

It's okay to blow your own trumpet (sometimes...)

I've spent some time with a client today going over her Curriculum Vitae and application letter to a potential employer. She really wants the position, is well qualified, and would be an asset to the business. Yet her CV doesn't reflect this.

It's okay to blow your own trumpet sometimes, and this is one of those times. **The sole purpose of your CV is to get an interview.** When writing it, think about all the things the employer needs to know which will make him/her realise you're just the person he/she's looking for. Keep it relevant, clear, succinct and don't lie or exaggerate.

Remember the basics:

- Make sure all your contact details are prominently displayed. Check your contact details carefully.
- List the qualification, provider/institution and year obtained with most recent first.
- List your work experience with position, business and years held with most recent first.
- If you are applying for a senior level position, remember to include some key achievements and accomplishments. Many employers will expect you to show you have performed at a high level.
- Make sure your referees know they are listed, tell them what job you are going for, and make sure their contact details are correct and current. Give them some background about the job and how you think you will be suited for this work. They're advocating for you – make sure they're well prepared.
- Pretty paper might look nice, but it's also a nuisance if your CV is going to be photocopied for distribution to an appointment panel. Keep your paper plain, white is fine, choose a font that is plain and easy to read.
- If your letter of application says "please phone me" or "please contact me at such and such a number" then make sure you stay by the phone or are easily contactable at the given email address.

Take note of the tone used in the advertisement – is it upbeat, casual and use contemporary language? Is it formal and conservative? Try to mirror the tone in your application letter. Be natural, but remember – this letter and your CV need to convince your potential employer that you will fit into the vacancy like a hand into a glove.

Try to keep your letter to a page – if members of the appointment panel have to read 20 letters of application, you risk them skimming over your precious epistle if you're too long winded. Write with the advertisement beside you, answer or acknowledge any specification that is mentioned in the advert but is not addressed in your CV.

Adhere strictly to any requests regarding applications – don't type if the advert asks for handwritten letters. Address your letter and envelope as requested. Show you can follow rules and you can read their instructions!

Now that's handy...

- If an Office XP programme encounters an error, don't panic – unlike previous versions, you are allowed to save your work before shutting down.
- You can select non contiguous text (text that's not next to each other) by holding the [Ctrl] key and using your mouse to highlight sentences, words or paragraphs.

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Me (in red) with my colleague Sue Trezise from **Sue-Lutions Ltd** at our stand at the Wellington Small Business Expo last week.

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