job, what do you think your boss or colleagues would say that they will miss most about you?

## Opening Statement Template

Outlined below is Louise Fuller's opening statement. You may recognise it from example CVs already provided.

### Personal Profile

An outgoing, professional, dynamic and results focused Human Resources generalist with 9 years experience in manufacturing, leisure industries, and the public sector. A Graduate of the CIPD, currently studying for an MSc in Industrial Relations and HR Management.

Specific experience includes disciplinary, grievance, recruitment and selection, absence management, maternity and paternity rights, performance management and TUPE. Builds excellent working relationships with all, can work independently or as part of team, fun and outgoing with real tenacity and pride to do the job well.

### Significant Achievements:

- Reducing employee turnover (28% to 15%) and absence (9% to 4%), through motivational tools and policy use, saving £X,000.00.
- Involvement in tendering processes for training, occupational health services and recruitment services, specifically gaining a 5% cost reduction with recruitment provider.
- Part of the winning team of the National Dragon Boat Championships in 2007.

Create a short opening statement for your CV, a short paragraph that clearly conveys your unique selling point and your advantages over others, e.g. your profession, breadth and depth of experience; specialised knowledge/skill, excellent performance, qualifications and personal characteristics. The aim of the statement is to encourage the employer/recruiter to read on into your CV.

### Your Opening Statement:

## EXAMPLE COVERING LETTER

10 March Close  
Parkhill  
Coventry  
CV34 2JJ  
Tel: 024 75323321  
Mobile: 07832 4448599  
Email: [lou.fuller@hotmail.com](mailto:lou.fuller@hotmail.com)

Strictly Private & Confidential

(Insert Date)

Mr J Parker – Lead Consultant  
Johnson, Mitchell and Hurst Recruitment Specialists  
(Insert full address)

Dear Mr Parker

**Re: Human Resources Manager – Ion Ltd – Ref: 231JP**

Please find attached my CV for your consideration for the above vacancy. As you will see from my details, I have 9 year's generalist experience in Human Resources, (Grad, CIPD), in the automotive and leisure industries as well as in the public sector.

I note from the advert, you are looking for an individual who wants to progress to the next career level and I am keen to do this. As per your requirements, I have extensive employee relations experience up to and including tribunal level within a unionised environment. I also have three year's experience of managing an administrative assistant within the business who I have developed within the HR field and who has now commenced her professional CIPD qualification. I am keen to build on my people management skills in my next role.

During my tenure with my current employer I have been able to reduce employee turnover (28% to 15%) and absence rates (9% to 4%) through the use of motivational tools, learning interventions and policy, saving £X,000.00 for the business. This is just one of the achievements I've made since working for IAC and I am sure my pro-active, results-driven approach can assist Ion with their business requirements.

I look forward to hearing from you shortly to discuss the vacancy further.

Yours sincerely,

Louise Fuller (Mrs)

**JOHN R MARKHAM**

10 Warrington Avenue, Solihull, Birmingham, West Midlands B5 6TT  
Telephone: 07876 247654 Email: johnm22@gmail.com

**A professional, tenacious, results driven Operations Manager, (MSc Plastics Technology & Engineering), with over 20 years experience in engineering, programme management and manufacturing within the automotive industry. Wide exposure to the majority of the existing OEMs experienced in their working practices and procedures.**

**Highly motivated, driven leader with high standards both professionally and personally who builds his teams in line with these parameters. Utilisation of key data to drive decisions and actions to deliver all business objectives and projects. Specific skills in implementation and management of Lean processes into businesses; global restructuring; sustaining business during economic downturn; acquisitions and transfer of distressed companies; and development of programme management systems and procedures.**

**Significant achievements:**

- Business growth of £10m from 2007 to 2009.
- Gold award for Best Managed Restructure in 2005 – Redditch to Germany, India and Poland.
- Gold Award for Best Programme Launch in India
- Design, development and roll out of the global programme management system.

**Career History:**

**2006 - present**

**Plant Manager – Birmingham, TIC Group**

Global Automotive Supplier. Responsible for the Birmingham Site employing 250 people (direct reports: 8).

**Additional responsibilities** for strategic manufacturing planning in the UK and forward capacity planning across 5 plants defining future capital expenditure, facilities and logistics planning (potential business worth of £150m turnover per annum).

