

## **New Level Recruitment – helping you find your next Health & Safety job**

### **Job Seekers fact sheet 1**

#### **Writing your CV**

**Be clear**  
**Be concise**  
**Be accurate**

In our line of business we spend a lot of each day reading CV's – some good, some bad, some frankly astonishing! Since a good CV is such an important tool in presenting yourself to a potential employer, we thought it was time we put together a few tips on how to write a good one, as well as a bit of background information on how recruitment really works. We hope it's helpful!

Remember that most of this information applies equally whether you are applying via a Health and Safety recruitment agency like New Level Recruitment or direct to a potential employer. The principles are the same.

**Fact** – your CV is the first contact a recruiter will have with you. It is essential that it gives a good professional impression. Chances are that the first person to read it will be a relatively junior person, not necessarily experienced in your field of expertise (the staff at New Level Recruitment being a notable exception!). He/she will have been given a list of requirements by the boss, and told to screen all applications according to that list. If they can't tick the boxes, or the information is too hard for them to find (hidden away in convoluted paragraphs, for example), then they are unlikely to bother going any further – your CV will be dumped firmly in the "too hard" basket, and go straight to the bottom of the pile.

So how do you go about writing a clear, concise, accurate CV that will grab the recruiter's attention and inspire him/her to read it again, more closely and with proper attention?

#### **Content**

- List all previous employment chronologically, starting with your current or most recent position first. One of the things a recruiter or a potential employer will want to do is to add up all the dates to see that they tally – a gap of 1, 2 or 15 years will confuse matters and make them wonder what you were up to in that time. If whatever you were doing isn't relevant to the position you're applying for now, then just put in one line that covers that period but makes it clear that it wasn't related to your current career.
- List all your qualifications, putting the ones relevant to your current career at the top of the list – if you're in the middle of a course that is relevant, put that on the list, but make it clear you don't actually have the qualification yet.
- Remember to put your name, address and contact details on top of the first page – sounds obvious, but you'd be amazed how many people forget!
- Remember to put your nationality (and if you're not a UK/EU citizen then you should state your visa situation.) This isn't being nosy, it's because recruitment agencies have a legal responsibility to ascertain that anyone they put forward for a position in the UK actually has the right to live and work here.

- Keep it short – the rule of thumb is to try and keep it to 2 pages, but that can be difficult, we know. 3 pages are usually ok, but no more. Remember that your CV is an introduction, not a life history. You can go into all the detail you like when you get to interview.
- Tailor your CV to the specific role you are applying for – this is a good idea, but not always do-able, as I'm sure you realise. Quite often you are submitting your CV to multiple companies in a short space of time, often "on spec", so you don't have time to do that. At the very least, though, it should be tailored to highlight your suitability for the specific industry you are applying for.
- It isn't necessary to give details of other people at all – this is YOUR CV, not your ex boss's, or your partner, or your children. A recruiter is initially only interested in reading about you – finding out the rest can come later.

### **Format**

- Don't use fancy graphics/borders/photos etc. They just detract from the real message, which is YOU - what you've already done and what you're capable of doing.
- Check your grammar and spelling! It isn't hard nowadays, with the spell check function, but so many people don't bother. A badly spelt, ungrammatical CV will have you heading straight into the dreaded too hard basket, whereas a correctly spelt CV with good grammar will help send you straight to the top of the pile. Something worth remembering though, is to read the document after the computer has checked it – common errors like "roll" instead of "role" , "wood" instead of "would" or "there" instead of "their" do nothing for your credibility.

### **Cover letters**

- These really should be written afresh for every position you apply for. Ideally you will have done your research and have the name and job title of the person who will be reading it, but if you are forced to send a generic "Dear Sir/Madam" letter, make sure you tailor it to the specific company, industry and role.

So there you go – a job winning CV in a nutshell! We hope you find this information useful, and we look forward to reading your new CV!