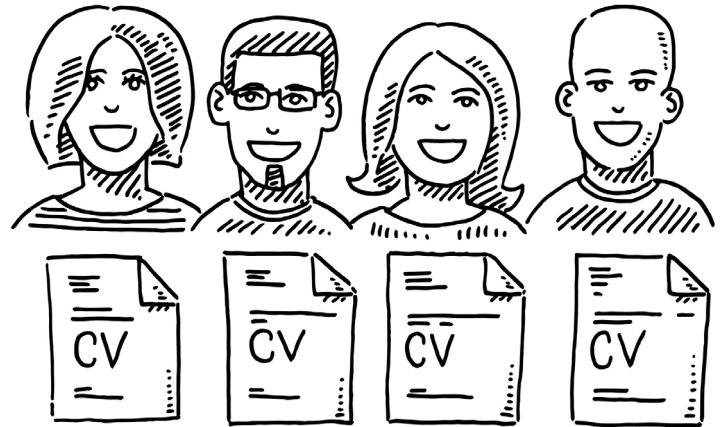


How to create the perfect CV to apply for jobs



Adrian O'Dowd gathers first-rate tips and advice from recruitment experts on how to have the best possible CV and make yourself stand out in the crowd to employers

Dentists are in high demand in the recruitment market at the moment but that doesn't mean they can assume any job being advertised is theirs for the taking.

The first step to securing a new position and beating the competition is to have a CV that shines and stands out from the crowd. We spoke to several recruitment experts for their advice and top tips on how to brush up a CV so that it catches the eye of potential employers who want to narrow down candidates before inviting them for an interview.

Current recruitment market

The recruitment market is hungry for dentists and recent research carried out by the BBC revealed what impact this is having on patient care.

BBC News contacted almost 7,000 dental practices over the summer and found that the vast majority (nine out of ten) were not accepting adult NHS patients and eight out of ten practices were also refusing to take on children.

Furthermore, official data on NHS dentistry in England published in August showed that just a third of adults (34%) accessed NHS dental care in the 24 months to 31 March, with children seen in the last year at 44.8%. This compares with 49.6% for adults, and 58.7% for children in the last full year prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

BDA Chair Eddie Crouch recently described the NHS dental service as being

'on its last legs' and said: 'NHS dentistry is lightyears away from where it needs to be. Unless [government] ministers step up and deliver much needed reform and decent funding, this will remain the new normal.'

In demand

Recruitment experts agree that demand for dentists to try and meet patient demand is at peak levels.

Gary Lehal, Team Manager for Medmatch Dental, says: 'At the moment as a dentist, you will have more options than ever.'

'Pre-COVID-19, we would usually have three potential offers or interviews for a candidate who was looking for a dentist's role. At the moment, dentists are having 10, 15 or even 20 options. I spoke to a dentist the other day who had 21 interviews coming up.'

Given that dentists will have many options, he adds: 'Our advice is that you always want to see who you are working with and the atmosphere of a practice. But even before that, can they offer what you are looking for not just now, but also in the future.'

'If you are looking to become an orthodontist, for example, do they have orthodontic work at the practice where you could learn? The NHS work dentists are 100% more sought after at the moment and there is a big shortfall of dentists, but even for private work, there's a lot more demand than there was.'

'Before COVID-19, if a newly qualified dentist wanted a private-only role, they just

wouldn't get that because they didn't have the experience. In the last two years, newly qualified dentists are getting private-only work straight away. Experience is not as important as it was.'

Lisa McCusker, Recruitment Team Leader and Locum Specialist at Dental Elite, says: 'The recruitment market at the moment is easy, especially for a dentist who is willing to consider NHS dentistry.'

'The market is crying out for dentists and not just experienced dentists, but also those who have just come out of dental foundation training who want to work in the NHS sector. There will be a lot of people wanting to work with you. You will be in high demand.'

'We have also seen an increase on the demand for private work too. Historically, most of our positions have always been within mixed practices and there are more practices now that are requesting our assistance with private, but the majority are still for NHS.'

Competition

Glenn Milton, Head of Recruitment at Bupa Dental Care, says: 'The market is buoyant at the moment, with many dentists keen to see what we have to offer.'

'I'm really proud of how we can support dentists through all stages of their careers and it seems to be resonating, so positions can be competitive. But we have lots of opportunities to work with us, and we'll always try and find a solution that benefits everyone.'

