

Material Imprimible

Curso de Redacción de CV y cartas de presentación y entrevistas laborales

Módulo 1

Contenidos:

- the strengths and weaknesses of different types of CVs
- the different sections of a chronological CV and what to include in each of them
- examples of typical mistakes and how to use verb tenses appropriately
- the importance of keywords and attention-grabbing vocabulary to make our CV stand out
- tips on how to make our performance more noticeable by means of numbers and percentages and how to maximize hits and
- what the Europass CV is and its documents.

Types of CVs

The most common **types of CVs** are the *chronological CV* and the *skills-based* one. The “chronological” CV focuses on your employment history while the skills-based CV highlights specific skills that are transferable to the job you are searching. The latter is also called “*functional*”. The sections of both types are the same but the order changes because the chronological CV showcases experience over skills and the skills-based one stresses the skills you have that match the requirements for the position you have applied for. There's a third type called “*hybrid*”, which is a combination of the chronological and functional CV. Regardless of the format you choose, keep in mind that the all-purpose generic CV is outdated and it is being replaced by the targeted CV, which is employer-centred and tailored to fit a specific position. In this course, we will focus on the reverse chronological type and we will analyse its different sections.

The different order of headings in a CV

Chronological format

You typically start by writing your full name in capital letters and usually centred. Then you indicate your contact details so that the recruiter can get in touch with you. The objective usually comes next followed by a personal statement indicating, among other things, the kind of employee you are. In this type of CV, education has a key role and that's why it comes next. Afterwards, the work experience or employment history follows. Skills is usually the following heading and it may include both hard and soft skills, a topic we'll discuss at length later. Finally, references are provided if asked for in the job ad.

Skills-based format

The first four sections are in the same order, that is, full name, contact details, objective and personal statement. Then, we should place our skills, work experience, education and referees if requested in the job advert.

Advantages and disadvantages of different types of CVs

The reverse *chronological CV* is ideal to show that your previous job descriptions and titles make you an ideal candidate for the position you want. Besides, it can be used to show progression in your career and confirm that you are well-suited for the position. It highlights the organizations and companies you worked for and that can be a plus, especially if you have been hired by well-known or reputable firms. One of the main disadvantages is that it makes it quite clear whether you took a sabbatical year or you were unemployed. If your career has come to a dead-end, that situation will be quite evident. This format also makes it possible for recruiters to know that a candidate has changed jobs frequently and that situation may be perceived as a lack of commitment to the company or a lack of necessary skills to do the job.

If there are employment gaps in your career, if you don't have much work experience or if you have changed jobs quite often, *the skills-based format* enables you to move the spotlight away from those aspects and to focus on your expertise. It is ideal if you want to show off certain skills or strengths because you can group them into categories. This CV type allows you to focus on what you can offer your prospective employer in terms of the skills you have and what you have learned in both your paid and voluntary work. As this CV does not reflect consistent career advancement, it may hinder your chances of being chosen for an interview. In addition, it doesn't let you highlight your loyalty to your employer or your career moves. Certain sectors may not be in favour of the layout of a skills-based CV and some recruiters consider it a way of covering up employment gaps. This format is not as popular as the reverse chronological one and some inexperienced recruiters may find it difficult to get a grasp of it.

Professional CVs and academic

If we compare **a professional CV and an academic one**, the latter is longer and provides more in-depth information. Job seekers send a professional CV when the position is industry-related and they send an academic one for a fellowship, teaching or research role. A professional CV emphasizes professional qualifications and it is used by

professionals in medicine, science and law. Let me tell you that an academic CV is longer and more comprehensive than a professional CV and is written to get a teaching job at a university or a research position. Academic CVs can be any length since you have to include all your relevant research, teaching experience, publications, conferences, professional associations, grants and awards. Is there anything else I can add to my academic CV? You can also include memberships, discoveries, inventions, patents, courses taught, in fact, anything that is valued in higher education, elite research and development groups. Additionally, you can provide a list of references and letters of recommendation from university members you have worked with or people with a teaching or research position.

