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How do you improve your odds of getting your dream job in the age of the algorithm?

We all know that all jobs and lots of CVs are now out there in the public domain; it's never been easier to find job vacancies and then to apply.

Many large technology companies receive 100,000s of job applications every year. How do they use their technology to sift through and find the best people for the job? What can we learn from them to help us get the job we really want?

Here are some top tips to match the algorithms and get your CV noticed!

Keep in mind why you want this job. You should be answering the question at the start of your CV. Why should they hire you?

Have you checked your spelling & formatting?

- There are plenty of tools out there to help with legibility, not least the Review tab in your usual document software, plus plugins such as Grammarly.
- Use black text and a usual font, that is simple, clean and consistent.
- Check your content for typing errors.
- Use bullet points. Put yourself in the place of the human reviewer, make it easy for them to glean the best information about you.
- Include your contact info. Again, you'd be surprised how many don't do this, so make sure your name and email address are visible. If you're applying for technical positions, include your Github link.
- If you require any adjustments, such as email contact, rather than a telephone call, mention them in your contact info.
- And finally, make sure your CV is saved as a PDF.

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Have you customised this CV to the job role?

- Write a new, specific CV for every job you apply for. Many IT recruiters now advise to keep it under a single page.
- The exception to this is that if you are applying for a technical or engineering position, you should have a number of relevant projects to list, and this might need a second page.
- Edit carefully and concisely. If you have loads of relative experience, describe it as succinctly as possible, while still getting your best information across.
- Keep your bullets short, ideally on one line.

I'm a technical specialist. What else should I include?

- The first is to include your Github link, or equivalent, at the top with your contact information.
- List your programming languages prominently. Wherever you are including your achievements and past positions, do include the programming languages you used for each project.

Have you applied the =X*Y*Z formula?

Articulate your experience in this very specific way: achieved X, as measured by Y, by implementing Z.

Focus on achievements, quantifiable results, and the impact that you had. Go for a succinct but punchy summary of what you have accomplished.

Examples:

Vague: "Member of Global Leaders Programme"

Better: "Selected as one of 300 for a 12m Continuing Professional Development programme for high-achieving diverse talent."

Best: "Selected as one of 300 participants nationwide for this 12-month Continuing Professional Development programme for high-achieving diverse talent based on leadership potential and academic success.

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Vague: "Won second place in hackathon."

Better: "Won second place out of 50 teams in hackathon."

Best: "Won second place out of 50 teams in hackathon at FastTech by working with two colleagues to develop an app that synchronises mobile calendars."

Vague: "Grew revenue for small and medium business clients."

Better: "Grew revenue for small and medium business clients by 10% quarter on quarter"

Best: "Grew revenue for 15 small and medium business clients by 10% quarter on quarter by mapping new software features as solutions to their business goals."

Top tip!
Be careful with jargon: only use acronyms if you're 100% sure that the reviewer will know exactly what they mean.

How about going one step further with formatting?

Following the usual rules on the flow of information will help you:

- Education before experience if you're a student or a relatively recent graduate, or experience before education, if you've been in work for more than a couple of positions.
- For recent school leavers or graduates, include your school / college / university, degree, month and year of graduation.
- If it's a while since you graduated or finished school, you can include less college and university information.
- Algorithms aren't so concerned about age and dates but you may want not to include that information.
- Highlight experience relevant to the position, and don't be afraid to leave out past positions and achievements, especially if they're not relevant.
- If you've got lots of experience that isn't entirely relevant, you could add a short footnote to that effect.

Need further help?

Call our Birmingham Office to speak to our Specialist Recruiters...
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