Despite the market's situation, dentists will not always just walk into new positions and will have to compete to secure them, according to Ros Bowen, {my}dentist Head of Resourcing, who says: 'In general, there is a higher demand for clinicians than the supply can meet, particularly for opportunities that include an element of NHS dentistry.'

'However, there are a few exceptions where the candidate market is competitive such as major towns and cities, of course including London.'

'The challenge candidates may have in the current market is trying to decide on which opportunity to accept if they have been to visit a high number of practices with several potential employers.'

Best advice from the experts

Dentists ready to seek a new position and re-reading their CV can learn a lot from recruitment experts who have good advice to offer.

The advice from Glenn Milton from Bupa Dental Care is: 'First, get to know the company, and if they have a social channel, follow it. This is often the best insight into a company and gives you a feel for how they operate.'

'If they have a website, have a look around, get a feel for what they stand for, their heritage, and what do they want to do in the future. The better informed you are, the more comfortable you will feel in the recruitment process.'

As for having a good CV, he adds: 'A CV is your chance to sell yourself so it's clear to see why you'd be a great match for the role. It should be clearly laid out with headings and bullet points, so someone reading your CV can quickly identify the skills and experience you have.'

'We need to know you're qualified for the job at hand with a brief section on your professional experience, a bit about you, and don't forget to include your GDC number so we know you're registered (or in the process of registering). We also recommend not making your CV too long – two pages maximum.'

Keeping it brief

Lisa McCusker from Dental Elite says: 'Remember that your CV is an introduction to you. The employer or agency may have never met you so the first opinion that they're

Top tips

- Keep your CV concise. Ideally, you don't want a CV that is more than two pages long. Written the right way, you should be able to include every bit of relevant information about yourself within two pages
- Sell yourself. A CV should show you in the best light but must be accurate and honest
- Keep it visually pleasing and consider using a web-based CV builder such as myperfectCV, CV Nation, Resume Now or Google Docs which offer different templates that you can use with the ability to choose different colours and formats
- Ensure the font, font size and format of your CV is clear, easy to read and, of course, check spelling and grammar
- Put your most recent work experience first and then work backwards. This saves time for the employer/agency so they can see right away where you are currently working
- At the top of the CV have a 'Professional Summary' section – a brief statement highlighting your work experience/level of qualification, achievements and skills and use those few lines to showcase what you are about. If you are a dentist with 15 years' experience including 10 years working in a private practice or if you've won awards, use that section to showcase this experience
- Use bullet points rather than paragraphs. Space out your text and avoid long blocks of text. This helps the reader digest the information quicker and keeps sections short and concise. For example, when listing each previous employment, just have three or four bullet points detailing the key things you did or are doing at your current practice
- Mention anything that makes you stand out and will bring something unusual to the table, such as confidence, your ability to upsell or convert NHS to private, strong communication and language skills, ability to work at a fast pace or a focus on quality of patient care
- Consider creating a portfolio, particularly if you specialise within certain areas of dentistry or are a private dentist. Portfolios could contain pictures of before and after treatments that you have done
- If a company/practice is interested in you, get to know them before any interviews take place. If they have social media channels and a website, follow them.

Things to avoid on a CV

- Avoid negativity. Within your personal statement, do not come across as negative by criticising previous employers
- Avoid using pronouns where possible. Instead of saying 'I successfully built up a private patient list' just say 'Successfully built up a private patient list' so it flows and avoids the overuse of 'I did this' and 'I did that' which can become repetitive
- Don't include work experience on your CV that is unrelated to the job you are applying for. As a dentist, only include the work you have done as a dentist and avoid mentioning old Saturday jobs you did while at college. They are irrelevant
- You don't need to include a photograph but it might give the employer a clearer impression of you
- Don't include details of all your school grades. Instead, just say how many you got rather than which ones and what grades they were. Most of your CV should be about your current experience and your achievements
- Information relating to protected characteristics under the Equality Act should not be included, for example, your gender or age/date of birth should not be on your CV. Decisions to offer a contract are based on qualification and experience to fulfil the role only
- Don't include case information. Although this is interesting and a good way to show your competency, there will be a chance to discuss this later during the recruitment process, including meeting the potential employer's senior dentists to discuss your work.

going to have of you is going to be your CV. You need to use that as a selling point to get you an interview.

‘Don’t have too much information in regard to your different employment. An employer is going to know what a dentist does so you don’t need to go into detail about your job role in particular.

