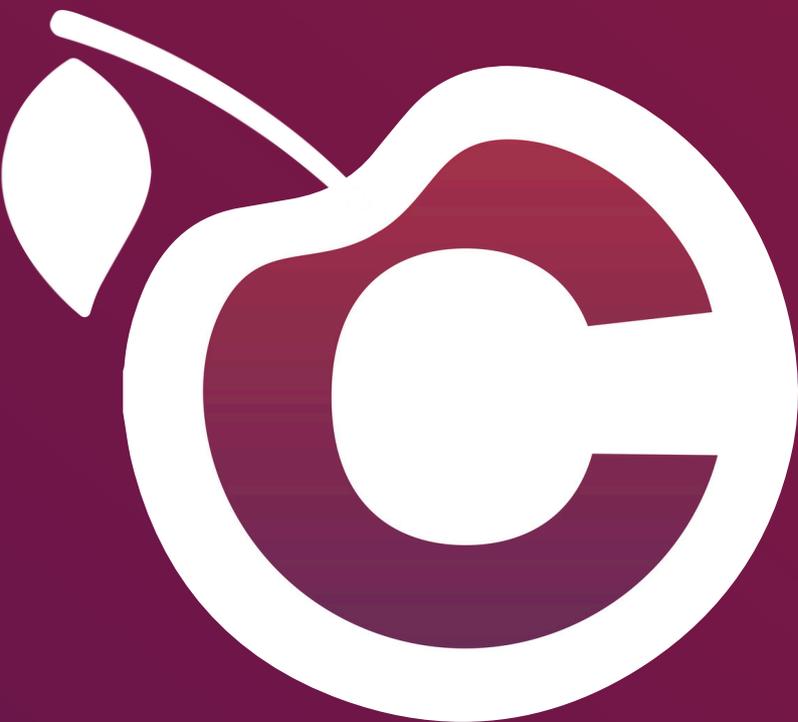




# THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO CREATING A COMPELLING CV



0115 9222240  
[cherryprofessional.co.uk](http://cherryprofessional.co.uk)

Your CV is often your first chance to demonstrate strategic impact, leadership ability, and commercial value.

At senior and experienced levels, employers and recruiters expect clarity, precision, and evidence of real contribution.

Because first impressions happen in 6–10 seconds, your CV must be clear, focused, and results-driven.

## 1. WHAT MAKES A STRONG CV?

### KEEP IT CLEAR, PROFESSIONAL AND EASY TO NAVIGATE

Senior professionals are expected to communicate complex information simply. Your CV should mirror that.

#### **Make it instantly clear:**

- Who you are
- What you specialise in
- The value you bring

#### **Use:**

- Clean, simple formatting
- Clear section headings
- Bullet points for readability
- Consistent styling

#### **Avoid:**

- ✗ Text-heavy paragraphs
- ✗ Visual clutter
- ✗ Uncommon fonts
- ✗ Photos or decorative design elements

## FOCUS ON IMPACT, NOT RESPONSIBILITIES

Employers care about measurable outcomes - not job descriptions.

### Instead of:

“Responsible for preparing monthly reports”

### TRY:

Delivered accurate monthly reporting across a £120m business unit, reducing reporting timelines by 20% and improving decision-making quality.

Quantify achievements where possible:

- |                    |                          |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| ✓ revenue growth   | ✓ team performance       |
| ✓ cost savings     | improvements             |
| ✓ efficiency gains | ✓ systems implementation |
| ✓ project delivery | ✓ risk reduction         |

## TAILOR YOUR CV TO THE ROLE

Generic CVs blend in - especially at leadership or specialist levels. Tailor by:

- Matching your skills to the role's requirements
- Using industry-appropriate language
- Emphasising relevant, recent achievements
- Removing outdated or irrelevant content

Tip: At least 80% of your CV should relate directly to the role you're applying for.

### Guidelines:

- 2 pages is ideal for most experienced professionals
- 1 page suits early-career candidates
- 3 pages only where absolutely necessary (e.g., broad leadership portfolios)

## ESSENTIAL CV SECTIONS

<b>Professional Summary</b> A concise snapshot of your expertise and value	<b>Core Competencies</b> Key strengths aligned to your discipline	<b>Work Experience</b> Achievements, scope, commercial impact
<b>Sector</b> Size of business, turnover, # of employees	<b>Reporting Lines</b> Job title of who you report into, and size of team	<b>Key Achievements</b> Projects, KPIs, major wins
<b>Education &amp; Qualifications</b>	<b>Memberships / Accreditations</b>	<b>Tools &amp; Systems</b>

## 2. HOW TO USE AI WHEN WRITING YOUR CV

AI is incredibly effective for refinement and structure - but accuracy and authenticity must remain intact.

