



## **DON'T UNDER-SELL YOURSELF WITH AN INEFFECTIVE CV**






**Interim Management is a highly competitive business and it is important that your CV sets you apart from the crowd.**

For the reasons given below, this does not mean utilising special formatting, diagrams and pictures. In fact, in some cases, such an approach can actually jeopardise your chance of success. You may have many variations to your CV depending on whom you are wishing to attract, but always be factual

The CV is a key piece of your marketing approach and it is important to spend time getting it right. The following guidelines should set you well on your way to developing an effective CV, which will get you that all-important interview. From then on, it's up to you!

### **Who will receive your CV?**

You could be sending your CV to any of the following and you might have to adapt it and have many versions:

-  a service provider (agency)
-  a potential client
-  people in your personal network
-  business banking service
-  venture capital company

So let's begin by looking at your CV from *their* perspective – always a good place to start!

### **The Service Providers Perspective**

Some Service Providers get up to 400+ CV's every month. They look for key information which indicates that the candidate has the right profile (seniority, experience, functional knowledge etc) which they work with. If they do, then it is likely that the service provider will scan your CV into a database (some may wish to meet you *before* they do this).

When the Service Provider identifies an assignment, they will go to their database and do an initial trawl and possibly a key word search, which will identify potential candidates. If the search identifies you as a potential candidate, the service provider will want to speak/meet with you (if they have not already done so) to check your availability, brief you on the assignment and further assess your suitability.

They may also give you the opportunity to tailor your CV for the specific opportunity. This does not mean that you create a work of fiction that will land you an assignment you can't deliver on, but it means that you can emphasise and add any aspects of your skills, knowledge or experience that are particularly relevant.

## The Clients Perspective

The client is going to select an interim manager based on:

- ✚ **Competence** – do you have they the skills and knowledge needed?
- ✚ **Credibility** – do you have they the right experience in the right places?
- ✚ **Compatibility** – will you ‘fit in’, do you speak the same language?

Your CV should aim to demonstrate as much as possible how you meet these three criteria.

A client will, in most cases, see an ideal candidate as having solved the type of problem they currently have, probably within the same sector, and within a respected organisation of a similar size. Now, it’s not an ideal world and it’s unlikely anyone will be a perfect fit on all counts, but the closer you get to the ideal, the greater the likelihood of winning the assignment.

## CV Guidelines

It’s not possible to gain complete agreement on exactly how a CV should be structured. However, the following guidelines have been compiled following countless discussions with clients and service providers.

### General

- ✚ The primary focus of your CV should be on what you have achieved recently - the results that you have achieved and the business transformations that you have led
- ✚ Start with a brief statement which clearly describes what you are capable of – your *Value Proposition* (who you are, what you do, what you have achieved). Be factual, because people become wary (and weary) of vague clichés such as ‘highly motivated’, ‘enthusiastic’, ‘confident’ etc.
- ✚ Follow this with a summary of your career in reverse chronological order. A line which describes your role, start and end dates, followed by bullet points outlining your *key achievements*, quantified wherever possible. Be precise; ‘increased turnover by £50,000’ does not mean much but ‘increased turnover by 20%’ says so much more about you .If you can demonstrate a coherent role progression, that is valuable
- ✚ Personal details can be added at the end. You are not required by law to state your age, but I recommend that you do! Interims are mostly hired for their experience which usually comes with age. When it comes to hobbies, if you have nothing more than ‘going to the pub’ or ‘walking the dog’, I suggest that you leave it out altogether
- ✚ Keep it to 2/3 pages at most. Work that you did 15/20 years ago is not particularly relevant unless it applies to an assignment which you are chasing
- ✚ Get a name to send it to where possible and include a covering letter/e-mail highlighting the main thrust of your CV

### Specific to Clients

- ✚ Special formatting, diagrams and pictures are more acceptable in this case as it is unlikely that the client will be filing them in a large database for a subsequent search
- ✚ Research the client before you send the CV. The more you can tailor your CV to their language and the issues that they are facing, or are likely to be facing, the better
- ✚ Again, get a name and title to send it to rather than e.g. ‘info@’. You can then further tailor your covering letter to the person in that role
- ✚ Make a friend of the PA and use him/her to get you to the right person

### *Specific to Service Providers*

- ✚ Target service providers who work in your area of expertise. Although many are generalists, others will specialise in certain sectors such as public sector, HR and board level.
- ✚ Send your CV electronically. It will be easier for the service provider to load it into their database.
- ✚ As the CV is likely to be downloaded into a database, fancy formatting, pictures and diagrams will complicate this hugely. Keep it simple
- ✚ Make sure therefore that all the relevant key words for the roles you have held, the industries you have worked in and your achievements are included in your CV.
- ✚ Some service providers get so many CV's that they have do not have the time to read them all in depth. Some will admit that they will pull a CV up on their screen and make a decision based on what they immediately see (this equates to about the first half page!). Make sure that you fill that first half page with important information you need to get across. This will probably be at least your *value proposition* and your last role together with your key achievements.

For further information on marketing yourself and building a successful career as an interim manager, I strongly recommend you enrol on the IMA accredited 'Interim Manager Induction Workshop'. At just £295.00, the fee can be recovered in just half a day working as an interim manager. Please visit [www.Results-in-Business.com/imw](http://www.Results-in-Business.com/imw) for further information.

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