**1. Fudging the format**

It’s a cliché so yawnsome I can hardly bring myself to write it, but first impressions count – and they count as much for your CV as for your face.

In an ideal world, employers would have the time to carefully read through and consider every single CV they receive – regardless of format. But in reality, with an inbox of hundreds to get through, they’ll probably spend a minute at most scanning each one before unceremoniously depositing them in folders titled “yes”, “maybe” and “junk”. An ugly or confusing CV with an illegible font, missing information or a messy layout doesn’t stand a chance.

Make sure you get the basics right. Include your name and contact information at the top, a short personal profile and longer sections covering your work experience, education and/or training, other skills and references. The information in each section should be in reverse-chronological order, with the most recent first. Use a web-friendly font in an easily readable size. Keep the layout clean and simple\* with judicious use of white space, headings, bolding and bullet points.

\*If you’re a designer, feel free to ignore this. Your CV is an opportunity to flaunt your creative flair. Go wild.

**2. Information overload**!

You don’t need to put down everything you’ve done since potty training. Don’t, for example, devote two paragraphs to the job you did in the local shop 10 years ago if you’ve since acquired far more relevant experience. You can leave off the six university courses you started but didn’t finish, and your caution for jumping the Tube when you were 13. There's no need to list all your interests, from “walking” to “socialising with my friends.” In fact, I wouldn't bother writing about your interests at all unless a) they relate to the role, b) they’re really, really cool, or c) it’s something for which you’ve won prizes or broken world records.

The jury’s still out on whether your CV should be one or two pages long. Either way, anything more than two pages is a definite no-no! Your writing style should be engaging but concise – stick to plain English and short sentences. Don’t use “I” – it gets painfully repetitive – and, besides, since it’s your CV, who else would you be talking about?

**3. ‘Jokey’ email addresses**

If you’ve reached the stage in life where you’re writing a CV, it’s time to get yourself a proper grown-up email address. By all means keep using [hotlips1990@wotmail.com](mailto:hotlips1990@wotmail.com) or [badmanblapblapblap@yabbadabbadoo.co.uk](mailto:badmanblapblapblap@yabbadabbadoo.co.uk) with your mates, BUT for prospective employers something obvious like [yourname@emailserviceprovider.com](mailto:yourname@emailserviceprovider.com) is always best.

**4. Being too vague**

“Motivated, reliable, ambitious, organised, creative, team player, natural multi-tasker…” Still awake, there? Not only is it boring for them to read, simply reeling off a list of generic skills tells a potential employer little about your suitability for the role. Tailor your CV to each job you apply for, and make it specific to you.

When you write about previous work experience, don’t just copy out your job description; give examples of what you achieved in the role. Highlight key accomplishments – projects you led, ideas you had, new systems you instigated – that demonstrate your unique skillset and what you can bring to the organisation.

**5. Spelling mistakes, typos, grammar fails**

Come on people, you know the drill. Use spellcheck – with caution, it’s far from fool proof – check the style, read it and re-read it for punctuation and grammar and always get someone to proof read your CV before hitting send.

Source: [Rachel Segal Hamilton IdeasTap](http://www.ideastap.com/Search#types=1,magazine&terms=author:)

– a great website to help you construct your CV is: <https://myperfectcv.co.uk>

See an example of a typical CV layout on our website to guide you.