



Getting the Interview: How to Build an Effective Resume or CV

By Victoria Houghton, Communications Manager

A strong resume or CV is important for proving your worth to potential employers; however, according to Anthony Beshara, author of *Acing the Interview* and *The Job Search Solution* and president of Babich & Associates, one of Texas's oldest recruiting firms, they alone won't get you hired. "They're merely tools to obtain an interview," he says. Nonetheless, crafting an effective representation of your education and work history is an essential first step in landing that interview.

Resume vs. CV

A common misconception is that the resume and the curriculum vitae (CV) are the same thing; however, they are actually very different in purpose and structure.

According to Jamie Yasko-Magnum, president of Successful Style & Image Inc. in Casselberry, Fla., and author of books on professional communication (*Look, Speak and Behave for Women*, and *Look, Speak and Behave for Men*), where you are in your career will dictate whether to use a resume or a CV. "Doctors who have at least five years of experience will need a CV," says Yasko-Magnum. "A resume is more appropriate for students trying to get a first job. They won't have as much experience, so the shorter resume is a better fit."

The type of job you apply for also makes a difference. Doctors of chiropractic applying for clinical positions with a practice or other private organization normally submit a resume because they primarily must demonstrate to potential employers that they have the necessary skills and a license to practice. Conversely, a CV is usually required when applying for a job in the academic or research fields because employers want to know the details of an applicant's expertise and involvement, and how they will enhance the capabilities and prestige of their organization.

In addition, DCs also may be asked to present a CV when applying for grants or fellowships, when participating in research studies, or before making professional presentations. For any doctor who is active in his or her community or professional organizations, preparing and regularly updating a CV is a smart move.

Structure

Before constructing either a resume or a CV, both Beshara and Yasko-Magnum stress the importance of brainstorming. "You need to rack your brain and pull out any accomplishments and achievements that relate to the position you seek. Talking to someone who knows what you've gone through and who is not blinded by your day-to-day activities will help," says Yasko-Magnum.

The resume is usually more flexible in terms of setup. In general, however, the following structure provides a good base. Put the following information in descending order on one or two pages:

I. Contact Information

- full name
- home address
- professional e-mail address
- home phone number
- cell phone number

II. Education

- degrees earned (DC, PhD, EEd., MS, MA, BS, BA, etc.; begin with the most recent; don't include high school)
- majors/minors
- graduation dates
- GPA (if high) and honor status (valedictorian, salutatorian, cum laude, etc.)
- skills, achievements and awards
- classroom work/studies (relevant to the job you seek)
- diplomates

III. Professional Experience
names of employers
dates of employment (from most recent)
relevant projects
accomplishments
internships

IV. Other Qualifications/Special Skills
professional licenses
relevant published articles or books
foreign language skills

According to Yasko-Magnum, the structure of the CV is much more thorough and specific, and can be several pages long. While a resume offers a summary of your professional credentials, a CV is a more complete list of your educational and professional credentials, accomplishments and activities. Place the most current information first and work backward.

The following is a general guide for structuring a CV:

I. Contact Information (same as resume)

II. Education (same as resume)

III. Professional Credentials

- professional licenses
- specializations (modalities)
- certifications

IV. Professional Experience (same as resume)

V. Teaching Experience

- courses taught

VI. Affiliations

- professional organizations
- state and national associations

VII. Honors and Achievements

- awards received
- published articles and books
- professional presentations (e.g. speeches, papers, workshops, etc.)
- clinical audits
- research projects
- patents, trademarks

VIII. Personal Information

marital status, children, hobbies
military service
foreign language skills
volunteer work

Common Pitfalls

"The biggest mistake most people make is that they write their resume or CV so that only they understand it, so be sure to explain your information in layman's terms," says Beshara. "The resume and CV have to communicate 'Here is why you should interview me, and this is what I can do for you that others can't because I've done it in the past.'"

Another common mistake is relying on unpredictable technology. "Cell phones get lost and stolen," says Beshara. "If the employer can't find you, he won't bother with you again, so get a land line and put it on [your resume or CV]."

Now What?

According to Beshara, follow-up is the key to getting your foot in the door. Call the employer and ask if they received your information. Then ask when your interview is. "People have a tendency to confuse activity with productivity," says Beshara. "Getting an interview doesn't stop at sending a resume."

Once you are hired, don't ignore your resume or CV. "Create a Word document, and each time you have an accomplishment, type it in there," says Yasko-Magnum. "Transfer the information to your resume or CV down the road when you have time. Just keep it in order for the next time [you're in the job market]."