### How to Use AI (the Right Way)

Use AI to:

- ✓ Improve clarity and grammar
- ✓ Strengthen your phrasing
- ✓ Tailor your CV to a job description
- ✓ Identify missing information
- ✓ Rewrite bullet points more concisely
- ✓ Build different versions quickly (e.g., leadership vs. technical)

AI is best used as an editor - not a creator of your experience.

### HOW NOT TO USE AI

Avoid using AI to:

- ✗ Invent or exaggerate skills
- ✗ Add responsibilities you didn't hold
- ✗ Over-polish your CV to sound robotic
- ✗ Copy-paste AI output without checking accuracy
- ✗ Mirror job description wording

### Recruiters can spot:

- Vague or overly corporate phrasing
- Skills unsupported by your career history
- Unrealistic achievements
- AI-generated text that doesn't reflect your voice

Authenticity remains critical at all levels.

## 3. WHAT RECRUITMENT AGENCIES LOOK FOR

### **A Clear, Recognisable Job Title**

If your internal job title is unique to your organisation, add a market-aligned version in brackets. This helps recruiters position you effectively.

### **Evidence of Stability and Progression**

Recruiters look for:

- Roles lasting 12–18+ months
- Increasing scope and responsibility
- Logical career progression
- Achievement-driven moves

### **If there are frequent transitions, add context:**

- Contract role
- Redundancy
- Organisational restructure
- Project conclusion
- Achievement-driven moves

## SKILLS HIGHLIGHTED CLEARLY AND EARLY

This varies by discipline, but commonly includes:

- Leadership capability
- Stakeholder management
- Analytical skills
- Commercial awareness
- Technical expertise
- Systems proficiency

These make you significantly easier to “sell” to employers.

## QUANTIFIABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

Agencies prioritise evidence of the following:

- Efficiency gains
- Cost reductions
- Revenue improvements
- Process enhancements
- Strategic influence
- Project delivery outcomes

## SIMPLE, ATS-FRIENDLY FORMATTING

Most agencies use an ATS (Applicant Tracking System).

### AVOID:

- ✗ Tables
- ✗ Columns
- ✗ Graphics
- ✗ Unusual layouts
- ✗ Complex PDFs

### Best format:

A clean Word document (.docx) with straightforward headings.

## PROFESSIONAL CONTACT DETAILS

### Include:

- Phone number
- Email
- City/region
- LinkedIn URL

### Avoid:

- Work emails
- Casual or nickname email addresses

## FINAL TIPS FOR A STANDOUT CV

- ✓ Tailor your CV to the role
- ✓ Focus on measurable achievements
- ✓ Keep layout clean and easy to skim
- ✓ Use AI as a polishing tool
- ✓ Prioritise clarity and relevance
- ✓ Ensure consistency with your LinkedIn profile
- ✓ Ask a trusted peer to review

At Cherry Professional, our philosophy is simple: relationship-led recruitment. We believe that building strong, lasting relationships with both clients and candidates is the key to successful placements. By understanding the unique needs and aspirations of everyone we work with, we create connections that truly matter.

As the 1st call and most trusted recruitment partner, we pride ourselves on our integrity and reliability, and on the deep trust our clients and candidates place in us. When you choose Cherry Professional, you're choosing a team that puts your success first, every time.



**99%** of candidates  
**RECOMMENDED US**

**98%** of clients rate  
**OUR SERVICE AS OUTSTANDING**

# GET STARTED TODAY

*Ready to connect with East Midlands recruitment experts who deliver results?*

## CONTACT US



0115 922 2240



[info@cherryprofessional.co.uk](mailto:info@cherryprofessional.co.uk)



[www.cherryprofessional.co.uk](http://www.cherryprofessional.co.uk)

*Don't just take our word for it - check out our stellar Google Reviews to see how we've helped others achieve their career goals and business success.*



Cherry Professional Ltd  
Merchants Court, 21-23 Castle Gate,  
Nottingham, NG1 7AQ