

Increasing your sales interview invites - Tips on writing a strong sales CV

My name is Charles Noyce; I have been recruiting sales people since 1997. I have put this guide together to help sales people place their best foot forward when submitting their CV.

As a recruiter I would normally receive anything from 10 to a 100 CV's per day, every day. In that time I have seen the great, the average and the downright disastrous CV's.

There is a saying that a CV doesn't always tell you how good a sales person is, and there is some truth to that statement. You can't really tell how people present in the flesh or over the phone from just a CV.

There is also a school of thought that says that if you can't present your features and benefits in a CV, then how on earth can you do that in person? Your CV is the only thing that tells me what you are like. So how it presents and the information it contains is all I have to help me make an initial decision on whether you are relevant for what I am looking for, and, determines my decision to engage with you, or not.

The CV is an introduction of you as an applicant. It's a statement of your experience, abilities and track record. Most quality recruiters are experienced CV readers, they have looked at 000's of CV's and in most cases they review for no more than a few minutes before making a decision on what they do next.

Recruiters are looking quickly to find out key facts. They receive hundreds of CV's each day so how do you make yours stand out as "The sales candidate" the recruiter will call straight away?

The recruiter is at any one time juggling five to twenty-five live open positions and will in most cases be looking for a few essentials on your CV. These are generally,

- **Role title and key responsibilities** (how do you sell and to whom),
- **KPI's and Targets** (what are your daily, weekly, quarterly or yearly activity and revenue targets),
- **Achievements and recognition** (what did you achieve and what have you been awarded).

I see so many CV's of "sales" people that have no details of what they have sold or what they have achieved. In my opinion if this information is not on the CV then more than likely I don't have a career sales person, and there will be a good chance I won't be calling you.

The Basics - Putting the CV together

Less is more. Remember, the CV isn't your life story; it's an advert for your ability as a sales person or sales manager. Keep it factual and to the point. Bullet point your abilities and performances.

The best CV's of some of the most senior sales people I have dealt with have been a maximum of 2 pages. The CV had the details I was looking for and I had no hesitation in picking up the phone to call them there and then. The CV had done its job.

Focus on the last 2 or 3 roles if you are an experienced sales person. Recent experience is in most cases the key skills we are looking for. You can list the roles and companies in your past and chat through those in more detail with the recruiter on the phone.

I recommend that for your current role and previous ones that you follow these basic rules when setting out your CV:

- **Name and contact details** - Email and a mobile are best contacts. Don't give out the details if you don't want us to contact you on those numbers. Where is home for you, are you happy to travel or relocate.
- **Company Name** - Have a brief two sentence description of what the company does. Include key words and industry terms; CV parsing technology will pick up your CV based on industry key words and terms, so make sure the hooks are there. Recruiters look for industry jargon & key words when scanning CV's.
- **Role title and dates in the role** (Month and year started/ finished)

Responsibilities

- Have 3 or 5 bullet points on the responsibilities and the outcomes of what the role is to achieve.
- The first bullet point should be a concise statement on what the outcome is of the role you do. Is it to generate new business revenue for the company, develop existing revenue streams or manage a team to achieve? Focus on the activities you are expected to perform to ensure success.
- Use language specific to sales, talk about cold calling, prospecting, relationship development, face to face meetings, pipeline management, staff management and leadership of teams.

- Are you a sector specialist? Do you target a specific decision maker within an organisation? Do you engage other people within your business or other businesses to achieve the goals of the role?

Targets & Achievements

- What are you expected to achieve and what have you achieved in the time you have been there. Include your KPI's as well as revenue targets. Facts and figures only please.

Of course this isn't the only information you would have on your CV, but if the sales information isn't there then you are going to be overlooked.

If you already have a CV, review it in light of the above and see what needs changing. If you don't have a CV, make sure you follow these basic rules and in both instances I guarantee you more engagement with recruiters, and increased interviews.

Finding a job is a full time job in most cases, so fill up your interview pipeline and let the deals (Interview Invites) fall through at the other end of the funnel.

Good luck in your job search

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