- Management of automotive JIT sequencing plant (interior trim) with 100% delivery on time in full over 3 years.
- Full P&L responsibility for £30m turnover (returning 12% EBITDA)
- Growth of business by £10m in 2 years (turnover projected for 2009 £40m).
- Introduction of Lean Manufacturing into plant:
  - Organised Kaizen colleges and 6-Sigma training and development plans
  - Launched Product Focus Teams to roll out Kaizen activities in plant
  - Improved quality of plant to 12 PPM average
  - Launched single source data communication (BOS chart based)
  - Headcount and materials reductions
  - Trained shop floor in Lean principles and carried out Waste WalksResulting in yearly efficiency savings of £1.2 million, scrap reduction to 1.5% for the plant and Winner of Most Improved Supplier Award.
- Effective recession leadership by:
  - Retained skilled workers through downturn by reallocation of jobs.
  - Reductions in number of shifts and working hours.
  - Union negotiations to gain agreement to move forward with process.
  - Regular all employee briefings to explain the situation, status and process.
- Average absenteeism rate of 2%.
- Development of People:
  - 4 Team Leaders promoted to Shift Managers.
  - 3 of management team developed into IAC Group positions.
  - Personal development of staff e.g. introduction of apprentice scheme; NVQs, Admin staff to HR, Shop floor to Logistics and Administration roles. Identified key people to become in house experts/T-T-T.

- Introduction of Incentive and Suggestion Financial Reward Schemes.

## **2001 – 2006 Various Roles – RMV Global Automotive Supplier**

### **2005 – 2006**

#### **Site Manager – Birmingham**

Responsible for the Birmingham Site employing 60 people, (direct reports: 4)

- Closure of production facility and redevelopment of site into a European Engineering Technical Centre (£18m budget).
- Development of new P&L structure.
- Extensive union negotiations prior to and during transformation.
- 180 redundancies.
- 50 employees retained and utilised in the transfer of production from the UK.
- 8 serial production lines transferred to sites in Europe and India with no disruption to customers.
- Management of customer relations during the transfer process.
- Management of quality, PSW/PPAP sign-off of all 8 production lines.
- Management of after-market production and subsequent transfer to Poland creating a Central After-Market Unit for Europe.
- Set up change management procedures for multiple production sites.
- Gold Award for the Best Managed Restructure.

### **2001 – 2005**

#### **Global Programme Manager – Birmingham/Germany**

Responsible for the management and director of design, development, test and manufacturing of the global ignition system. First multiple programme for all Ford brands, e.g. Volvo, Jaguar, Mazda, Aston Martin etc. Generated €40m sales per annum.

- Delivered programme to customer's time, cost and quality requirements.
- Management and co-ordination of launch at 3 customer sites (Europe & Japan) and internal production sites (Europe & China).
- Management of cost tracking of programme.
- Management of cost down activities e.g. takt time reductions and rationalization of design.
- Management of sub-supplier quality, change introduction, costs and deliveries.
- Supplier development and selection to enhance efficiency and to ensure robustness of their production processes.
- Gold Award for the Best Programme Launch in India.

## **1998 – 2001 Various Roles – ITC Automotive Global Automotive Supplier**

### **1999 – 2001**

#### **Programme Manager – Porsche Roof system – Cologne, Germany**

Responsible for the management and direction of design, development, test and manufacturing of the Porsche Roof system.

- Delivered programme to customer's time, cost and quality requirements.
- Assigned to programme to resolve customer dissatisfaction and regain confidence.
- Introduction of robust design and manufacturing process for all roof system variations to optimize product performance and reliability.
- Reversed negative programme margins by management of design changes (+15% PBIT).
- Implementation and roll out of global programme management system across Germany.
- Resourcing of components to low cost countries (Eastern Europe and Asia).
- Supplier development and selection to enhance efficiency and to ensure robustness of their production processes.

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**1989 – 1999**

**Engineering Manager – Peterborough Plant**

Responsible for the design, development and test of anti-vibration component and systems (Team: 12).

- Design, development and roll out of the global programme management system.

**1995 – 1998**

**Engineering Manager – Peterborough/Glamorgan Plants, Fanwire Polymer Engineering**

Responsible for the design and introduction of new and modified products/programmes (Peterborough Team: 8/Glamorgan Team: 20)

- Closure of 3 engineering departments at separate factories
- Recruitment and training of new Engineering team at Greenfield site at Glamorgan, Wales.
- Purchase and implementation of Catia and IDEAS CAD systems to enhance engineering capability.

**1993 – 1995**

**Senior Engineer – Gloucester Plant, IKO Seals**

- Development of flashless/wasteless production techniques and machinery.

**1988 – 1993**

**Design and Production Engineering Manager - Croydon Plant, Cow Industrial Polymers**

Responsible for the design and introduction of new and modified products and programmes (Team: 5).

- Introduction and development of CAD system.
- Introduction of in house design development capability.

**1984 – 1988**

**Toolmaking Apprenticeship – Tunbridge Wells Factory, S H Muffetts**

- Design and manufacture of jigs, fixtures and tools.

