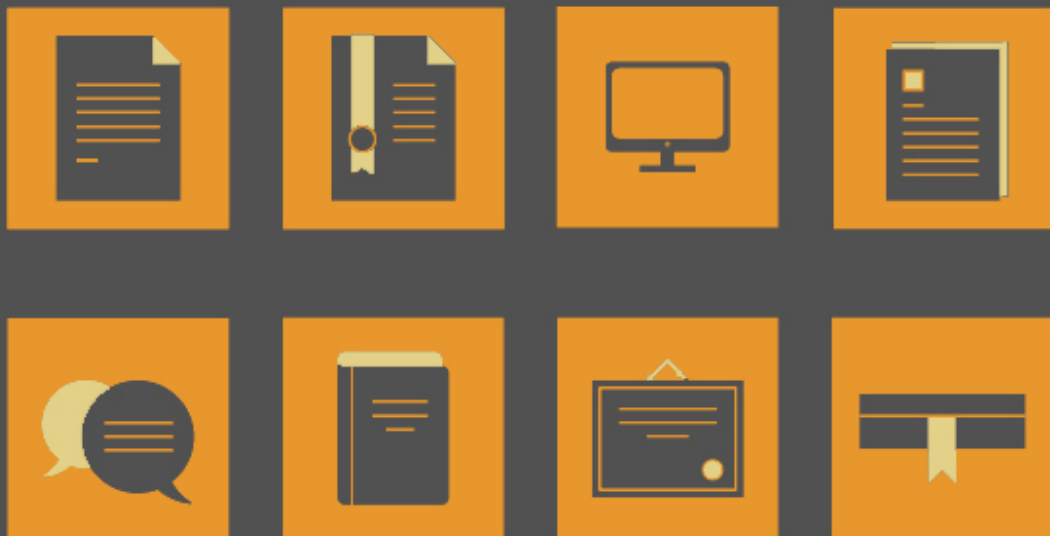


THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO A WINNING CV

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
TO GET WORK IN THE
SECURITY INDUSTRY.



TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR CAREER DESTINY.

It is harder now than it has been at any point over the past 15 years to gain work in the security industry. Getting your CV on the right desk, at the right time, and read by the right person has always been something of a dark art or extreme fortune. The general consensus has been that it's more about who you know, rather than what you know. But the landscape is changing and now more than ever, there is a heightened and equal emphasis on what you know and how well you perform. So, that's the good news! But here's the thing, none of that matters if you don't know how to present yourself in the most professional manner.

By downloading this toolkit you're already distinguishing yourself as someone who is prepared to invest in themselves and their career. Use the advice and tools included in this guide to enhance your professional standing.

The time is NOW! Seize the opportunity to get ahead of the pack. Build momentum, get engaged, and stay motivated. A career in the security sector is amongst the most rewarding and satisfying of any industry, but it won't happen by accident.

The BBA Team

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SHOULD YOU USE A PROFESSIONAL CV WRITER?

When applying for a job, you are almost always required to submit a copy of your most up-to-date CV. You want it to be as professional looking as possible and hiring a professional CV is one way you can increase your chances of getting the job you're targeting.

Who are professional CV writers?

A professional CV writer is often a freelancer writer, who specialises in writing CV's. Many have qualifications or years of experience with creating professional CV's. In all honesty, the decision as to whether or not you want to hire the services of a professional CV writer is yours to make, but there are a number of benefits to doing so.

Benefits

- They hold specific training and experience in this field.
- Many freelance writers have a degree related to journalism or English.
- They will see many examples of your competitors and peers CVs and through comparison may be able to advise on a strategy for improvement.
- Some professional CV writers have worked in HR or as hiring managers and therefore know what employers look for in a CV.
- It will lessen the work you would otherwise have to do yourself (you'll still need to be in communication with your hired CV writer, as they need to gather information on your work history and education, but that is about it).
- Many people struggle with the concept of promoting themselves and often water down their own achievements, the very things, which will get you noticed. Professional CV writers will prise this vital info out of you and project it.
- When enlisting professional writing services, you don't have to settle for second best; you should always be given the best

service and the best results available (many professional CV writers have satisfaction guaranteed policies).

Downside

- Cost

There are a vast amount of professional writers available to choose from, especially if you use the Internet to examine all of your options. So, you should be able to find plenty of services with affordable rates. However, it is important that you don't go too cheap; REMEMBER — the whole point of contracting the services of a professional is to ensure that you get professional results. Spending one to two hundred pound on a professional CV writer really isn't that bad of a deal, especially when you consider that by employing their services it may get you a higher paying job!

It's worth bearing in mind that jobs advertisements, especially those listed online, receive hundreds, sometimes thousands of applicants. From all of those applicants, you would actually be surprised to see how many do not use the services of a professional CV writer. In fact, many do not even bother to get them proof read. Hiring the services of a professional writer will give your CV a professional look and feel, a look and feel that most hiring employers want to see and which will instantly put you ahead of the competition.