Infographic CV

Is a creative way to engage the recruiter by including graphics and illustrations. Infographic CVs work well because the human brain is attracted to colour and visual storytelling and they make you stand out immediately. A visual CV will help you ensure an employer will remember you and will let you show your creativity, personality and design abilities. They are particularly useful at networking events. If an employer is looking for a creative employee, an infographic CV also serves as a sample of your work, especially if you are a developer, web designer or writer. However, infographic CVs are not meant for every field. If you are in the law or healthcare industries, you'd better send a traditional CV. Stick to the black-and-white format for conservative professions. It is important not to overwhelm the reader with lots of graphics or colours; otherwise you will make your CV hard to read. You don't need to be a designer to make this type of CVs because there are many webpages that offer free templates that you can easily customize.

Sections of a chronological CV

How to start?

Your CV should always start with your full name in bold, in a prominent position and in a font size that is bigger than the font of the rest of your CV. Do not include the words “curriculum vitae”. Adding a photo depends, among other reasons, on the place where you apply for a job. In Argentina, for instance, it is customary to accompany a job application with a photo whereas in the US and in the UK including a photo goes against anti-discrimination and labour laws.

Personal information

Concerning personal information, equal opportunities legislation in some countries means that you do not have to indicate your marital status, age or date of birth. However, it is usual to do so in Argentina, where the personal identification number is usually included. About your contact information, it is better to include a mobile phone number. Bear in mind that your email address should look professional and you’d rather avoid a work email address. The city where you live is typically included in this section. Besides, you may also add your personal website address and your LinkedIn profile.

Objective

Let’s analyse an example of an objective together and see what information we should include.

- “Pursuing a position as an auditor where my accounting knowledge, 10-year experience in the corporate accounting area and detail-oriented skills can aid the company in ensuring the integrity of its financial and accounting records.”

Now I’d like us to analyse this objective together.

- “Pursuing a position as an auditor”. You may refer to a specific position or to an area where you want to work. If you have worked in the accounting area for many years but you don’t have a degree in accounting, then you’ll probably indicate the area.

The same applies to people who are looking for new challenges in a different department.

Let's keep analyzing the example.

- "where my accounting knowledge, 10-year experience in the corporate accounting area and detail-oriented skills". Here you can showcase your expertise and career milestones, particularly those that fit the company's needs. "can aid the company in ensuring the integrity of its financial and accounting records." As you may have guessed, writing the objective is not only about what you are looking for, but also how you can be of benefit to the company. In fact, it is advisable to do research into the company's mission, goals, values and plans first and then write this part to fulfil the company's needs. To sum up, you should strive to make a strong connection between what you have to offer and what the company is looking for.

Now I would like to share with you points related to the way in which the objective we have just analysed is written.

- The verb "pursue" is a very formal word and you may feel more comfortable using verbs such as "seek", "search for" or "look for", all of which are appropriate.
- The use of the gerund, that is, a verb with "ing" to start the sentence will make writing the objective easier.
- When we refer to the area where we work, we should say "in the corporate accounting area" and not "with the corporate accounting area". We use the preposition "in" for areas, departments, sectors and industries.
- "Aid" means "help", but it is a formal word and both verbs are followed by a different pattern. You aid someone in doing something, in this case, "you can aid the company in ensuring the integrity of its financial and accounting records" whereas you help someone to do something. For example, "you can help the company to ensure the integrity of its financial and accounting records".

Personal statement

Let's analyse the following example of a personal statement:

- "Analytical accountant graduate of the University of Buenos Aires, with over 5 years of experience preparing budgets, analyzing financial data and maintaining accounting control procedures. Organized and effective troubleshooter with ability to deliver under strict deadlines."

What if we examine the personal statement together?

- "Analytical accountant graduate of Stanford University". This candidate graduated from a prestigious university and this is worth pointing out.
- "with over 10 years of experience preparing budgets, analyzing financial data and maintaining accounting control procedures". This applicant has broad experience, something that may be of importance in the desired position and outlines his key capabilities as a professional that best support his application.
- "Organized and effective troubleshooter with ability to deliver under strict deadlines." Do not forget that these days, soft skills can set you apart from other candidates.

