



## Registrant Resources - Information Overload

Issue 44, April 2006

---

### Welcome:

Welcome to the April edition of Information Overload for Registrants and other interested readers.

This month we re-visit the most important document you will ever write – professionally speaking. We are of course, talking about your CV or Curriculum Vitae. This document has the power to get you to the interview stage or an application process or not depending on the words that you use. The question is, why don't we give it the importance it really deserves?

We would like to thank you in advance for forwarding on this edition to interested friends and colleagues,

If you would like to read any of the back issues or the main edition of Information Overload you can find these on our web site - <http://www.iea.com.au>.

Lorraine Bradshaw  
Marketing Coordinator & Projects Officer

---

### In this issue we will look at:

- Your CV: probably the most important document you will ever write
  - Covering page: Necessary or not?
  - To bind or not to bind, that is the question
  - Do you need to use coloured paper and fancy fonts?
  - The importance of having a Master CV
  - Customising your CV
  - Components of a CV
- A Thought to ponder

### Your CV: probably the most important document you will ever write

If your CV is the most important document you will ever write, it makes me wonder why we do not give it the attention it deserves. For most people a CV is something that is updated just before you apply for another job, we add a few comments relating to our current position and cross our fingers and hope the employer can read between the lines.

Did you know that a prospective employer looks at every document that you send as evidence of good written communication skills, attention to detail and presentation? If the job were on the other "foot" would you employ "you" based on the written documents that you sent? Or is it a case of – oh dear, could do better. Please bear in mind that we are not after perfection, but we are looking for evidence that you are the best candidate for the position on offer. So how do we achieve this? **The first point is this:** Make sure that you update your CV when you make any significant change to your life. Have you changed names, moved house; are your contact details correct? You should also make sure that you add all information relating to training courses that you have been on, or new skills that you have acquired. I can guarantee you will forget about them in the panic of trying to get your application ready on time.

---

© IEA 2006. All rights reserved. You are free to use material from the Information Overload newsletter in whole or in part, as long as you include acknowledgement of source.

**Information Enterprises Australia Pty Ltd**  
Unit 4, Upper Level, 201 High Street, FREMANTLE WA 6160  
Tel: 08 9335 2533 Fax: 08 9335 2544 e-mail: [training@iea.com.au](mailto:training@iea.com.au)

### **Covering page: Necessary or not?**

As a general rule of thumb, a covering page is a waste of paper. Unless you are applying for a position as a designer, then fancy fonts that state your name and address are of little value.

### **To bind or not to bind, that is the question:**

Every position that you apply for has different submission requirements, and the document(s) that you send to a prospective employer should follow their guidelines and requirements exactly. Whilst you may choose to bind your master CV (more on these in a minute) it is important to note, that in most cases the document(s) that you send will be photocopied. Therefore, it is important not to staple or bind your document(s) as this will make it difficult for the prospective employer to copy them.

### **Do you need to use coloured paper and fancy fonts?**

The answer is no. Let your words speak for themselves. Use plain white paper with black text in a font that is easy to read. Again, remember that your document is likely to be reproduced, and coloured paper and fonts may be hard to read once photocopied. You may also like to ensure that the font size and type is the same for each document that you produce (covering letter and statement addressing the selection criteria) as you are looking for a total "look". Using different fonts and sizes

### **The importance of having a Master CV:**

A Master CV is a document that contains absolutely everything about you. It should contain information regarding every position that you have held, every course that you have been on, and the qualifications that you hold. However, there are arguments as to how much information you need to send to a prospective employer, do they need to know that your first job was as a shop assistant that lasted for 6 months, or whether you have studied to be a Reiki master. The answer is – probably not. Therefore, before you send your CV to a prospective employer, you should amend the document so that it contains only the best, most relevant information relating to the job that is on offer.

### **Customising your CV:**

It is unlikely that you will apply for a series of jobs/positions that have exactly the same set of requirements (selection criteria). Therefore it is vitally important that you customise your master CV so that you highlight the important keywords and key phrases as outlined in the application package for each position that you apply for. If this sounds like a waste of time and energy, you will stand a better chance of being asked to attend an interview if you can demonstrate in written format that you do have the essential criteria required. Whilst you may be wondering why you need to answer the selection criteria if the information is already contained in your CV, the documents should complement each other. It is important when stating, for instance, that you have a certain level of skill in a particular area (software, public speaking) that you say in your CV who you were working for when you gained the experience. This allows your prospective employer to see if you have managed to progress your career through the position that you have held. A simple list of duties on the other hand is unlikely to give this information.