**Education:**

1996	MSc in Plastics Technology & Engineering	Manchester Metropolitan University
1988	HNC – Mechanical & Production Engineering	West Kent College of FE
1986	ONC – Mechanical Engineering	West Kent College of FE
1984	3 City & Guilds & 1 O Level	West Kent College of FE
1984	5 O Levels	Cannock House School

**Training:**

2004	Diversity Training (in-house)	RMV
2002	Lean Manufacturing (White Shirt) Training	RMV
1999	Management Appraisal Training (in-house)	ITC Automotive
1998	Global Programme Management Training	ITC Automotive
1995	Catia and IDEAS CAD Training	ICE

**Personal Details:**

Driving Licence: Yes (Clean)

Marital Status: Married

Health: Good

Dependents: Two

**Interests:** Cooking, reading, walking, running, rugby spectator and travel.

## **Joe P Lewis**

10 Tewksbury Way, Diss  
Norfolk NR22 1TT

Telephone: 01953 323211 / Mobile: 07818 9123322

Email: joeplewis10@btinternet.com

### **Personal Profile:**

I'm an outgoing, enthusiastic and hardworking person who has recently graduated with a 2:1 degree in Marketing and Media Studies. I have four years of work experience in the retail sports industry including skills in customer service, sales, promotional campaigns, stock control, finance reconciliation and thorough product knowledge in all brands. I work well in a team but can be left to work alone and also deputise for the store manager when required.

### **Significant achievements:**

- Won the Titan Award for creating/producing the Best Film in Year 3 of University
- Developed promotional campaign for new sports clothing range generating £5K of sales within the first three months of introduction
- Have been Employee of the Month at least four times per year, maximum eight times in 2010
- Part of the winning team of the 5-aside Norfolk 2009 Tournament

### **Career History:**

#### **Sept 2008 – Present**

**Part-Time Sales Assistant – JJB Sports** (Multi-million pound sport shop retail chain across the UK)

- 90% of customer interactions have led to purchase
- Generation of promotional campaign for the Adidas Envogue brand including, sales pitch for all assistants in store, development of additional promotional literature, front window display, photography of employees wearing new range and advertising around the store resulting in £5K of sales within the first three months of introduction
- Deputise for store manager as required handling all aspects of customer liaison and management of staff
- Till reconciliation and analysis ensuring end of days takings reflect items sold
- Stock control analysis/monitoring to ensure all trainers are available
- Handling all types of customers and situations e.g. sales, complaints, shop lifting, returns etc.
- Read up on new product introductions to ensure fully informed when advising customers

## Education/Training Courses:

2008-2010	Bachelor of Arts 2:1 Marketing & Media Studies	University of East Anglia
2008	Induction Training - Customer Service Training - Till Operation - Stock Control	JJB Sports
2006-2008	3 A Levels - English (B) - Computing (B) - History (C)	Attleborough College
2001-2006	8 GCSEs - English (A) - Computing (A) - Art (B) - History (C) - Biology (C) - French (C) - Religious Studies (C) - Mathematics (D)	Winterton's School

## Personal Details:

DOB:	21 <sup>st</sup> November 1988	Driving Licence: Yes - Clean
Marital Status:	Single	Dependents: None
Health:	Good	

## Hobbies:

Football  
Karting  
Gaming  
Socialising with friends and family

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- Have been Employee of the Month at least four times per year, maximum eight times in 2010
- Part of the winning team of the 5-aside Norfolk 2009 Tournament

### Key Skills:

#### Sales:

- 90% of customer interactions have led to purchase of goods
- £5K of sales within the first three months of launch of the Adidas Envogue brand

#### Marketing:

- Generation of promotional campaign for the Adidas Envogue brand including, sales pitch for all assistants in store, development of additional promotional literature, front window display, photography of employees wearing new range and advertising around the store

#### Customer Service:

- Handling of all types of customers and situations e.g. sales, complaints, shop lifting, returns, etc.

#### Interpersonal Skills:

- Ability to work well within a team
- Deal with all types of diverse customers
- Handle difficult situations such as shop lifting and angry customers effectively
- Reliable and able to work on own unsupervised and have won Employee of the Month several times

## Creativity:

- Designed and produced "Holt Park" and won the Titan award for Best Film in Year 3 of University
- Developed additional promotional campaign materials for the store to sell the new Adidas Envogue brand including design of the hand out literature, sales pitch, photographing the staff in the new range and setting up the front window display

## Management Experience:

- Deputise for store manager as required handling all aspects of customer liaison and management of staff
- Trained all staff in sales pitch and product information for the Adidas Envogue launch
- Trained new staff joining the store

## Finance/Logistics:

- Till reconciliation and analysis ensuring end of day takings reflect items sold
- Stock control analysis/monitoring to ensure all trainers are available
- Read up on new product introductions to ensure fully informed when advising customers

## **Career History:**

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