



Your CV and Effective Job Applications

Successfully structuring your CV can be a difficult and sometimes arduous task. People spend hours and sometimes hundreds of dollars on formatting and beautifying their CV, consultants at Chris Tan Consulting are happy to provide free advice on how to best tailor your CV, giving you a competitive advantage when next applying for that dream job.

Throughout this document we will address what we believe to be the following key points:

- What are employers looking for?
- What is a CV for?
- Structuring your CV
- Cover Letters
- Successful job application advise

Preparation is and always will be the key, as many employers will agree that *“not preparing, is preparing to fail”* and therefore Chris Tan Consulting believes the following factors must be addressed before even sitting down to write your CV:

- What do YOU want? (ie: Project Experience, Money, Status, Opportunity, Work/Life balance, Location etc)
- What are your unique selling points (USP's)?

How about if I am a graduate and looking for my first job? Does the above still apply?

YES!

Chris Tan Consulting is continually lending their experience; expertise and assistance to graduate's when it comes to preparing for and structuring their CV, Cover Letter, interview advice and general industry awareness. Chris Tan Consulting has found that those successful in securing what they want will not only follow the above protocol but will additionally:

- *Apply with numerous and different organisations.*
- *Research companies – Ask friends, media (internet, newspaper, TV etc), university lecturers, Industry bodies etc.*
- *Work experience*
- *Winning job application*
- *Winning interview*

What do employers look for?

Put yourself in the employer's shoes for a minute and imagine that you are looking to employ a graduate! What elements and attributes would you look for and identify with as having the potential of adding value to the organisation?

- **Contact Details** → Ensure all relevant information is clear and easily found. Should the employer wish to contact you they don't want to be flicking through five pages in order to find a phone number.



- **Education** → What are you studying – is it relevant to the position you applied for? Should be clear and on first page of CV.
- **Industry related Work Experience** → Again this should be easily identifiable and preferably on first page of CV.
- **Non-industry related work experience** → Employers like to see graduates that have held part time jobs whilst studying as it demonstrates loyalty, commitment, social awareness and communication skills amongst others.
- **Tertiary Grades** → If you are applying for a graduate position a copy of your academic transcript should be attached to your CV.
- **Achievements & Interests** → Be proud of your achievements and interests outside of work and study. In particular achievements should be seen as unique selling points – key elements to a successful CV.
- **Attitude** → Employers are increasingly looking to employ graduates and employees that have a pro-active attitude and this is something that needs to be displayed at Interview.
- **Focus & direction** → Employees with a clear focus and outlook on what they hope to achieve tend to achieve it more often than those who are unsure of what they want. Again this is an attribute you need to convey at interview.
- **Leadership & Communication skills** → Fairly straightforward, unless you have won a community leadership or public speaking award (in which case should be illustrated on CV) it will be at interview where employers will assess you on these attributes. Not surprisingly they are also two things that can easily leave a lasting impression on an employer long after the interview is complete.

What is a CV for?

- To get an interview
- It is a sales brochure
- It is a reference tool at interview
- It should NOT be a full account
- It should NOT contain irrelevant information
- Do NOT assume your CV will be read in full – Use bullet points where possible.

When structuring your CV there are a few points Chris Tan Consulting recommends you keep in mind.

- Make it clear & concise, it should be very easy to read
- Think to yourself what is the first thing you want the employer to see? Try to include these on the first page, not imperative and ensure you do not compromise the above point in order to do so.
- Focus on your unique selling points?
- Chronological order - Most recent (and in most cases relevant) first!



COVER LETTERS

Cover Letters should ideally compliment your CV and answer any questions your CV may raise or leave unanswered (ie: Why and when you are looking to relocate from interstate or overseas, prolonged breaks in employment, reasons for applying, do you hold a visa or do you require sponsorship etc).

It is easy for cover letters to be seen as a necessary evil however in truth if constructed carefully they have the potential to enhance your CV and further strengthen the case of why an employer should sit down and spend an hour or more of their time with you. Below are a couple of points that should be considered when writing a cover letter:

- Try to make them short punchy & concise – your potential employer is likely to be a very busy individual who is not going to be interested in reading large blocks of text.
- Why are you interested in the company? Look to relate their unique selling points back to your aspirations.
- Why they should interview you? What is it about you that separates you from the 500 other applications they have received for the same position.
- Personal circumstances? Why are you looking to move from your current employer? If you are applying from interstate or overseas then when do you anticipate arriving and are you familiar with the location for which the job is situated? If you are coming from overseas do you hold a current visa that will permit you to work in Australia or is this something that needs to be organised? Will you require relocation assistance and are you expecting the organisation to provide this?
- Don't make all your cover letters standardised, each and every company is different, as your cover letters should be!
- Don't assume they will be read.
- Cover letters should be NO LONGER than 1 PAGE.

Successful Job Applications

The aim of a job application is to secure an interview and this point should not be lost. Summarised below are some key points which Chris Tan Consulting believes will assist you in successfully securing your dream job.

- Work hard → Apply to a variety of organisations.
- Research the market & companies you wish to make applications with.
- Tailor each application to the specific position and organisation.
- Sell yourself → Understand and project your unique selling points!
- Chase your applications → Often brings it to the top of the pile!
- Attitude, enthusiasm & charisma → Together they form the key elements of a successful job hunter.
- Learn from each experience