Preparing for success.

A quick guide to preparing your CV.

WESTPAC GROUP

1.

WHAT IS A CV, AND WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT?

Your CV (Curriculum Vitae) is your foremost marketing tool in your job search.

It outlines your skills and experience and helps Hiring Managers and Recruiters understand how you can contribute to the customers and the team. Investing time in developing an effective CV is crucial to securing that coveted interview.

At Westpac we see the CV as a key document in your application as it helps different stakeholders to understand your background and offers you an opportunity to tell your career story. This guide has been created to help you put together a professional CV that conveys your motivations, capabilities and achievements.

2.

PREPARING A DRAFT

Writing a CV can put us on the spot – reflecting on ourselves and our achievements whilst distilling months, perhaps years, of hard work into a few sentences can be tough. Getting started is almost the hardest part. What am I going to write? How am I going to write it? To help you we have outlined our top tips to get over the any writer's block.

Just hammer it out and refine afterwards.

– Instead of getting stuck on technicalities, wording, details and exact dates – simply start writing out your career history, responsibilities and achievements. Don't put too much thought into it, build out a list, and once you have a broad outline you can select and refine the most relevant examples.

Use a friend, partner or colleague.

– Grab a coffee, bring a laptop and get your friend typing. Talk about your most recent jobs, let them ask you questions about what you do for work, how you get it done, what's difficult, what's easy, what's value adding, and what are you proud of.

Cheat-sheet – simple shortcuts that work.

– Know someone who just got a new job? Ask them for a copy of their CV.

– Download your LinkedIn profile and rewrite it into a CV.

– Online CV writing – search for 'CV builder' or 'Resume builder' – there are some great tools available.

– Use AI tools like Copilot to help draft or improve your CV.

Try prompts like: "Rewrite this section to sound more achievement-focused," or "Help me summarise my experience for a customer service job."

Refer to the section *Tailor Your CV and Utilise the Power of AI* for more prompts.

3.

CREATING A STRUCTURE AND ORGANISING YOUR INFORMATION

The key principles to creating an effective CV are:

– Easy to navigate and read – make sure it's well structured with plenty of white space.

– Clear, concise and succinct – relevance and brevity trumps too much detail.

– Offer context whilst highlighting your contributions and make every line count.

4.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

What to Include.

Make sure your name and contact details are clearly visible at the top of the first page.

– Name, phone number, email address, location, LinkedIn profile, video chat account - make sure it's an inbox/phone number you regularly check.

What to Exclude.

As an inclusive company that supports diversity, we don't believe that any of the following personal details impact your ability to do a great job, so there's no need to include;

– Date of birth, gender, marital status, children, religion, illnesses, disabilities, memberships of political organisations, your photo, reasons for leaving jobs and salary expectations.

5.

INCLUDING SUMMARIES

Summaries can be a great way to highlight the things you want to express, but can't convey in other parts of your CV.

Here are some examples of areas you may wish to summarise, but we suggest only using one summary in your CV.

– Summarising your experience and professional achievements can be powerful – just make sure the content is tailored to the role you're applying for.

– Articulating your career objective is useful if transitioning from a different environment - highlight transferable skills and aptitudes, and outline how you'd use these to problem solve.

– A personal summary can be a good way of highlighting your interests and personality. If you feel this is the right option for you, make sure it's tailored to the role and adds value.

6.

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Your employment history should be outlined in chronological order, starting with your most recent role, working back in time. Make sure to keep it clear and easy to read – include:

– Company name, role title(s), time period
– A brief role-summary can be helpful - 'in this role I was responsible for ensuring customer satisfaction by...'
– If you've been promoted within the same company, consider listing each role as a separate sub-entry to clearly show progression.
– Focus on outlining achievements instead of responsibilities (if you've just started out this can be a bit tricky, feel free to refer to your responsibilities)
– When outlining your achievements, highlight how you have contributed, and where possible quantify your achievements.
  – Say: 'Delivered project outcomes 1 month ahead of schedule, and at 80% of allocated budget as a result of thorough project planning'
  – Don't say: 'Met project deadlines'
– Academic achievements and education – this is best suited towards the end of your CV
– Life achievements like sporting, community, charitable work are great to highlight – but best placed toward the end of your CV
– Hobbies and personal interests – unless highly relevant for the role make sure to keep at the end of your CV

7.

QUESTIONS/ FAQ?

Q: How long should my CV be?

A: A CV can be 3-4 pages long depending on your level of experience, shorten it by clustering similar roles, or early career experience into an abbreviated summary.

Q: How many years of career history should I include/list?

