

How to write a targeted profile on your cv

Introduction

When [writing a killer CV](#) for a contract application it needs to contain a profile of you, which indicates to the reader that you are perfect for the position.

This article explains what a profile is and provides advice and guidance for tuning the profile perfectly to the position.

What is a profile?

The profile is a very short (4 line) summary that states three main points:

What you are – your job title.

Your experience and what you have done.

What you are now looking for.

It is placed at the top of the front page of your CV below your name.

For example:

Experienced **DEVELOPMENT TEAM LEADER** with 10 years experience training and leading development teams to build Object Orientated Internet/Intranet applications using C#.NET, ASP.NET, SQL SERVER. Now seeking next challenging and rewarding position in a customer focused organisation.

Motivation for a well targeted profile

When the agent, or client reads your profile the ideal reaction you want is:

"Wow! This person looks perfect. I'll carry on reading the rest of the CV and probably invite them for interview."

A poorly targeted profile might invoke a response of 'Oh, this person is one of those, and we don't need one of those'.

Your profile should be adapted to match each application you make to optimise your chances of being selected for interview.

Your title

Use **BOLD CAPITAL TYPE** for your title. It will have more visual priority over the rest of the front page and ensure it gets read.

Use the exact same words for your title as you find in the application. If the requirement is for a Software Engineer, then you are a 'SOFTWARE ENGINEER'. If the requirement is for a 'Senior Developer' then you are now a 'SENIOR DEVELOPER'.

You do not have to use the same title that you had at your last permanent role. You are now your own boss, so you now call the shots on your title.

With regard to the IT market, since it is not a profession (like accounting, law etc) anyone can call themselves what they like without any formal qualifications. This results in many differences in what people expect certain job titles to mean. Provided you are confident you can do the job be as flexible as you like with your job title.

[Aside: You can also rename previous positions you've had in other companies (permanent or contract) to adapt to the position you are now applying for. You will want your job titles to look like you are progressing through your career.]

One word of warning: Never try and trade up your skills. For example, "Senior developer now looking for a team leader position." It will never work in the contract world. They will simply hire a team leader. Trading up works in the permanent market, because they get you cheaper than contractors in return for training you and offering you career growth. It doesn't work like that in contracting.

Length

Keep it brief. Four lines is all you need to make the three points. Anymore and you risk reducing the impact.

Detail

Avoid too much detail which overlaps with the purpose of the other CV sections. The number of years and a list of your primary skills is sufficient.

Remember, the purposes of the sections are:

Profile: What are you, primary skills, what you are looking for.

Expertise: List of your skills, that closely match the client requirements

Achievements: Backs up the expertise list, shows you are create value.

Career history: Shows than you have 'been there, and done it before'.

Each section should flow naturally into the next. This is discussed more in the article about [how to structure a CV](#).

Avoid irrelevant information

You may have some aspects of your career which you are quite rightly very proud of but unfortunately have nothing to do with the client requirements.

For example: If you are a SENIOR GAMES PROGRAMMER, and applying for a position in a bank, it would be sensible to change this to 'SENIOR DEVELOPER'.

Another example: If you have worked for software houses, but are applying to work in an organisation then it might be sensible to leave out 'X years experience working in software houses' if you feel the organisation might have something against the software house type mentality. However, if the client was a software house then of course you would leave it in.

The same applies to mentioning skills that have become redundant. You might have been the best coal minor in the country, but if no one wants coal minors anymore don't mention it.

Avoid mentioning anything that is irrelevant. Only present the sweets from your box of chocolates that the clients are looking for.

Education

If you are fresh out of university then you might want to include this in the profile. For example 'SOFTWARE DEVELOPER with degree in Mathematics.

If you have 1+ years experience then education is never mentioned until the education section on a CV, unless the job specifically demands it. In that case it would be included in the expertise section.

Education gets you your first job. Experience gets you the second.

Benefits for them - not you

In your 'now seeking...' sentence you simply need to state exactly what they want to hear, rather than what you want.

For example, there is little point in saying 'Looking to transfer my expertise to the banking sector'. This would be something you want, not what you can offer. The client is unlikely to have a requirement to pay contract rates to cross train someone for their position.

Contractors are hired because they have the skills the client wants and can hit the ground running. Contractors are never hired to be trained by the client, and neither does the client want the impression that the candidate wants to work for them to learn new skills and get them on their CV.

[Aside: In all aspects of job seeking never give the impression that you are looking to get anything out of it except satisfaction and money. You are not being paid to learn, but being paid for what you know.]

It is all about the client, and what you can do for them, not what they can do for you.

Years experience

Always include this to substantiate your level of experience.

This is how many years you have been working, not how many years with a particular skill. Number of years experience with particular skills can be listed in the expertise section if you wish.

Summary

Keep your profile short and relevant.

Good luck in your job search.

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