In conclusion, a personal statement is a short summary of the sort of person you are, your abilities, strengths, achievements and other background information, aimed at giving the recruiter an immediate idea of who you are without needing to read your whole CV. The personal statement is also called Personal Profile or Executive Summary. Now it is time for us to analyse some words from the Personal statement we talked about before.

- The candidate was a graduate of the University of Buenos Aires. Don't forget that the correct preposition to use is "of". You are a graduate "of" a university but you graduate "from" a university.
- The candidate has ability to deliver. In this context, "deliver" means to achieve something that has been promised. In addition, you have ability to do something or you are able to do something. Both the noun "ability"

and the adjective “able” are followed by the word “to” and then a verb in the infinitive form.

- If you want to use the word “capable”, you shouldn’t forget that it is followed by the word “of” and then a verb ending in “ing”, that is, a gerund. Let me illustrate: “capable of working under stress”. The meanings of “able” and “capable” usually overlap but, in general, we use “able” to indicate current things someone can do and “capable” to indicate someone’s future potential.
- Finally, deadlines can be described as “strict” or “tight”, in which case they are difficult to meet. If you meet a deadline, you finish something by a certain date or time but if you miss a deadline, you are in trouble.

Education

The education section should go before your work experience if your education is more relevant to the position you are seeking. This section, which is also called Educational Background or Academic Preparation, should include start and end dates in reverse chronological order, name and location of the university or institute and type of degree.

- If you are still studying, you must include the start date followed by the word “Present”.
- If you a dropout, that is, if you have quit your studies, write “pending completion” after the start date and don’t use the word “incomplete” because it has a negative connotation.
- If you are a degree holder, there is no need to list secondary school information. However, if you don’t have a university degree and you want to indicate the specialization of your secondary school, you can write, for example, “secondary school specialized in business studies”.
- One more point I would like to mention is that the British use the word “secondary school” while Americans use the word “high school” for education that follows on from primary school. If you are sending your CV

abroad and the reader may not be familiar with the university you graduated from, it is useful to provide a link to the university's website. You should include courses that apply to the job you are trying to get because this will show the recruiter that you have the necessary knowledge to do the job and the desire to broaden that knowledge. Create a "relevant courses" section if your desired position requires strong academic background.

- What information should I include? For starters, the name of the courses, for example, Social Media Marketing Studies, the institute or university as well as the city or country where you did the course. If you haven't finished the course, indicate when you expect to complete it.
- What courses should I list in this part? Indicate the most recent courses first. However, if you have an older course that is more relevant to the position, or shows that you have advanced skills in a certain area, list that course in the first place. If you've completed research projects and they're related to your application, include them as well. Write about online courses too.
- One last piece of advice: add related keywords from job postings to reinforce coursework information.

Sections of the chronological CV

Back to the sections of the chronological CV, let me say that the Work Experience section, also called Employment History, shows the places where you have worked. In this example, the candidate has worked at ABC Limited since 2010. It goes without saying, that we should include the date when we started working for a company and if we still work there, the word "Present" will follow. The name of the company is a must as well as our position (in this case, general manager) and our responsibilities or duties, usually listed using bullet points. The jobs should be listed from the most recent to the most distant.

You can also add *Key Accomplishments* related to each position. Your accomplishments are milestones that you have managed to reach and that have had an impact on your company. They are different from responsibilities, which come under a job description, because accomplishments are unique to your experience and they show your capabilities and potential. Accomplishments can be divided into two main categories:

- personal, that is, awards you've received, promotions you have gained, etc. and
- professional, that is, productivity you've increased, targets you've exceeded, etc.

What is the takeaway? Even if we feel that our professional accomplishments carry little weight due to our lack of experience, for instance, we shouldn't overlook the fact that our personal achievements may make a difference in the recruitment process.

When listing your accomplishments, make sure to describe them in a clear way and in an impactful manner to improve their credibility. There is an important rule when describing accomplishments: "what" you did, "how" you did it and "why" it mattered, in other words, its importance. Indicating that you increased sales dramatically is not good enough, but showing that you increased sales by 60% in seven months is an accurate and objective measure of your talents as an employee. If you also explain how you achieved those results, you will strengthen the accomplishment further. Why are they necessary? Because past performance can be an indication of future performance. When making a list of accomplishments for your CV, tailor them to the position you want, include the most recent and the most significant ones first. Bear in mind that this is not the time to sell yourself short.

