

## How to target your CV

### Introduction

In a [previous article](#) on this site we explained the [disadvantages of using a generalised CV](#). This article illustrates the technique of how to target the CV relating to different roles.

### Why Does The CV Need Targeting?

Whilst you may have a wealth of skills across a range of disciplines it is certainly not always the case that all of them are required for each potential position.

Rather than present the reader with a sweet jar of bits and bobs to take their pick from, you present them with a box containing only the chocolate they require.

You have 20 seconds to make an impact before your CV either goes in the bin or into the pile of potential candidates. Targeting your CV will ensure you maximise your chances of going into the latter.

### Starting With The Job Advert

We will approach this by looking at two opportunities previously advertised on [Jobserve](#) :

#### ADVERT 1

##### Web Developer

*Our client requires an experienced Web Developer for a 12 month FTC. You should have advanced experience of HTML, CSS and DHTML with strong JavaScript skills. You should have an understanding of project methodology and have experience developing Intranet and Extranet solutions for large companies. You will be working on the development of new Intranet, Internet and Extranet sites as well as doing the ongoing maintenance and enhancements of existing sites. You should have good client facing skills and be an excellent communicator.*

#### ADVERT 2

##### .NET Developer

*Our client is a medium sized organisation based in West Yorkshire, they are looking for a .NET Developer, with a minimum of 2yrs VB or ASP and 6 months commercial .NET experience. The client also requires knowledge of Web Services and Compact Framework, and should be comfortable with SQL Server, Access, XML, Crystal Reports and IIS. Optional skills that would be a benefit to the role would be HTML, JavaScript. Your desire to become part of a growing team and eventually move into a Team Leadership capacity will be what interests you. This organisation will be growing there IT department ten fold over the course of the next two years and as such will be opening a new data centre to help facilitate the growth in IT personnel. If you would like to work within a fast paced young dynamic team then please contact the office ASAP.*

These are similar roles with similar technical skills requirements, however, we need to target the CV specifically to match each opportunity and ensure we tell the reader what they want to hear within 20 seconds. We will assume for the purposes of illustration that you do actually possess all of the skills required within both roles. No telling porkies!

Lets first pick out the salient points from each advert before we incorporate them into the CV:

Advert 1: What they want to see:

- o Need a 'Web Developer'
- o Has done long contracts (e.g. 12 months plus).
- o Front end web skills: HTML, CSS, DHTML, Javascript.

- o Worked with large companies.
- o Experience of project life cycle.
- o Done new development and also maintenance.
- o Good communication skills with clients.

Advert 2: What they want to see:

- o .NET Developer – VB/ASP background. 6 months .NET
- o Web Services / XML.
- o SQL Server, Access, Crystal Reports
- o Fast paced. Young and dynamic.
- o Ambitious (to become a team leader later).

You may well have the skills for both of the roles, but notice that the roles place a different emphasis on those skills. The first advert is looking for a solid front end developer who can interact with clients. The second advert is looking for an ambitious .NET developer to build web services that sit on top of a relational database. On top of that they are looking for someone who wants to grow with them.

### Tailoring Your Profile and Expertise Sections

Now, using the salient points from the advertisements rewrite the profile and expertise sections. Here are some suggestions for both adverts:

Suggested Profile and Expertise list for Advert 1:

<p><b>PROFILE</b></p> <p>Experienced and very successful <b>WEB DEVELOPER</b> with a wealth of technical and business skills acquired in demanding roles with leading global industry players in financial services. Technical skills include JavaScript, HTML, CSS and DHTML with full understanding of life cycle and project methodologies. Now seeking next rewarding career opportunity to demonstrate substantial abilities and make an effective contribution in a successful client focused team.</p> <p><b>EXPERTISE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Extensive experience of Intranet, Internet and Extranet solutions.</li> <li>o Front end skills: HTML, CSS, DHTML, Javascript.</li> <li>o Full project life cycle: Design, development, testing, deployment and maintenance.</li> <li>o Mature and articulate communication skills – good with clients.</li> <li>o Flexible and adaptable approach to tasks - effective team player.</li> <li>o Meets demanding deadlines and targets working under pressure</li> <li>o (and so on – you need about 10 bullet points here)</li> </ul>
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Notice how we specifically address all of the points mentioned in the advert and that the 'banner headline' on this CV is 'WEB DEVELOPER'. It is not 'Software Developer' or 'Java Developer'– we tell them exactly what they want to hear.

Suggested Profile and Expertise list for Advert 2:

<p><b>PROFILE</b></p> <p>Ambitious and experienced <b>.NET DEVELOPER</b> with a wealth of technical and business skills acquired across a wide range of demanding roles within leading commercial organisations. Skills include VB, ASP, .NET Framework. Full understanding of project methodologies. Now seeking next rewarding career development opportunity to demonstrate substantial abilities and make an effective contribution in a young and dynamic client focused team.</p> <p><b>EXPERTISE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Extensive commercial experience of VB and ASP technical solutions.</li> <li>o Comprehensive knowledge of the .NET Framework, Web Services and the Compact Framework.</li> <li>o Relational Databases: SQL Server, Access</li> <li>o XML, Crystal Reports and IIS technologies.</li> <li>o Some experience of web development using HTML and JavaScript.</li> <li>o Self motivated and ambitious to develop into team leadership role.</li> <li>o Mature and articulate communication skills – good with clients.</li> <li>o Flexible and adaptable approach to tasks - effective team player.</li> <li>o Meets demanding deadlines and targets working under pressure</li> <li>o (and so on – you need about 10 bullet points here)</li> </ul>
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Again, notice we target exactly what is required in the job title and description and resist the urge to include things which are not relevant to this particular role. You might be a guru in Flash or Excel VBA, however they have not asked for that – you may have climbed Mount Everest last weekend, however, they haven't asked for expertise in mountaineering either!

### Don't Make Them Think

Getting your CV put into the 'possible candidate pile' and avoiding the bin is the whole point of your CV. It is a marketing document about you.

You need to ensure that you minimise the amount of thinking that an agent needs to do when reading your CV when they try and evaluate you for the position.

To do this you need to avoid the need for them to make mental leaps. For example, if they ask for someone who can do OO modelling you put 'OO modelling' on your CV rather than, or in addition to, putting something like 'Design using UML'. You know and your potential new boss probably knows that OO Modelling and Design with UML are the same thing, but does the agent? Thus, use the same words and phrases you see in the advert.

### Closing Comments

If you would like help preparing your CV then please contact Career Consultancy Services .

Good luck in your job search and look out for further tips from us on job search.

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- [Writing The Killer CV](#)
- [How to Structure a CV](#)
- [Writing Achievements on CVs](#)
- [Common CV Mistakes](#)
- [Targetting the CV Profile](#)
- [CVs Deconstructed: Example 1](#)
- [Killer CV Template](#)

#### Related Calculators:

- [Permanent To Contracting Calculator](#)
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- [Contractor Financial Profile Calculator](#)
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- [Jobserve](#)



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