

CV & COVER LETTER

Writing a winning CV

No matter what sector of the food/drink industry you work in and what stage your career has reached, a good CV is your key to success. A good CV won't get you a job, but a poor CV can lose you the opportunity of getting to that crucial stage – the interview!

Spend time on your CV and the effort will be worthwhile. Also, one CV will not always be suitable for every role. Tailor your CV to the role you are applying for. Make sure you highlight any skills & experience you have that are relevant to the position you are applying for.

Your CV and cover letter (when required) should combine to create a picture of you and your background and career aspirations. It should make an employer WANT to interview you.

Structure

Download a sample CV from our website.

General tips

- Keep it simple! Black ink on white or cream paper, no borders, colours or photos. Use a standard font such as Times New Roman 12 or Arial 10.
- Your CV should ideally cover no more than two pages of A4 and never more than three. Aim to ensure the content is clear, structured, concise and relevant. Using bullet points rather than full sentences can help make your CV easy to read.
- Start your CV with a brief profile summarizing your skills and experience. Avoid making this a long list of 'buzz-words' such as "excellent communicator with outstanding organisational skills". This doesn't differentiate you from other candidates.
- Education and employment history should be in REVERSE chronological order, i.e. start with the most recent first.
- List your responsibilities and achievements for each position you have held, in bullet points, in order of importance/frequency.
- Check your CV carefully for grammatical errors and spelling mistakes, as these leave a bad impression, no matter how good the content is! Ask someone else to check it for you.
- Explain any gaps in your employment history.
- Be honest and accurate!

Covering letters

How to make the employer or agency WANT to read your CV

A good covering letter will differentiate your CV from the countless others that employers and Recruitment Consultants see. Make sure yours stands out!

When responding to an advertised job vacancy, whether via letter, e-mail or fax, you should always include a covering letter with your CV. A covering letter introduces you and your CV and is your first chance to make a good impression on your potential employer, or on the Recruitment Consultant handling the vacancy. Ask yourself: “What’s in it for them?” The employer has to WANT to read your CV after reading your covering letter. There is no clear-cut perfect formula for a covering letter, as it should always be tailored to you and to the position you are applying for, but there are a few simple rules you should follow.

Appearance and layout

Follow the instructions given in the vacancy advert. If an employer asks for applications by e-mail or for hand-written letters, do exactly what is asked. Ensure that there are no grammatical or spelling errors and that the letter is easy to read in terms of content and formatting. Your letter should address the relevant contact, whose name will often appear in the job advert. If no name is given, try to ‘phone before applying and obtain a contact name to address your application to. Avoid Sir/Madam if possible.

Content

- Keep it brief and structured
- Avoid lengthy repetition of information covered in your CV
- If you are replying to an advert, say so: mention job title, any reference number and when and where you saw the advert
- Always follow specific instructions and include any information that is specifically requested
- Briefly outline your current situation and why you are looking for a new position
- Include brief information about your current or last job, your qualifications and professional/academic training and your achievements but make sure this is relevant to the organisation or job you are applying for
- State why you are interested in that particular employer and what you have to offer them (transferable skills, achievements and versatility; what you can contribute and what makes you different)
- Close your letter by expressing an interest in discussing the role and your suitability further and await a response in due course