Skills

Skills can be broadly divided into hard and soft skills.

- Soft skills are personality traits necessary to do a job effectively and they include flexibility, communication, problem solving, leadership, etc. They

are not related to a specific job or sector and they are especially important for customer-based positions.

- Hard skills are the ones necessary to perform a job and they are related to a specific job. You acquire them through education and training. For example, a web developer should have solid web design skills. As hard skills are measurable, you may indicate the level of proficiency you have reached by writing: beginner, intermediate, proficient or expert level.

Hiring managers look for candidates with both hard and soft skills because hard skills show “what” you can do while soft skills show “how” you will work, on your own and with others. If your greatest strength lies in your skills, you may consider organizing them into categories so that they stick out a mile. For example, if you are a graphic designer you may categorize your hard skills into software, image editing, photography and coding. Likewise, you can divide your soft skills into categories such as interpersonal, organizational, leadership and communication skills.

Transferable skills

Transferable skills are a set of abilities that are helpful across different areas of life and you develop them through employment, education and by interacting with others in your personal life. They can be transferred between jobs and sectors and can be categorized in different ways. For example: A candidate with good interpersonal skills is assertive, supportive and good at negotiating.

What if we explain transferable skills further?

- Interpersonal skills are behaviours and strategies you use to communicate and interact with other people.
- Organizational skills refer to the ability to manage your time, workload, energy and resources efficiently. To highlight these skills, you can say that you are able to coordinate resources, schedule and set goals
- People with leadership skills are able to communicate well, are decisive, empower people and are team-builders. Leadership skills are necessary in

any situation where you have to take the lead, professionally or in your personal life.

- Communication skills let you express and share your ideas and feelings verbally, so you can describe yourself as articulate, as well as in writing, so you can indicate you have solid writing skills. These skills involve listening, speaking, observing and empathizing.

Employers value transferable skills because they can be applied in different ways in the workplace and including them in your CV will increase your employability chances as they are a must in collaborative workplaces.

Computer skills are essential for anyone looking for a job these days. Employers need people who can use the latest technology that is relevant to their area or field. What digital skills should I include in my CV? The obvious answer is: those that are required in the job ad. And if the job advertisement doesn't require specific computer skills?

Then, you can go over the following ones.

- Social media plays an important role in today's business activities and showing that you have social media skills can set you apart when applying for a new job.
- If you have graphic design skills, highlight the specific programs you use, like Photoshop or Illustrator.
- Data is essential for making well-informed decisions that impact the company. In addition to listing the data analysis programs you know, also include metrics. For example: "created Excel pivot tables to streamline inventory in two months".
- If you have knowledge of content management systems, you can be a great asset for the organization as you can update and maintain the company's website content.

There is no doubt that computer programmers need to know how to program and code, but if you have that knowledge, you will be better positioned to communicate with the IT or development team.

Ways to assess a candidate's level

There are many different ways to assess a candidate's level of computer literacy. Most hiring managers are familiar with a basic, intermediate, or advanced rating. In this example, the candidate has little knowledge of Photoshop. An intermediate level of Photoshop, in this case, requires a moderate level of knowledge. Advanced or expert is the highest level of proficiency, so this candidate knows the ins and outs of Sql.

"Proficient" is another word we can use to describe this level.

Adding computer skills to your resume is not all about software. Some positions require expertise with physical devices and that information should be present in your CV under the heading "hardware skills". If computer skills are quite relevant to your position, instead of indicating the level of proficiency you have reached, it is better to write what they helped you achieve by describing your accomplishments in terms of timeframes, percentages, and dollars. For example: "increased user clicks and customer purchases by over 25% in a three-month period".

When indicating your language level, you can refer to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), prepared by the Council of Europe, which provides a method of assessing language ability. It goes from the most basic level (A1) to the highest (C2) for those who master the language. To illustrate, let's say that I just know a few words of phrases in English. In that case, I will rate my English level as A1 pursuant to the CEFR. We invite you to access the Council of Europe website through your search engine of choice where you will find the complete framework, which will help you to self-assess your language level regardless of the language you know. This Framework is becoming widely accepted in Europe and new English course books have adopted the CEFR levels and have abandoned the traditional ones when indicating who their books are aimed at. This graph also provides the Toefl and Ielts equivalents.