A: Depending on your level of experience this will vary – however if you have been in the workforce for a longer period, the last 10 years will be more than plenty.

Q: I've been contracting a lot and have had many different jobs and employers – what do I do?

A: If your contracting engagements have been of a similar nature, distil into a summary and outline your various contracts/employers.

Q: What's the difference between a CV and a Resume?

A: The major difference is length - a Résumé is a shortened, high level summary of a Curriculum Vitae (CV), it's typically no longer than one page, a CV can comfortably stretch over 3-4 pages. The two terms have become interchangeable in Australia – but it is nonetheless a CV that is the commonly used format here.

Q: Do I need a Cover Letter?

A: It depends. Some Hiring Managers still request one. A concise, tailored Cover Letter can high-light your fit and interest and reinforce your alignment with the role, especially if you're chang-ing career direction or have a unique story.

8.

MEMORY JOGGING

Your old Position Descriptions; you saved them for a reason – this is it!

Your inbox; our lives are busy, our memories short - browse your inbox folders to recall all the amazing work you've done. Look through notes, emails and development conversation material.

9.

AVOID OVER-DESIGNING YOUR CV

Whilst there certainly is a place for great visual and creative communications, your CV isn't necessarily the one.

This is because of accessibility, and the way application systems tend to reproduce your CV in 'text only' version. This means that your beautifully designed document may become illegible. If you want to display other skills like programming, development, visual storytelling or general creative flair we suggest you offer a 'portfolio' hyperlink or similar in the CV or shared separately with the recruiter.

– Keep your CV limited to words

– Avoid using any photos, pictures or gimmicks, use a plain, clean layout with minimal styling

– Be aware of what your document is saved as – keep it simple such as FirstNameLastName.doc

10.

LANGUAGE AND EXAMPLES

– Spelling and grammar – always spell check and proofread.

– Don't use abbreviations or jargon.

– Use bullet points with succinct and concise sentences.

– Provide up-to-date and professional contact details.

– Include only relevant education and training.

– Order the CV in reverse chronological order with your most recent experience appearing first.

– Ensure it is well laid out, leaving plenty of white space on each page to make it easy to read.

– Focus on your achievements – use specific examples i.e. 'reduced costs by 10% in 12 months'.

– Only include referees who have agreed to provide a reference for you, speak with them about it before you provide their details.

11.

TAILOR YOUR CV AND UTILISE THE POWER OF AI

Why tailoring matters:

Every job is different, and a CV tailored for the job shows Hiring Managers you understand the role and how your experience aligns with what they're looking for.

Key Tips:

- **Highlight the most relevant language from the job ad:** Look for keywords or repeated themes in the job description (like "customer-centric," "agile delivery," or "risk analysis") and use similar phrasing, but only where it makes sense and reflects your actual experience. This helps show alignment without sounding artificial.

- **Prioritise relevant experience:** Reorder bullet points or sections to highlight the most applicable roles and achievements.

- **Quantify your impact:** Use numbers and outcomes that relate directly to the job's goals (e.g. "increased customer retention by 15%").

- **Match tone and language:** If the job ad is formal, keep your tone professional. If it's more conversational, it's okay to soften your style slightly as long as it still reads clearly and professionally.

- **Use the Job Title strategically:** If your previous title differs but the responsibilities match, it's okay to clarify (e.g., Customer Success Manager (equivalent to Client Relationship Manager).

Use AI to Help Tailor Your Resume

Here are some example prompts you can use with AI tools like Copilot to help you tailor your resume:

Goal	AI Prompt to Use
Identify key skills in a job ad	"Can you extract the top skills and qualifications from this job description?"
Rewrite your summary	"Here's my current summary. Can you rewrite it to better match this job ad?"
Tailor bullet points	"Can you help me rewrite these job responsibilities to align with this role?"
Highlight transferable skills	"I'm moving from retail to banking. What transferable skills from my CV should I highlight?"
Quantify achievements	"Can you help me add measurable outcomes to these bullet points?"
Create a tailored version	"Can you help me create a tailored version of my resume for this job?"

Please note: AI tools like Copilot can be helpful for refining your wording, identifying key skills, or tailoring your CV, but they're not perfect.

Always review the output carefully to ensure it's accurate, relevant, and reflects your real experience. Never include anything you can't confidently speak to in an interview.

12.

LET'S REVIEW

What has been done well in the example CV included with this guide?

– No use of pictures, photos or gimmicks.

– Professional email address provided.

– Concise summary of key skills and experience relevant to the role.

– Several key achievements listed.

– No use of abbreviations or jargon.