# RC

## RICHMOND CAPITAL

# CV Guide & Checklist

*Your step-by-step resource to creating a CV that stands out.*

# Introduction

Today's job market is fast-paced, competitive, and increasingly automated. Recruiters and hiring managers scan CVs in seconds. Often judgments are made before reaching the bottom third of a page, and Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) filter candidates before humans even see the document.

At Richmond Capital, we understand how fierce the job market is. Your CV is your first opportuntiy to make a powerful first impression, and the way you present your experience can determine your future.

This guide is designed to help you create a CV that not only survives these hurdles — but stands out as one worth reading.

Using insights from executive recruiters, behavioural psychology, and high-performing candidates, this guide will show you:

- What makes a CV immediately compelling
- Why most CVs fail — and how to avoid those mistakes
- How to present your experience in a human, memorable way
- Exactly what hiring managers look for in the first 7 seconds
- How to communicate your value clearly, quickly, and confidently
- A proven CV template for you to use right away. (You can **download the template here**)
- Clear do's and don'ts to follow.

### 1. Understand How CV Reviewing Really Works

Before writing anything, you need to understand the reality of modern recruitment.

### The 7-Second Scan

Recruiters take, on average, 7 seconds to decide if your CV stays or goes. Hiring managers take under 30 seconds on their first look.
This means:

- Walls of text get skipped
- Overly technical jargon loses attention
- Long-winded summaries get ignored
- Vague or buzzword-heavy descriptions get dismissed

Your CV must make sense instantly.

## 2. The Biggest CV Mistakes Most Professionals Make

Across thousands of CVs, the same problems appear again and again:
- **Generic statements** — e.g., "Results-driven professional." It doesn't tell us anything specific about you.
- **Buzzwords with no evidence** — Words like "strategic," "data-driven," or "high performer" mean little without proof.
- **Long, dense paragraphs** — Big blocks of text make your CV hard to read and easy to skip.
- **Tasks instead of results** — "Managed a team" is vague. "Led a team of 6 and improved delivery by 30%" shows impact.
- **No personality** — A CV with zero human detail feels flat. Hiring managers hire people, not descriptions.
- **No numbers** — Without metrics, it's hard to understand the scale or success of your work.

## 3. What A High-Impact CV Should Achieve

Your CV's job is not to tell your entire story.

Its job is to make the reader say:
👉 *I want to meet this person.*

A strong CV is:
- Clear — the reader understands who you are immediately
- Digestible — easy to skim with standout takeaways
- Specific — filled with concrete achievements that are relevant to the oppportunity
- Human — reveals personality, values, and style
- Tailored — reflects the roles you're aiming for
- Memorable — includes a detail or two that spark curiosity

This is what moves you into the "must-interview" pile.

## 4. How to Write Bullet Points That Get Attention

Most CVs describe tasks, strong CVs describe outcomes.

**Weak Example:**
"Managed customer satisfaction surveys."

**Strong Example:**
"Designed and executed a new customer survey process that increased response rates by 43% and revealed insights leading to a 12% improvement in NPS."

**Bullet Formula:**
Verb → What You Did → Outcome / Impact → Evidence

**Example:**
 "Led a cross-functional project to redesign onboarding, reducing ramp-up time by 35% and improving retention of new hires."

Numbers anchor credibility and differentiate you immediately.

## 5. Tailoring Without Starting From Scratch

You do NOT need 10 different CVs.
Instead:
- Keep one master CV with all your experience
- Create 2–3 slight variations for your target roles
- Adjust:
  - headline
  - summary
  - order of skills
  - emphasis of certain bullet points

Tailoring should take 10 minutes, not 2 hours.

## 6. The "7 Filters Test" For Your CV

**Before submitting your CV, apply these seven filters:**
1. Can someone understand who you are in under 10 seconds? If not — your summary needs refining.
2. Are the top 3 keywords from your target job description reflected?
3. Are all buzzwords replaced with concrete actions or achievements?
4. Does every bullet point start with a strong verb?
5. Is at least 60% of your experience quantified?
6. Is there something on your CV that could spark conversation? Why not add your CVs and hobbies, the team you support, an interesting sporting achievement or triumph?
7. Does your CV reflect you — not just your tasks?

This is what makes you memorable.

## 7. How to Show Personality Without Losing Professionalism

Senior hiring decisions often come down to:
- communication style
- emotional intelligence
- leadership approach
- cultural alignment
- how you work under pressure
- how you collaborate

Your CV should give early clues.
Ways to do this:
- Include a one-line passion statement
- Mention unique experiences (e.g., ex-athlete, ex-founder)
- Add an "Interests" section
- Use natural language instead of corporate jargon

This does NOT make your CV less professional — It makes it human, which increases interviews.

## 8. How To Use AI Without Sounding Like AI

AI can support you — but shouldn't write your CV alone.

*Helpful uses:*
- Rewriting for clarity
- Expanding a bullet you draft
- Condensing long sentences
- Extracting keywords from job descriptions

*Avoid:*
- Copy-pasting job descriptions
- Letting AI invent responsibilities
- Over-optimizing for keywords
- Using AI-generated buzzwords
- Losing your personal tone

YOU provide the story, AI helps clean the language.

## 9. Final Advice From Recruiters

Based on thousands of CV reviews, here's what matters most:

*Top 5 Signals of a Great Candidate*
- Clear, confident writing
- Specific, quantified achievements
- A narrative that makes sense
- Evidence of leadership, not just tasks
- A hint of personality

*Top 5 Red Flags*
- Vague, empty statements
- Dense paragraphs with no structure
- Job descriptions copy-pasted from LinkedIn
- No results or numbers
- No sense of who the person is

A strong CV is not longer — it's smarter.