How to strengthen your image?

In addition to the sections we have already covered, you can add others to strengthen your image and to include evidence that you are a well-rounded person. Choosing the

right awards is about selecting accomplishments for which you have been recognized and that are connected with your professional life. If you decide to include an activities heading, make sure to identify activities that are relevant to the target job. This section may be used to highlight leadership and interpersonal skills.

In regard to organizations, you should choose professional affiliations that apply to your ability to do the job.

- Certifications verify your qualifications and show that you stay up-to-date with the developments in your field.
- If you have written articles, essays or posts that show you have the required skills for the desired position, list the most fitting ones including the year and title and the name of the magazine, website or journal.
- Include references if the job advertisement requires them. Just as a reminder, a referee is a person that you have worked with and who can answer your prospective employer's questions concerning your credentials.

Please, take into consideration two important points. First, the list of headings we have covered in this module is illustrative, not exhaustive and their presence in a CV or not depends on the country and company you send your application to. Second, the name of the headings and their order may vary as well.

Typically mistakes

We'll start this class speaking about **mistakes typically** made when writing a CV. Let's focus as this is a very important topic.

- Repeating a word several times shows a poor English level and lack of creativity. Unless you have worked for several years in the same role for different firms and, the repetition of the word "secretary", for instance, is justified, you should always look for synonyms or alternative words.

- Punctuation is important too. In English, periods are not used unless they are at the end of a sentence. If you are using bullet points, don't use periods.
- If the language in your CV is basic, you run the risk of appearing to be a candidate with a low English level and poor communication skills. Instead of writing "helped different parts of the company", write "supported various company departments". Whenever you think of using the verbs "get" or "give", try using "obtain" or "provide" and "offer", instead.
- Believe it or not, one of the most common mistakes has to do with spelling and grammar. To illustrate, in British English "practice" and "advice" with the letter "c" are nouns while "practise" and "advise" with "s" are verbs. However, Americans don't make this distinction and write those two words with "c", whether they are nouns or verbs. In a nutshell, stick to one "English" only. If you want to know what other spelling and grammar mistakes are usually made, just keep watching.

Spelling or grammar mistakes

Spelling or grammar mistakes can cost us a job so let's see what we should pay extra close attention to. Why don't we look at some examples?

- Apostrophes can be confusing but you will be able to use them effectively if you follow some simple rules.
- Apostrophes show possession, that is, that something belongs to a person, organization, etc.
 - If the noun is singular and doesn't end in "s", we add an apostrophe and an "s", for example, "Joe's doubts".
 - If the noun is singular and it ends in "s", as in Chris, add an apostrophe and then an "s" anyway, so it will be "Chris's doubts".
 - If it's a plural word that ends in "s" only add an apostrophe and no additional "s", for example, "customers' doubts".

We'll keep discussing spelling and grammar mistakes. About plurals, let me point out that plural acronyms and other abbreviations do not take an apostrophe, for example, CVs, without an apostrophe means more than one CV. Regarding possessives, let me remind you that the possessive adjective of "it" is "its". An example? Despite the company's poor performance last year, its profits are on the rise this year.

- When you want to make an acronym or abbreviation plural, don't add an apostrophe. To illustrate, the plural of CV is CVs, without an apostrophe.
- Decades don't take an apostrophe either, so we should say "the 90s".
- Regarding possessives, let me remind you that the possessive adjective of "it" is "its". An example? If we are speaking about a company and we want to refer to the profits the company makes, we should say "its profits".

What else should we consider?

- First, remember that, unlike Spanish, the personal pronoun "I", days of the week and months are capitalized in English. As an illustration, I, Monday and May should always start with a capital letter even if they aren't the first word in a sentence. There is a tendency to capitalize common nouns in the middle of sentences to give them more relevance, but this is just a grammar mistake.
- Homonyms are words that sound the same, but are spelled differently and have different meanings. Just to illustrate, "effect" is the result of something and "affect" means to influence something. The word "principal" can be used as an adjective and means "most important" whereas "principle" is a noun and means a fundamental truth, law or guideline.