3 PRINCIPLES FOR SUCCESSFUL CV WRITING

Potential employers are flooded with applications in response to their job postings; you only have a small window of opportunity to make a suitable impression before your CV goes in the shredder. So, how do you optimise your CV to ensure that it gets read? Consider the following 3 guiding principles before going any further, they should underpin everything you go on to write.

1. Be Comprehensive, yet Succinct.

While your CV should contain a detailed account of your qualifications and accomplishments, you must stay focused on the job you are applying for. If you are applying for a position as a security manager, for example, you don't need to include references to your stint as a cab driver. The employer is only interested in the skills and work experience that relates directly to the position they are advertising, so give them what they are looking for. When considering your complete work history and skillset choose to highlight only what is relevant, and eliminate that which is not — less is more when it comes to extraneous information. It may be necessary to list non-relevant positions to explain career gaps, but don't assign any greater significance to them than is warranted. This strategy ensures your CV stays focused and gives you the appearance of being the most qualified candidate for the job.

2. Don't Neglect Formatting. It's Essential, Not a Luxury

Your CV represents you, or at least how you want an employer to think of you. Therefore, funky fonts and experimental layouts are best left for personal communications; your CV needs to exude

professionalism. It is essential that you pay close attention to spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Nothing could be more damaging to your prospects than a CV with typos, grammatical errors, and misspellings. Presenting a CV with errors will not impress potential employers and will likely result in your CV embarking upon a one-way trip to the shredder! Don't rely on computer based spelling and grammar checks. Check it yourself, and if possible, get someone else to proof read it for you. Also be wary of unintentional reformatting that sometimes occurs when uploading your CV to an Internet based submission service. Often, you will lose your carefully formatted work only to find it replaced with the wrong margin, strange fonts and worse. Before you send it, check it and where possible send PDF's as this will prevent any unexpected alterations.

3. Exude Enthusiasm

Your CV and cover letter should not be something that you write begrudgingly. If you are excited about the job you are applying for, then show it, and if you're not, then fake it! Your enthusiasm will come across in your CV and cover letter and will impress perspective employers. No employer, regardless of the industry would want to take on someone, from day one who was unmotivated and lacking in enthusiasm. Project this enthusiasm by, wherever feasible, using action words to describe your career history and goals.

THE 7 SECRETS OF A SUCCESSFUL CV

So, you've incorporated the principles from the previous section and managed to get your CV included in the 'for consideration' pile. You're down to the final few and neck-and-neck with your industry peers all vying for a single sought-after position. What are you going to do to win this final battle? Nothing now, it's already too late, but hopefully you made sure that these 7 vital hallmarks of a winning CV were included before you sent your application off.

1. I Don't Have All the Required Skills – Do I Mention It?

Yes, and address it directly. Demonstrate why this won't be a problem by highlighting similar qualifications and transferable experience gained in other areas. If you identify a skill shortfall explain that you 'have already begun learning it' or have 'enrolled onto a course in anticipation'. Use this as an opportunity to promote yourself, the type of candidate you are – ambitious, confident and invested in personal development. You'll be surprised to find that many employers appreciate this self-motivated, pro-active attitude and will value you ahead of other applicants who already have the requisite qualifications in place but don't display the same aptitude.

2. Be confident, be bold, be what they're looking for!

Always incorporate the advertised job title into your CV. Place it under or next to your name as a statement of intent. This tells any recruiter looking at your CV that you consider yourself to be that which they're looking for – eliminate ambiguity from the off! Look back through past work experience for any opportunity where you may have carried out any of the tasks associated with the position you're now applying for. For example: a CPO who is now considering

Risk Management positions will invariably have conducted risk and threat assessments in his current role and this should be leveraged to your advantage when applying for the new position. Be creative but avoid BS!

3. Get Straight into it!

Eliminate all the non-essential clutter so often found at the beginning of CV's, this will enable you to get the most important, attention grabbing information onto the first page. Essential bio data can go at the end of the document, but if it's not important then get rid of it altogether. Your address does not need to be on your CV; it's unlikely that you'll be submitting a postal application but if you do then include the address on your covering letter. If you live in an area of high demand for your services, such as a capital city then incorporating it into your personal statement; 'London based, Close Protection Officer with over 14 years experience,' for example.

4. Research: Be the Perfect Fit

It's easy to be the perfect fit for any job, if you know what the employer is looking for. Divide a page of A4 paper into 2 columns. Down one side list all the qualities that an employer would want from

a candidate. Then in the opposite column, address each requirement by listing the credentials you possess that make you ideally suited for the job. Find an answer to every question, even if it seems as though you don't have the necessary skill or experience - as covered in Tip 1.

The more you know about the position/job/company the more tailored and relevant your CV can be. Speak to other people who have held this position, join groups and industry associations to get the inside knowledge from those in the know!

5. Avoid Long Egocentric CV's

Unless explicitly stated, there will be an expectation that your CV will be 2 pages in length. Exceeding this industry-standard does not indicate vaster experience and equate to there having been 'simply no other way to convey such a volume of essential information' other than for you to spew your whole career autobiography across 6, 7 or even 8 pages. In fact, it says quite the opposite.

