

# The truth about CVs



How can you make your CV stand out among all the rest?  
asks **Alison Miles-Jenkins\***.

**D**id you know the sad truth that most CVs only get a brief look through when we apply for a job? Seems unfair, doesn't it, when we've spent hours putting one together, maybe writing and rewriting it, tweaking and polishing it because we so want that next job.

As a dental care professional (DCP) your CV has to immediately hit all the right buttons for the busy team members who have been tasked with shortlisting applicants for interview. So, how do you make your CV stand out, ensure that it goes to the top of the pile and gets you that coveted place in the interviewee's chair?

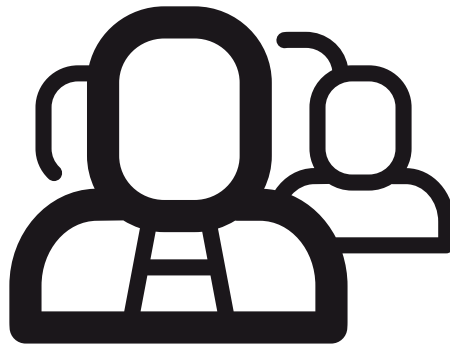
Here are seven of my top tips to help you produce a CV that catches the eye and makes you stick in the recruiter's mind.

## TOP TIPS

### 1. Think of your CV as your personal representative

If you were sending someone to represent you you'd want them to do a great job wouldn't you? Look at your CV with as much scrutiny. It's got to look good. Visual appeal is very important for creating a fantastic first impression. These days we live in a very visual society and there is a widely held view that 'if it doesn't look good, it can't be good'. First impressions are formed unbelievably quickly. So make sure it is a great representation of you. Clearly written, concise, with lots of white space, and for non-electronic CVs it should be unfolded, uncreased and on good quality paper: these are vital ingredients.

\* Managing Director, Training To Achieve UK. Alison set up Training to Achieve, the training and management development consultancy, in 1990. She has 28 years' experience in management development and has been working in the dental sector since 1998. Alison has helped more than 36,000 professionals and business owners become better at managing their staff.



Don't use lots of different fonts, colours, designs or images. These tend to make it look too busy, fussy or simply that you are trying too hard.

### 2. An insider's view

Guess what? Make the shortlister's life easier. I know, from training literally thousands of people over the years on how to recruit and select staff, that most people do not enjoy having to recruit a new member of staff – unless they have chosen to be a recruitment specialist that is! The whole process takes time, there are lots of legalities and skills involved and some people even find it quite nerve-wracking. It's quite a risk when you think about it, isn't it, taking on a new team member? So you will 'score points' if you make it easy for them to do their job. Because of the way the economy is going, they may at the moment be swamped with applications for some positions. So get on their side straightaway by:

- Keeping your CV to a maximum of two sides of A4
- Making sure you have tailored your CV to the role and not used a generic one
- Writing it in benefits-driven language – that means tell them what you can do for them and the value-add they would get from shortlisting you
- Using a good, easy to follow structure and layout
- Making sure an electronic CV looks as good as a hard copy.

### 3. Avoid common mistakes

One of the most common mistakes I see all the time with CVs is a focus on listing tasks, not achievements. Again, focus on achievements

and benefits that you will bring, not a boring list of tasks.

### 4. Check nothing is missing

Leave nothing unaccounted for. If the dates don't add up or there is an obvious break in your employment timeline, account for this. Otherwise the shortlister will make their own assumptions, and these may be well off mark!

### 5. This one will put your CV in the bin!

Nothing is more guaranteed to consign your efforts to the bin than spelling mistakes and typing errors. Always proof-read from a hard copy and get someone else to double check it too.

### 6. Speak the same language!

To show that you are on the right wavelength and build rapport through your CV, make sure you weave in the right words – words which that particular dental practice specifically uses. To do this re-read the job advert, the job description and the person specification if you have these and incorporate in your CV the same words they are using when they describe what they are seeking.

### 7. Use power words

Every word has to count in your CV so positive power words convey the right messages that your shortlisters will connect with. Examples to get you started are: 'achieved', 'demonstrated', 'exceeded', 'won', 'developed', 'effectively' and 'unique'. Oh, and put down quantifiable figures like targets you reached or exceeded, with examples.

So, follow the tips above to power-boost your CV. That way you'll increase your chances of getting that invitation to interview. Good luck!

For more information from Alison on how to write a winning CV, order the BDA iLearn CV writing webcast. Simply download the order form at [www.bda.org/ilearn](http://www.bda.org/ilearn) and watch it wherever, whenever and however you choose! Finish by simply downloading your personalised CPD certificate.