

YOUR CV: HOW TO DEAL WITH THE BIG GAP CAUSED BY YOUR CAREER BREAK

The traditional format for a CV lists your job history in date order (newest at the top) and provides your key responsibilities and achievements for each role.

But what if you've recently had a long career break? The big hole in your CV is a potential disaster area!

The solution is to switch to a different CV format, called a 'functional CV'. This alternative approach puts the spotlight on your skills and experience first, *before* getting to your employment history. It gives you a much better chance of gaining the recruiter's interest.

Template for a functional cv

YOUR NAME

Your telephone/ email / address

Personal profile

*Your attention grabber – should be the top 4 or 5 things about you that are **most relevant** to the job you're applying for. Avoid general statements about personal qualities e.g. 'good team player', as these look bland.*

Key skills and achievements

First skill

Second skill

Third skill

These should all be relevant to the skills in the job advert. E.g. organisational skills, communication and influencing skills, creative skills. Show 2 or 3 examples of when you've demonstrated a high standard of these skills. Include specific evidence of key achievements (see the example on the next page)

Career summary

Name of company

Job Title

Dates

Name of company

Job title

Dates (month/year to month/year)

List most recent first with brief description of responsibilities.

Education

Name of school, college or university

Qualifications achieved

Dates

Place in order of importance. You don't need to include everything, just those relevant to the post applied for.

Optional

Training and professional development

Course taken, course provider

Dates

Interests

References available on request

Always check your spelling!

It's so easy to slip up on this – and lack of attention could put your CV straight into the 'no' pile. Read it carefully several times – don't just rely on spell-checker. Better still, ask a friend to double-check it for you.



Example of a functional cv

Neepa Smith

Tel: 020 7654 321 Mobile: 07748 123 456

Email: neepa.smith@broadband.com

Skilled communicator with 12 years' experience of dealing with customers and colleagues in busy, commercial companies. Specific experience of estate agency and lettings. Strong background in administration and organization, including managing systems and excellent time-keeping. Now developing career in estate agency and client management.

Key skills & achievements

Customer handling

- Liaised with potential buyers, tenants, vendors and landlords on a daily basis during 2 years' experience in a lettings agency, successfully ensuring that accurate and timely information was shared.
- Increased number of potential buyers and tenants on lettings agency database by 10%, by ensuring that all enquiries were logged.
- Communicated with a wide range of customers and suppliers to ensure the accurate supply of services for a business with turnover of £10m pa.

Knowledge of estate agency business

- Two years' experience of working in a busy, expanding lettings agency, acquiring knowledge of all aspects of the business including legal considerations.
- Established an efficient filing system for all property records, including setting up a diary system to ensure that tenancy agreements due for renewal were not overlooked.

Budget management

- Managed annual budget of £10,000 for office supplies and ensured zero overspend.
- Organised 2007 summer fair for local school which raised £7,500. Managed all budgets and record keeping for this successful event.

People management

- Promoted to manage one member of staff, including daily prioritisation and handling of tasks and annual appraisals.

Career summary

Co-ordinator for local youth group May 2015 to present
Co-ordinated youth group for 13-15 year olds during career break to raise children.

Morgan Commercial - Office Administrator Sept 2011 to April 2015
Managed all office administration for the central team of 25 staff at this expanding logistics company with turnover of £10 million pa.

ABC Lettings Ltd - Team Secretary April 2006 to Sept 2011
Organised all record keeping for 5 team members and produced written communications for tenants and landlords, ensuring accuracy at all times.

Range of Secretarial and Administrative Roles Sept 2004 to April 2006
Successfully completed temporary assignments as a secretary and administrator for businesses including banks and property management companies. Was often asked back for further assignments by companies for whom I had worked.

Education

University of the West of England 2001-2004
BA Hons degree in English Literature. Grade 2:2

Archway High School 1994-2001
3 'A' Levels (English, History and Geography)
7 GCSE's (Including Maths and English)

Training and Professional Development

First Aid Training (provided by St John's Ambulance) 2009
Advanced Microsoft PowerPoint Skills (provided by IT Skills Ltd) 2004

Interests

Triathlon. Recently took part in a charity event, raising £2,500 for Cancer Research.

References available on request