For example: say that you worked for XYZ company, and your duties involved opening and scanning of incoming mail, distribution of mail and other duties as required, you have not advised the prospective employer that you had to use a particular piece of scanning software, or that you had to register the information onto an electronic system. Whilst this information may be listed on the front page of your CV, the information may not correlate.

---

© IEA 2006. All rights reserved. You are free to use material from the Information Overload newsletter in whole or in part, as long as you include acknowledgement of source.

## **Components of a CV:**

### **First page information:**

This first page should contain a brief summary of you, your skills and abilities and should include:

### **Name and address panel:**

When putting your CV together it is important to ensure that the organisation can contact you quickly and easily. Therefore make sure that all your contact details are correct before you send off your application. Whilst this may be a case of stating the blindingly obvious, have you changed address, name or mobile phone number? Do not assume anything, and check everything.

### **Telephone numbers:**

**Work** – only add your work number if you are allowed to accept personal telephone calls during working hours.

**Mobile** – If you are not supposed to answer your mobile during working hours please state this on your address panel.

**Email:** It can be deemed unethical to use your current employers email address on your CV. Arrange to have a personal email address. There are a number of free web based sites that you can access from any computer with Internet access, for example – Yahoo and Hotmail. However, when creating your name – please ensure that you use a professional style, the standard is firstname.surname@.

**Web site:** If you have a personal web page/site, please add this information **ONLY** if it will have a positive impact on your application. Job offers have been withdrawn on the basis of information contained in “personal” web sites.

### **First Name Last Name**

1 Any Street  
NEW PLACE WA 6999

**Tel:** (08) 1234 5678(H)  
(08) 9876 4321 (W)

**Mobile:** 0123456789 (out of business hours only)

**Email:**

**Web address:**

**Background & Objectives:** Discussion has been varied on the validity or importance of including this information in your application at all. However, this section allows you to give a brief sentence or paragraph that outlines your background and skills gained to date, as well as what you may like to do with them.

**Education:** State the highest qualification you have gained or if you have not yet completed your study, the progress you have made to date. Place of study and date conferred or will be conferred.

---

© IEA 2006. All rights reserved. You are free to use material from the Information Overload newsletter in whole or in part, as long as you include acknowledgement of source.

**Skills & Abilities:** You can utilise this section to highlight all your strengths. For example:

- Excellent written and verbal skills
- Excellent time management skills
- Ability to work under pressure and still meet deadlines
- Proven decision making and problem solving skills
- Excellent team working skills
- Able to deal with challenging behaviours

**Software & Computing Experience:** This should be a succinct summary of the types of software products that you have used. It is also worth noting if you have extensive/basic knowledge of a particular product. For example:

- Extensive use of Microsoft Office Suite of Products, including Word, Excel, Publisher, Powerpoint and Frontpage;
- Good knowledge of Internet use for research purposes.

**Other Qualifications:** You can list any other important qualifications that you may have in this section. For example:

- Drivers licence and class held;
- First aid certificate;
- Police clearance (and date of issue)

**Professional Memberships:** Are you a member of a professional body? Are you eligible for membership of a professional body? Some positions do not say that you have to be a member of a particular organisation, just that you be eligible to join. For example:

- Eligible for Associate Membership to the Australian Library & Information Association (ALIA)

**Work Status:** Some positions insist that applicants be a citizen of a particular country, or eligible for citizenship, whilst other positions do not. If you are not a citizen, or eligible for citizenship, please state your VISA number and Sub class, as some sub classes are only eligible for a certain number of hours to be worked in any given period.

**You will note that we have not included any information relating to marital status, number of children, date of birth or any other information that can be used in a discriminatory manner. However, it is up to you whether or not to include it. If in any doubt, then please do not include it.**

## **WORK HISTORY & EXPERIENCE:**

When completing this section you should work backwards from most recently held position to first position you have held. Organisations are more interested in what you have done recently rather than what you did 10 years ago. When completing this section, the following is a standard format:

<b>Month, Year – Month, Year (or to date, if still employed)</b>	<b>Organisation Name, Location State, Country (if applicable) Job Title</b>
--	---

Was the position held through an employment agency? If it was, then it is important that you say so, especially if you have held a number of short contracts. Failure to do so may

---

© IEA 2006. All rights reserved. You are free to use material from the Information Overload newsletter in whole or in part, as long as you include acknowledgement of source.

indicate that you have been unable to hold down a job for any length of time, or are willing to change positions at the drop of a hat, when this is simply not the case at all.