- Finally, the subject of the sentence must agree with the verb of the sentence. This is obvious but it gets tricky when we use collective nouns. These are words that imply more than one person but are considered singular and take a singular verb, for instance, group, team and committee. So, we should say that “the committee meets once a week”. However, the plural verb is used if the focus is on the individuals in the group. For example, “the group engage in lobbying activities”.

An important recommendation.

We should spellcheck and proofread our CV before sending it as an error-free CV is vital to showcase our attention to detail.

Choosing the right preposition can be tiring and challenging for non-native English speakers because of the lack of consistent rules. Many adjectives, nouns and verbs are followed by certain prepositions and a grammar mistake may be a turn-off for recruiters.

- With regard to some typical adjectives that we may need to refer to during a job search, let me say that you are committed "to" a policy, interested "in" a field, familiar "with" a process and responsible "for" a department.
- In connection with verbs and their corresponding prepositions, remember that you work "on" a project, you work "in" an area and you work "at" plus the name of the company.
- With reference to nouns, you provide advice someone "on" a topic, you put forward an answer "to" a question, there is a demand "for" a product you design and there is a lack "of" professionals in a certain region.
- The word “deadline” deserves a separate paragraph as it is pretty popular and can be accompanied by different prepositions. For example: you have a deadline “for” deliverables and you have to complete some tasks before the deadline “of” July 1st.

Let's take a look at other typical mistakes.

- Use of superlatives
- Salary expectations
- Too wordy
- Unprofessional layout
- Poor file naming

Next, we'll discuss what each of these points is about.

It's better to avoid superlatives. Saying that you are "the best salesperson in the company" is subjective and it is definitely an overstatement. Instead, quantify your accomplishments and write "exceeded company's targets by 30%". Another point to bear in mind is that your salary expectations should not be included in your CV and we will analyse how to express them when we get to writing cover letters.

Let's continue going over recommendations to avoid mistakes. If you use more words than necessary, you will make it harder for the recruiter to follow your thoughts. Don't write long chunks of text. Instead, break the information up into short paragraphs and bullet points. Additionally, if a CV is too wordy, chances are it is too long as well. Another cardinal sin. Additionally, your CV should be visually appealing and its content should be easy to absorb. The format should be eye-catching but uncluttered. Use a simple and clean font, two at most: one for the headings and the other one for the text. If you want to add a bit of colour to your CV, choose safe colours for headings. Needless to say, your photo should look professional. Last but not least, let me tell you that a CV with an unprofessional name can disqualify you from the recruitment process. Your name followed by the word "CV" is a safe choice for naming your CV document.

Present and past tenses

Now, I'd like to move on to a new topic, which is about the use of present and past tenses.

- When outlining your job history, you should use the present simple tense to describe your current tasks. Why? Because present simple is used to describe routine tasks. As an illustration, if my job title is general manager and I use bullet points to indicate my duties, then I should write that I “run 100,00 square feet warehouse” and that I “oversee and train more than 50 employees”. Present simple helps us describe routine tasks while present continuous, that is, one of the forms of the verb “to be” followed by a verb with “ing”, is used for temporary situations, among other uses.

However, the description of the tasks I performed in my previous jobs should be in the past simple tense. For example, if I worked as a warehouse supervisor between 1998 and 2000, then I should use the simple past tense, as in “supervised warehouse operations with \$ 5 million inventory”. It is better not to spend too much time and space describing your older jobs.

Bear in mind that the personal pronoun “I” is usually omitted in a CV and the use of bullet points will make it easier for recruiters to skim read it.

Verbs

Action verbs express a physical or mental action and describe the skills you have used to prospective employers. You may wonder what action verbs you should include in your CV. Always choose verbs of substance that will make your CV stick out. Instead of clichés such as “in charge of ABC’s electrical construction project”, use compelling action verbs and say that you managed ABC’s electrical construction project. Both examples mean the same but if you led a project and you start the description using verbs like “chaired”, “coordinated” or “orchestrated”, you will sound much more competent.