What an excessively long CV actually tells an employer about you:

- You're long-winded (*poor communicator*).
- You struggle to identify and emphasise the relevant points (*ineffective communicator*).
- Your presentation of data is poor (*lacking basic IT skills*).
- You display a poor understanding & execution of basic processes (*inexperienced*).

- You just can't be bothered to refine it (*lazy*).
- You have an overinflated belief in your own importance (*narcissist, arrogant, not a team player*).
- You don't follow protocol, believing you know better (*stubborn, close minded*).
- Perhaps you deliberately rebel against convention (*non-conformist, anti-authority*).

'Some of', 'none of', or 'all of the above' may be true of you but whatever the case, you certainly don't want to promote it to an employer!

6. Get Socially Smart

In an age of easily accessible information any recruiter worth their salt will conduct their due diligence on all candidates whose CV's make it through to the final round of deliberation. Get search engine savvy and objectively research yourself as if you're the recruiter. Imagine you're starting from a blank and try to put together a dossier of information on yourself just based on what you can obtain through searching online. If you see something questionable or that may project a negative impression of you then do something about it. One great tip is to proactively steer the recruiter by adding a link, via a QR code to a professional online profile. This is also a great

workaround for offering more information (to a recruiter who wants it) than what you can fit on a 2-page CV.

7. Value Your Achievements

Listing achievements is far more important than you realise. This is what will help distinguish you once you've become inseparable from other candidates in terms of experience and skills. Once your CV has made it through to the final stages you can safely assume that all candidates satisfy both essential and desirable requirements. It is at this point when an employer starts considering you as a personality; what do you have to offer, what are your guiding principles and how will you fit into the team dynamic? List 2 or 3 things that you've accomplished, they can be professional, personal, sporting, charitable anything, but try to link your achievement to an obvious tangible benefit for the employer.

Remember!

In many cases, the first person looking at your CV isn't reading it; they're not even looking at it objectively to see if you fit the job description — they're simply scanning it to see if they can identify any reason to eliminate you on the grounds of suitability. So, let's aim not to give them any cause to do so. Once you've implemented the 7 tips above, we'll focus on what not to do, in the next section.

7 CV MISTAKES TO AVOID

So, you're close to putting together a knockout CV, tailored specifically for the position to which you're applying and you're ready to pull the trigger. Wait! Let's take one last look to ensure you're not making any of these 7 common CV mistakes.

1. Bland or Generic Personal Statement

For some unknown reason this paragraph has become an exercise, for many, in writing unoriginal, bland, ‘job speak’. However, this provides you with a great opportunity to avoid the all-to-frequent generic babble and write something, which will capture the reader’s attention.

2. Uninformative Job Description

“I was responsible for security of the main residence.” — So what? What does that mean? Instead consider what knowledge and experience did you gain which will have value to a future employer - What plans did you devise and what strategies did you implement? What challenges did you encounter and how did you overcome them? What technology and software did you use and thereby became proficient in the use of? What seems obvious to you may not to others.

3. No Room to Breathe

In your attempts to condense the plethora of qualifications you’ve amassed and make them fit into 2 pages, don’t then render your whole CV illegible in the process. Your layout and use of white (breathing) space should make for a pleasant reading experience for any recruiter

4. Ambiguous Employment Credentials

Yes, we're in the security industry and confidentiality is paramount, but be careful you don't confuse a healthy respect for confidentiality with a stubborn, overly-guarded attitude towards information dissemination. This in and of itself is a valued skill, which employers will judge you on. Furthermore, irrespective of your vast experience, if an employer cannot validate it then it's likely to effect your chances of getting the position.

5. Avoid Schizophrenia

"John is, Simon said, Andrew did" are all examples of a schizophrenic, or split personality. Oddly enough this isn't top of most recruiters 'desirable quirks' list — so don't do it.

6. Bet You Can't Guess my Age!

Regardless of your age, it is not a suggested strategy to avoid assigning dates to age defining events such as graduation, military service etc. Leaving the date off suggests you're hiding something, which you are and it could result in your application being rejected.

7. Physical Aesthetics

Though less commonly requested these days, physical copies of your CV should be shown the same respect as their digital counterparts, with regards to presentation. While this might be the first opportunity you've had to 'get creative' since your childhood, you should suppress all urge to turn this into a scrapbooking exercise! Use a high quality ivory paper, do not create unnecessary cover pages and avoid attaching stationary trinkets – the recruiter is only interested in the information contained on the pages and won't take kindly to any extra effort needed to be able to access it.

Okay, that's it, you're ready to go! If you've followed all of the advice in these sections you should feel confident that you now have a CV capable of getting you through the elimination rounds and all the way to the interview. Remember, even the best CV can only present the achievements and credentials you actually have. It is therefore fundamental for any operator who wants longevity in the industry to commit to professional development (CPD). For more information and free tools on CPD go to:

<https://www.the-bba.org.uk/development>