**Duties & Responsibilities:**

*List these in significant order*

*Remember you can always come back and fill in the gaps if you miss anything of note.*

**Significant Achievements:**

*Again it is important to list these in significant order.*

*What difference did you make when you were with the organisation?*

*Did you win any awards?*

*What did you do better than your colleagues?*

**Month – Month, Year**

(if position started & finished in same year)

**Organisation Name, Location**

**State, Country (if applicable)**

**Job Title**

**Duties & Responsibilities:**

*List these in significant order*

*Remember you can always come back and fill in the gaps if you miss anything of note.*

**Achievements:**

*Again it is important to list these in significant order.*

*What difference did you make when you were with the organisation?*

*Did you win any awards?*

*What did you do better than your colleagues?*

**Carry on this way until you have completed each job that you have held.**

**If you have limited work experience it is important to have an additional section entitled:**

**Relevant experience:**

This is where you can indicate that you have been captain of a particular sporting body, or any significant research projects that you have undertaken whilst studying. When completing this section, please ensure that the information is relevant to the job that is on offer.

Once you have completed this section of your CV, you may feel that you need space to pass on **additional information** of relevance to the job that is on offer. Again, you need to ensure that the information that you give, does present you in a positive way. For example, your hobbies are only relevant if they benefit the organisation. For example, if applying for a position as a Laboratory Analyst, an employer might like to know that you are a chess champion, however, they may not see your hobby of wine appreciation in the same way that you do.

It is this particular area that you can use to tailor each job application if you have been unable to do this in earlier sections. This is also the area to use if you are looking to change

---

© IEA 2006. All rights reserved. You are free to use material from the Information Overload newsletter in whole or in part, as long as you include acknowledgement of source.

**Information Enterprises Australia Pty Ltd**  
Unit 4, Upper Level, 201 High Street, FREMANTLE WA 6160  
Tel: 08 9335 2533 Fax: 08 9335 2544 e-mail: training@iea.com.au

directions or focus, as you can highlight areas that are transferable between occupations. For example, good time keeping is essential in all positions, as are good customer service skills and abilities, being able to work in a team, lead a team, and deal with difficult behaviour. Whilst you may lack certain key requirements you may be able to “persuade” a potential employer with the ability of your “arguments” that you are worthy of consideration.

## **REFERENCES:**

When completing your application, it is important to read the section on the number of references required, and whether or not they need to be of a personal or professional nature. Please also ensure that you speak to each of your referees BEFORE you apply for a new position so that they will know they will be receiving a phone call.

Please avoid the use of mobile numbers where possible. Whilst it may be more convenient for your referee for organisations to contact them on a “personal” telephone number, there have been instances whereby the telephone number was not the telephone number of the person listed as a referee, but someone who was posing as the referee.

The reason(s) why people feel they need to fabricate this kind of information are many, but may include:

May feel that the person will not give them a favourable reference, because the person does not “like” them;

May have had to leave the organisation because of fraudulent activity and obviously do not want their prospective new employer to know about it.

*This has been excerpted from IEA's book "The first 4 minutes: Understanding the selection and Interview Process" 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2006, which will be available shortly.*

---

## **A Thought to Ponder**

“Good manners will open doors that the best education cannot”

**Clarence Thomas (1948 - )**

**US Author, Journalist**

---

If you would prefer not to receive this newsletter, please send an email to [training@iea.com.au](mailto:training@iea.com.au) with “unsubscribe newsletter” in the subject line.

If you would also like to receive the main edition of IEA's Information Overload, please send an email to [training@iea.com.au](mailto:training@iea.com.au) with subscribe client newsletter in the subject line, we have covered a wide variety of topics from record keeping to search engine optimisation of your web site – back issues can be found on our web site – <http://www.iea.com.au>.

If you have any suggestions as to what should be included in future editions, then please send an email to [training@iea.com.au](mailto:training@iea.com.au).

---

© IEA 2006. All rights reserved. You are free to use material from the Information Overload newsletter in whole or in part, as long as you include acknowledgement of source.

**Information Enterprises Australia Pty Ltd**  
Unit 4, Upper Level, 201 High Street, FREMANTLE WA 6160  
Tel: 08 9335 2533 Fax: 08 9335 2544 e-mail: [training@iea.com.au](mailto:training@iea.com.au)