

Sales Techniques

Optimising your CV for a Career in Sales



Selling Your Abilities

If selling is what you do, this needs to come out of your CV. If you don't sell yourself, who else will? If you can't sell yourself, what can you sell?



WHY THIS GUIDE?

While the general tips that apply to all CVs, such as avoiding errors and staying on topic, are obviously still relevant, an effective sales CV must include unique features that companies and recruiters are looking for. Without these crucial details, an application will fall short.

To get the job, you have to secure an interview first and it is typically your CV that will do this for you. Read this guide to find out what you can do to make sure your CV gets noticed, read and remembered.

WHAT TO INCLUDE

Essential Information

CREATING YOUR CONTENT

Think about moving away from traditional CV formats to place what's most important in prime place. Focus on what attributes and experiences are truly vital to sales and look to display these as early in your CV as possible. Look to display your results, your character and your determination to succeed in a sales career.

These can include anything from individual awards and industry sales rankings to examples of growth or major accounts brokered. Your personal triumphs should be used and employers will want to see them, particularly in the case of awards.

→ “ If your CV runs across many sides of A4 and demands deep analysis, it is unlikely to get the attention of a recruiting sales manner. The overall length of a CV should be no more than 2 sides of A4 for a typical sales role. ”

→ “ Being to the point and relevant throughout a CV is more important that disclosing every minor detail. There are several things, such as interest sections and long introductions that can safely be cut from a CV. ”

Employers will often consider success stories as more relevant than your education or employment history, so give your best results the priority they deserve and place them towards the beginning of your CV.

Previous job descriptions should be tailored to include specific examples of responsibility and success. Include relevant qualifications or training courses completed outside of formal education.

At entry level, there may be a need to prioritise education over work, but this still needs to include examples of relevant skills and accomplishments. Did you manage a society or do particularly well in presentation modules? Make sure your CV showcases your best features and experience by looking at the structure.

→ “ Verbs and facts should be preferred to adverbs and anecdotes. Let what you’ve done take precedence over how you’ve done it, the latter can be explained in person. ”

Reconsider your intro and distil it down to the basic, essential details. Let your performance and results do the talking, not a brief autobiography. Answer the key questions about what you have sold, who you have sold to and always focus on your performance. This is similar to the mainstay sales principle that talking too much and not selling is wasted time. If a Sales Manager likes what they see or not, details about your personal history are unlikely to affect this.

When piecing together your CV it is important to consider your audience.



Numbers, facts and figures – measurable representations of growth, success and performance – speak to Sales Managers. Include percentages surrounding your target performance and resulting revenue and maintain a considered use of buzz words. Recruiting businesses want to see experience of cold calling and closing deals, so give them what they want rather than vague alternatives.

→ “ If you opt to include an interests section ensure it contains information that either makes you stand out or is relevant to the position you’re applying for. Only include this if it adds value. ”

Conclusion...



How you present yourself to your employers is important and more often than not they will see your CV before they have even spoken to you. Sales managers won't judge a person solely from their application but will use a CV as the initial vetting process. With that in mind, strengths will only pique interest and need reaffirming in an interview, but unexplained weaknesses and errors are often fatal to an application. Hampering yourself before getting an interview is best avoided.

When applying for a sales job, make sure your CV is tailored to the position by:

- Emphasising awards and personal triumphs
- Presenting evidence for any listed performance highlights
- Only including worthwhile, value adding details
- Keeping it short and easily digestible

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