

Cvs deconstructed: applying the killer CV technique - case study 3

Introduction

This is our third article where we deconstruct a real CV and suggest changes to improve the impact and target it directly at the role being applied for. Note that some details have been amended for confidentiality reasons.

The [original CV](#) and [updated CV](#) can be viewed in full.

Summary of Original CV

Overall, this CV has many of the elements we would want to find and does not suffer from some of the [common mistakes when writing a CV](#). However, it can be enhanced to provide significantly more impact to get noticed. Remember, you only have 30 seconds of the reader's time to achieve this!

Whilst examining the CV we are looking to identify opportunities to develop changes which will improve the impact and targeting and maximize the chances of:

1. getting read at all.
2. gaining that all important interview.

Our other articles discuss in further details [how to target your CV](#) and [why a generalized CV does not work](#).

Before we look at each section lets look at the description of a job which the contractor is intending on applying for.

The Job Target

Title: Business Analyst/Bus Process Analyst Contract

Description: Banking. Experienced Business Analyst/Business Process Analyst. Any banking/financial services experience and specifically any business process experience surrounding call centre applications or CRM. Supporting the development and implementations of these core banking applications. Candidate required for involvement across the life cycle including development and testing cycles.

General Comments

This CV has good content but it could be presented better. The front page could have much more impact starting with a skills profile and achievements rather than drilling straight down into career history.

The CV is also it is a little bit wordy. The golden rule is to write as little as possible whilst retaining the content. Use bullet points and lots of white space rather than sentences.

Now, let's look at each section in turn to see how it could potentially be improved to maximize the chances of getting to the interviewing stage.

Name and Title

Original:

Curriculum Vitae
Jon Smith – Business Analyst

The font size of 'Curriculum Vitae' is too large commanding the same visual priority as name and title. There are also no contact details which were previously hidden on the second page in the original.

Improved:

Curriculum Vitae
JON SMITH
55 Cliff House, London, E12 3KL
Tel: 01234 567 899 Email: jonsmith@jonsmith.com

Now, let's look at the next area on this all important front page.

Profile

The original profile:

A driven graduate professional with over five years experience in software and Internet functional design who combines a rational and analytical mind with excellent time management and good interpersonal and presentational skills. Looking for a challenging role where she can combine her expertise in logical analysis with her passion for quality, strategic solutions design.

This is good although in drills down perhaps too deeply into details that are not directly relevant to the job target. Let's include words that target the job advert.

We will also include the title in the profile since we took it out of the heading earlier. It is better placed here in the context of the profile.

'Graduate' can be removed. The 5 years experience is more valuable than a degree and takes precedence.

We will also make it shorter to ensure we do not dilute the impact.

Improved:

High calibre **BUSINESS ANALYST** with 5 years experience in business and systems analysis. Heavy emphasis on business process modelling using OO techniques, UML, and case tools. Full life cycle experience. Now seeking next rewarding and challenging opportunity in a successful customer focused team.

Expertise

The original expertise:

Extensive experience in:

- o OO Analysis & Design following the UML standard
- o Rational Rose
- o Rational SoDA
- o Data and Entity Relationship Modelling
- o Test Strategy, Design and Implementation

Knowledge of:

- o Macromedia DreamWeaver, HTML, XML, PHP
- o MS Access, SQL
- o Artesia TEAMS, Virage VideoLogger
- o Test Director, Keystone, Silk Test
- o Perforce Document Management Tool, Visual SourceSafe
- o LotusScript, Java (Servlets), Perl
- o Microsoft® Certified Professional with Intranet Specialisation

We need to move the expertise to the first page to create a high impact. It must be easy for the reader to pick out the skills.

Solely having employment history written in sentences makes it more difficult for the reader to scan and discover the relevant skills.

Rather than 'extensive experience in' and then 'knowledge of' we will combine them all and take the negativity out. There is no reason to say you are average at something!

We also need to add some personal skills which we can take from the original profile.

The technical expertise is removed, since it is irrelevant to the job.

We also need to add some words and phrases from the job advert, like 'Business Process Modeling'

Listing the industries is useful in the expertise area. If you have industry experience then list them, otherwise don't.

Improved:

EXPERTISE

- o Extensive Business Process Modeling.
- o Data and Entity Relationship Modeling
- o OO Analysis & Design, UML
- o Customer liaison. Requirements extraction and documentation.

- o Tools: Rational Rose, Rational SoDA, Perforce Document Management.
- o Test case design and implementation. Test Director, Keystone, Silk Test
- o Artesia TEAMS, Virage VideoLogger
- o Familiar with iterative development and waterfall: RAD and RUP.
- o Excellent communication and presentation skills. Good team player.
- o Rational and analytical approach to problem solving.
- o Abundance of personal energy and drive.
- o Industries: Education, Television, Broadcast Media, Retail, Energy, Banking

Achievements

Achievements need to be added to the CV. It is important to show what benefits your clients have gained by applying your expertise. For example:

- ACHIEVEMENTS**
- o Designed and implemented structured business and systems analysis procedures which improved efficiency and quality of work within the Customer Requirements & Liaison team.
 - o Fully specified a business object model which consolidated the design across the programming arm of the company. This improved the speed and efficiency of development by 50%.

Bear in mind that the achievements section is one of the hardest sections to write. We have dedicated another entire article on explaining [how to write an achievement on your CV](#)

Career History

Here's part of the original section:

- May 2004 – present: XYZ Ltd.**
 An up and coming software development company specialising in software for the education sector.
Lead Business Systems Analyst – design and specification of standards and applications
- Top business analyst working on both a wide selection of projects simultaneously while developing standards and processes to improve the efficiency and quality of working within the Customer Relationship and Liaison department.

When viewing all the positions it is difficult to quickly ascertain job progression, duration in each position, and the companies worked for. We will change the layout to improve this lining up the dates, positions and companies for ease of reading. The duration of each position also needs adding so the agent does not have to work it out.

'Present' is not as attractive as 'Aug 2004', which implies 'available right now'.

Bullet points need to be used for readability rather than sentences.

The 'world travel' (see original) needs less visual priority since it is totally irrelevant to the job target!

The descriptions of the companies can be removed. They are not required and add clutter.

Here's an example of an improved version:

- May 2004 – Aug 2004 Lead Business Systems Analyst ABC Ltd**
 (4 months)
- o Design and specification of standards and applications using OO / UML.
 - o Worked within team across multiple projects.
 - o Developed standards and processes.
 - o Improved efficiency and quality of working within the department.

Education

This is fine.

Training and Development

The original CV does not have one. It would be the place to list all the relevant courses and training.

Interests / Personal

Remove place of birth and driving license since it is not relevant to position!

Conclusion

This CV has been improved by reordering the content, adding some achievements, targeting it directly to the role, and reducing the number of words by using bullet points rather than sentences.

The candidate now stands a better chance of getting a phone call from an agent after applying for a position.

Your CV Deconstructed?

If you would like us to deconstruct your CV in a future article then please email it to us at cvsdeconstructed@ContractorCalculator.co.uk. All names and work references are changed to ensure anonymity.

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