

# CAREER TIPS

'DON'T CALL US, WE'LL CALL YOU' OR 'ONE OF THE CHOSEN FEW'.

by Lola Elroi

Even though you are not a salesman by trade, there often comes a time when your sales technique has to be at its sharpest and most effective. That time is when you have to sell yourself. A.K.A – When you're writing your CV.

A CV (Curriculum Vitae) is by and large your first step to selling yourself to potential employers. So it's imperative that this stage of the employment process is effective.

The format of your CV should be sharp, concise, to the point and eye-catching regardless of the employment level you are at. Use bullet points to highlight achievements instead of long winded sentences. It is amazing the number of very good and eye-catching Resume (CV) templates included with MS Word, which no one uses. There is no excuse for a shoddy, cumbersome or badly written CV.

Explore MS Word, press F1 for help and type in "Templates" in the "What would you like to do" box and follow the instructions for Resume Templates. It's amazing what one or two strategically placed lines can do to the look of a CV.

If your CV is an amalgamation of 7 of your friends' and colleagues' CVs all cut and pasted together, then there are a few additional tasks you will have to carry out other than just cutting and pasting:-

**1. Consistency:** Ensure that, by and large, one font type and size is consistently used throughout the CV

**2. Avoid Duplications:** Just before you send out your CV, read through again from beginning to end and edit out any duplications/repetitions – which is a common occurrence in 'cut and paste' CVs

**3. Review Spellings:** Spell check using your spell checker and also by manually reading through. Find out what the **acceptable number of pages** is for the specific industry you are looking to gain employment in, and try and ensure your CV pages do not exceed this.

If you are certified with any of the "sought after" industry accreditations, for example, the

ITIL exam for an IT Consultant, why don't you cut out and paste a small ISEB logo and place it tastefully at the top left-hand corner of your CV. Not many people do this but it's different, and makes the CV stand out in a crowd of others.

Know the **terms and buzzwords of the industry** you belong to, and don't be afraid to use them. The same way that you would strategically drop these words in a face to face interview, feel free to drop these words on your CVs too. Be specific with your terms. A CV with "3 years experience of PeopleSoft/SAP/Oracle implementation and administration" will generate more hits than someone who used a generic term of "3 years ERP application implementation and administration".

If you are well and truly blessed from above and you are multi talented and multi skilled, be prepared to be multi-CVed! That means, have different versions of your CVs to suit different roles and industries. This enables you to **highlight the relevant** aspects of your experiences for different roles. Sometimes it's the fact that you have banking experience you want to highlight. Other times you may want to lay emphasis on the fact that you have leadership skills. Find out the requirements of the job you are applying for, and edit your CV to suit it. In 'CV land', the "One size fits all" approach isn't always the best.

Be prepared to explain away any gaps that are in your CV. Acceptable explanations include "I went travelling", "I was on a course".

Employers love candidates who are immediately available, even though they may not be required to start for another 4 weeks or so. Don't hesitate to include your availability in your CV. It sometimes makes a difference.