In order to choose the right verbs, first you should analyse the job posting and see which of your abilities and accomplishments match the job requirements. For example, if you worked in sales, you could say that you boosted sales by 20%. There are at two verbs that are overused: “work on” and “use”. Rather than “work on”, try using “arrange”, “make

progress on", "prepare" or "undertake". Replace the verb "use" with "apply", "adopt", "handle" or "resort to".

Using action verbs will demonstrate to an employer that you "took action", produced results, and contributed. Your choice of action verbs will depend largely on the role you had in a company. What if we have a look at some examples?

- If you led a project, you can use the verbs administer, organize and oversee. For example, you can say that you administered over ten projects between 1999 and 2001.
- If you increased sales and efficiency, you can resort to verbs such as enhance, expedite and outpace and you can indicate that you enhanced efficiency by streamlining processes.
- If your job title was supervisor, don't hesitate to include the verbs monitor, enforce and verify in your CV. For example, "enforced compliance with internal and external regulations".

Avoid weak, vague or overused verbs because they can undermine your work and achievements. When including them in your CV, ask yourself: does the sentence convey results and impact or is it a mere description?

Action verbs should also be our choice when we want certain skills to be noticed by our prospective employer or recruiter.

- Instead of verbs like talk or present, try using address, persuade or reconcile. The verb "persuade", for instance, shows that you are capable of influencing other people. We should select verbs that carry more weight than overused ones.
- If a candidate wants to show organizational skills, the verb "organize" is an expected visitor. But why don't you spark the recruiter's interest by using catalog, execute or operate? For example, "executed a luxury store renovation project applying SMART goals within ten months".
- When showcasing your management skills don't limit yourself to verbs like lead or handle. If you manage effectively, you also have to

consolidate, appoint and delegate. For example, "established a four-member audit team and delegated data analysis tasks to junior members". That description also hints at your work style.

Adjectives

I would like to start by saying that informal adjectives, like "fantastic" or subjective ones, like "excellent" are completely out of line. Let me give you an example to clarify this point.

- Don't say that you built fantastic and excellent relations with 70% of foreign clients. Instead, indicate that you built long-lasting and harmonious relations with 70% of foreign clients. CV adjectives should only be used to stress your experience, knowledge and personal traits but sparingly.
- Try to look for active and positive adjectives. To illustrate, the adjective "dedicated" showcases your enthusiasm and motivation.

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When should we avoid adjectives? The answer is: when we can quantify an accomplishment with a number, so, don't say that you coached a huge number of employees. Say that you coached over 100 employees. You should also choose action verbs over adjectives when mentioning accomplishments. Rather than describing yourself as "ingenious", indicate what you have invented.

Powerful adjectives set the tone for your application and emphasize important information. They can be categorized according to the skill that they help to describe.

- The following adjectives for leadership demonstrate your ability to guide others: reliable, accounting, inspiring.
- Highlight your knack for innovation by using ground-breaking, cutting-edge and visionary.

- Team players make the working environment more enjoyable for everyone so describing yourself as cheerful, cooperative and respectful shows that you want to be fully on board.
- The following adjectives can highlight your ability to communicate effectively: proactive, eloquent and tactful.
- Agile, flexible and versatile are adjectives that show ability to adapt to a changing workplace and business scenario.
- Whether you're in management or not, keeping your work organized is key so the words timely, orderly and detailed can help you paint a clear picture of the sort of employee you are.
- One final thought: use adjectives to enhance your experience, knowledge or skills, not to replace them.

Keywords

When looking for the best employees to fill a vacancy, recruiters type keywords. What are keywords? They are nouns, short phrases, action verbs and adjectives, which identify not only knowledge, skills and experience but also well-known companies, prestigious universities, degrees, certifications and achievements. They represent the qualifications that are necessary to fill a position.

To give you an idea of what keywords are about, I have compiled three lists of keywords.

- For instance, in administration and management you will come across the words administrative processes, back office operation and data analysis;
- in customer service, you'll probably see customer loyalty, order processing and service quality;
- in human resources, you're likely to read the words cross-cultural communications, labour contract negotiations and succession planning

From a grammar point of view, in business most keywords are compound nouns, that is, a noun that is made up of two or more words. Compound nouns can be formed in three different ways.