# Why Your CV Matters

Your CV isn't just a document. It's a marketing tool that tells employers why they should choose you over other candidates. On average, a CV is scanned for as little as 6–30 seconds so it is vital you put your best foot forward.
This means:

- Clarity matters: If it's hard to read, it won't be read.
- Results matter: Employers want to see measurable impact, not just duties.
- Relevance matters: A CV that's tailored to the role will always stand out over a generic one.

**Think of your CV as your personal pitch. It should answer:**
- What problems do I solve?
- What value have I created in past roles?
- Why am I the right fit for this opportunity? Do I have the experience, skills and requirements they are looking for?

**Common CV mistakes we see as recruiters:**
- Overloading the CV with every job detail instead of highlighting what's relevant, or regailing your job description and not stating your achievements
- Using vague statements like "excellent leadership skills" without examples.
- Forgetting to show career progression, making the CV look flat.

**Richmond Capital Tip**: *Always update your CV for each role you apply to. This doesn't mean rewriting everything, but adjusting your personal statement and selecting the most relevant achievements.*

# ✅ Do's

- **Be specific:** Employers want results, facts and figures, not just responsibilities.
- **Use numbers:** Percentages, revenue growth, budgets, and team size all give credibility.
- **Keep formatting clean:** One professional font, aligned bullet points, and consistent spacing.
- **Adapt your CV:** Highlight the achievements that are most relevant to the role you're applying for.
- **Include months and years:** This shows career continuity and avoids confusion.
- **Explain gaps:** If there are career breaks, add a short explanation (e.g., parental leave, study, relocation).
- **Add a personal profile:** A short, tailored summary at the top of your CV sets the tone.
- **Add project details (if delivery-focused):** If you're in a role where you deliver projects, include scope, size, timelines, and results.
- **Show progression:** Add clear job titles for each role to demonstrate career growth.
- **Use the right contact details:** A professional email address and a working phone number are essential.
- **Spellcheck:** Typos leave a poor impression — always run a final check.
- **Limit your CV to 2–3 pages:** Enough to showcase your career without overwhelming the reader.

# ⊗ Dont's

- **Don't use "I"** — keep it professional and factual.
- **Don't use vague terms like "significant achievements"** — instead, show how they were significant.
- **Don't include unnecessary details** like date of birth, marital status, or a photo (unless required in your market).
- **Don't hide gaps** — silence raises red flags, even for short breaks.
- **Don't leave out job titles** — they show career trajectory.
- **Don't cram everything in** — white space improves readability.
- **Don't rely on spellcheck alone** — proofread carefully or ask someone else to review it.

**Richmond Capital Tip**: *Think of your CV as an interview ticket. Its job isn't to tell your whole story — it's to spark enough interest for employers to want to meet you.*

# Final Thoughts

Your CV is more than a professional document — it's a strategic communication tool.

 When written thoughtfully, it becomes:
- Your brand story
- Your positioning tool
- Your differentiator
- Your first impression
- Your bridge to interviews and opportunities

With the right structure, clarity, and storytelling, your CV can open doors you didn't know were there. You now have everything you need to create a CV that not only gets seen — but gets remembered. A great CV is not about listing everything you've done — it's about highlighting the impact you've made and the value you bring next.

# Checklist

✅ **Profile & Presentation**
☐ CV is no longer than 1–2 pages
☐ Clean, modern layout with consistent formatting
☐ Professional font (Calibri, Arial, Helvetica, etc.)
☐ Adequate white space (no dense paragraphs)
☐ File name is professional: "Firstname_Lastname_CV.pdf"
☐ PDF version saved to preserve formatting

✅ **Top-Section Essentials**
☐ Full name, phone number, email, and city/country are correct
☐ LinkedIn link included (and matches your CV)
☐ Professional summary (4–6 lines) written in a warm, human tone
☐ Summary clearly states who you are, what you do, and the value you bring

✅ **Skills & Strengths**
- ☐ 6–10 relevant, role-aligned skills included
- ☐ Skills grouped into clear categories (e.g., Leadership, Commercial, Technical)
- ☐ No generic buzzwords without proof
- ☐ Skills reflect the job descriptions you are targeting

## ✅ Work Experience
□ Each role includes clear dates + job title + company name
□ Every role has a 1-line description summarizing your main focus
□ 3–5 strong achievement-based bullet points per role
□ Each bullet begins with a powerful verb (Led, Delivered, Built, Improved, etc.)
□ At least 60% of bullet points include numbers or measurable results
□ Responsibilities describe outcomes, not tasks

## ✅ Key Achievements
□ Impact clearly demonstrated (revenue, efficiency, customer satisfaction, growth, etc.)
□ Achievements relevant to the roles you're applying for
□ Achievements balanced across your past roles
□ Achievements show progression over time

## ✅ Human Elements
□ A short Interests or Passions section is included
□ Personal detail(s) that reflect your personality or values
□ Writing style is professional but warm (not robotic)
□ No copy-pasted job descriptions or AI-sounding language

## ✅ Tailoring for Each Application
□ Summary slightly adjusted per role
□ Top skills reordered to match job requirements
□ Role-specific keywords included naturally
□ Unrelated details removed or minimized

## ✅ Final Review
□ Spelling and grammar checked
□ Dates aligned and consistent
□ No duplicated phrases
□ File successfully opened and reviewed on mobile & laptop
□ Someone else skimmed it in 10 seconds and understood your value