‘You just need to highlight the main points of whatever it was that you did or how you trained other people on there. Have the key points but don’t go into great detail.’

Portfolios

Including a portfolio with your CV can help make a good impression, according to Lisa who says: ‘Portfolios are big for dentists, particularly those who specialise within certain areas of dentistry or if they are a private dentist. They will have pictures of before and after treatments they have done.

‘We tend to see a lot of portfolios from dentists who do aesthetic dentistry. Some of the higher end private practices will request a portfolio from potential candidates.

‘There are also some dentists who have websites and their CVs will include links to their website or to their LinkedIn profile, Instagram account or other social media platforms. That could showcase their reputation within the industry and that is going to be beneficial for your application.

‘There are also lots of people who are turning to video content and in the future, it may be that the standard CV may be replaced by video applications where you talk through your experience and who you are.’

Saving time

Saving a potential employer time in sifting through numerous CVs will be appreciated and could earn a good first impression, says Gary Lehal from Medmatch Dental.

‘Your CV needs to give someone a good overview of what your experience is and what you are looking for as a growth plan. You want to make sure you’re not receiving calls from practices that can’t offer you what you don’t want. Some dentists and dental nurses or hygienists want to work in a practice where they can utilise their skills in a particular specialist area or a particular type of treatment.

‘Making that clear [on your CV] is helpful because you won’t be disturbed by practices that can’t offer what you are looking for now and in the future. That will also save you a lot of time.’

Ensuring that you always list your most recent work experience is another way of saving time and potentially winning favour, he adds, saying: ‘We have a lot of CVs that look great with the personal statement and then they mention their work experience and the first thing they mention is working for Domino’s Pizza or something they did 10 years ago!

‘That is not relevant at all. They should list the most recent experience first.

‘For your most relevant experience, for example if you are working at a dental practice, have a little detail on what you do day to day at that practice and what you have learned from it, and your daily duties.

‘It’s helpful to a potential employer that they get an understanding of the type of practice you are coming from (mixed or just NHS or just private), what size it is in terms of practitioners, who you have worked with and your daily duties. That’s what employers want to see.’

Standing out

Uniqueness can also help a candidate stand out and improve their chances of being invited in for interview, as Gary explains: ‘I’d also say if there is anything that makes you stand out and that you think you can bring to the table which other people might not be able to, mention it.

‘Within dentistry, that could be being very confident or being able to upsell or convert NHS to private. If you think these are skills, they should be on your CV. You’d be surprised how often it’s not.

‘It could also be communication, language skills or it might be that you work at a really fast pace or that you take your time and focus more on more on patient care. It doesn’t matter what exactly it is, but everyone has a unique selling point (USP). You need to highlight that in the personal statement or add that at the end.’

Preparing for interviews

If a candidate is invited for an interview, there are several steps they can take to prepare for the experience, explains Ros Bowen from {my}dentist, who says: ‘On a practice visit, have a tour and meet colleagues who work there.

‘Establish how you would be able to provide the dentistry that you desire and how the employer can support with your career aspirations.

‘I’d say ask questions around the running of the practice and the wider clinical support

Sections a great CV should contain

- Professional Summary – summarise your experience and catch the employer’s or agency’s attention
- Work Experience – put most recent work experience first
- Skills – list these clearly, for example being a team player, good with nervous patients etc
- Education – put your most recent education first and if you have done additional further education courses that are relevant to the role you are applying for such as courses on aesthetic dentistry, orthodontics or endodontics, put these at the top
- Awards – important to have this as a section to showcase your experience and skills
- Contact Details – name, number, email address, address (or just the town/city)
- Professional and social media details - include LinkedIn profile, Instagram page (aesthetic dentistry in particular)
- Professional Registration details – include these at top of your CV so it’s one of the first things that the agency/employer sees – i.e. GDC Reg, performer number and year of qualification. If an employer sees that you have a performer number, they will focus on you quicker
- Professional picture (optional)
- Interests – gives the employer an insight into your life outside of work
- References – you should be able to supply these on request

and also speak to clinicians who work for the employer. At {my}dentist in addition to the clinicians you meet in practice, you are able to speak to members of our clinical support team.

‘Weigh up the pros and cons and ask further questions if there is anything you are unsure about. During the {my}dentist process you have your assigned recruiter as your point of contact throughout the candidate journey.’ ♦

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