- The first one is with a space between words, as in data analysis.

- The second one is with a hyphen between words, as in changing-room.
- The third one is without a space or hyphen between words, as in keyboard

To hit the right version, always check your spellchecker or a dictionary.

Reading a job ad

When reading a job ad, we should pay close attention to keywords and customize our CV accordingly. If a company is searching for a candidate with ability to give financial advice to clients, then you can indicate that you advise clients on financial matters. Let's look at the following example:

- Si el job advertisement dice "If the job advertisement requires "ability to give financial advice to clients"
- Dentro de las Keywords debería decirse que: Then, the keywords should be "advise clients on financial matters"

If an ad indicates that a company is looking for a "content writer" but your prior job title was "content creator", your chances of being called for an interview are higher if you change the name of your previous position to "content writer". Why? Because many companies use automated applicant tracking systems (ATS) to screen candidates for a position. Those systems typically eliminate CVs that lack certain keywords. Hence, the importance of their presence in our application.

Keywords

Where can I find keywords to include in my CV? First, in the job advertisement that advertises the position you want to apply for. You can also find them in online job descriptions, annual reports of companies that describe their key staff and achievements, news about your field and career portals.

Sometimes we feel that we need more tools to prove our claims, in other words, to show that what we say about our skills and experience is true. So what can we do? We can include numbers and percentages to support our claims. Why don't we discuss how we can do that?

First let's read an achievement without any numbers: "fundraised for NGOs". Do we know if the applicant was effective raising funds for NGOs? The obvious answer is "no". However, if we add numbers, the effect will be different. Let's try again: "fundraised 40 million dollars for NGOs in three years". Now the candidate appears to know what he is doing. What's the point? We should try to back up the abilities and achievements we say we have by measuring them with numbers and percentages. Now let me give you an example with a percentage. Saying that you strengthened customer relations reducing customer defection by 60% is more impactful than an example in which the percentage is missing.

Some pieces of advice in relation to grammar. First, numbers don't have a plural form, so we should say forty million dollars and not forty "millions" dollars. Second, we should use the word "by" before a percentage to show the amount of change between two different time periods or values.

Recommendations

What are the most important steps we can take to increase the numbers of "hits" or recognition by automated applicant tracking systems ATS, APPLICANT TRACKING SYSTEMS.

- First, focus on keywords or buzzwords and study intently job advertisements and descriptions for positions in your area or field.
- Second, include words from the job ad to maximize hits. One classic mistake non-native English speakers make when incorporating words from an ad is the incorrect use of nouns and verbs. Let's say that the ad indicates that the prospective employee will be in close liaison with environmental organizations and you want to show you have had experience of that kind. Then, write that you liaised with environmental organizations as "liaison" is a noun and "liaise" is a verb.

- Third, use typical headings as scanning software searches for headings such as Objective, Education, Work Experience, Skills and Accomplishments.
- Fourth, only use abbreviations or acronyms that are easily recognized, for example, it is safe to assume that every recruiter knows that CFO stands for chief financial officer. When in doubt, write the full form of words.
- Finally, don't overlook interpersonal skills as hiring managers give them prominence nowadays. Therefore, words like motivation, leadership and team player should be included in your CV.

Europass

Europass is a European Union initiative to make a person's skills and qualifications clearly understood in Europe. The European Commission created the Europass CV in 2005 to facilitate mobility and provide citizens with a chance of studying and working abroad.

Europass includes five documents.

- The curriculum vitae is a standardized CV that enables people to show their skills and qualifications.
- The language passport is a self-assessment tool for language skills.
- The Europass mobility keeps a record of the knowledge and skills acquired in another European country.
- While the Certificate Supplement indicates the knowledge and skills acquired by those who have vocational education and training certificates,
- the Diploma supplement is for holders of higher education degrees.

The first two documents are freely accessible and the other three are issued by education and training authorities. If you are thinking about moving to Europe, you should visit the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) website, where you will find examples of CVs in 27 languages and where you will be able to create different versions of your CV.