

**Presenting Gerard le Roux's ...**

---

# **HIGH IMPACT JOB SEARCH QUICK-FIXES**

---

**"Quite simply the best, quickest, most powerful  
straight-talking job hunting advice you'll ever get."**

4 High Impact Articles to Help You Find a Better Job Fast.

- "10 Smash & Grab Cover Letter Ideas"**
- "10 Easy-to-Do Ways to Quick-Fix Your CV"**
- "10 Interview Success Strategies"**
- "How to Write a 2 Page CV"**

The Job Search Clinic | Gerard le Roux

[www.JobSearching.co.za](http://www.JobSearching.co.za)

## Gerard le Roux? Who?

I am a Professional CV Writer and Guerrilla Job Search Coach. My advice has been published online at Career Junction, PNet, and IOL, in newspapers like Business Day, The Star, Cape Argus, Cape Times, Pretoria News, and Natal Witness. You also may have heard me interviewed on job hunting topics on Talk Radio 702 or Cape Talk 567, Radio 2000, SAfm, Good Hope FM, or KFM. I've also been a Recruiter with clients like Deloitte, Old Mutual, Shell, Caltex, BP, Alexander Forbes, and Dimension Data.

BUT – besides all that – I'm just someone who's had a lot of experience with jobs and the job market, companies, recruitment agencies and job hunters.

**And I've made it my business to help you cut through the garbage, misconceptions, bad practices, mistakes, bad attitudes and waste-of-time, old fashioned ideas that can make the job market a frustrating, infuriating place to be.**

For more free job hunting advice and insights - to help you find a better job fast - please visit my blog at [www.JobSearching.co.za](http://www.JobSearching.co.za)

## Please ...

**Feel free to pass this document around.** Print it. E-Mail it. Fax it. Post it.

- What about sending it to a friend you know isn't happy in their job?
- What about to colleagues you know are looking?
- What about to people you know are unemployed right now?

**To receive this HIGH IMPACT JOB SEARCH QUICK FIXES report free, via an e-mail attachment, all anyone has to do is send a blank e-mail to the following address:** [quickfixes@getresponse.com](mailto:quickfixes@getresponse.com). **It'll be instantly sent right to their 'inbox'.**

## And if ...

... you want personal, professional, expert assistance with your CV ...

(Your CV, by the way, shouldn't be a boring, dry, lengthy, average, looks-like-a-thousand-others type document – NO – it should be a **fresh, concise, hard hitting, WOW!** personal **sales** document that ***bashes down doors of opportunity for you.***)

... then visit [www.WoWCV.net](http://www.WoWCV.net) or contact me directly at [gerard@jobsearching.co.za](mailto:gerard@jobsearching.co.za).

## **10 Smash & Grab Cover Letter Ideas**

By Gerard le Roux - Professional CV Writer & Job Hunting Coach

Smash and grab! Bang!

That's the impact your cover letter can have.

Or ...

Whimper, whisper, waffle and drone.

### **Do you feel like just another insect on the windscreen of job hunting life?**

A good covering letter can help you "SMASH" – through barriers, obstacles and objections, and "GRAB" – attention, interest, and response.

There are two main situations that warrant a good covering letter. 1) Any job application – answering job adverts, online, in newspapers, wherever; and 2) A 'cold' call job hunting approach – where you're approaching an employer when no known vacancy exists, but you have a particular interest in the company.

For either situation – here's what a covering letter is NOT.

- It's not another opportunity for you to drone on about yourself.
- It's not an extension of your CV.
- It's not your CV.

It's there to make quick impact. It's there to generate a response. It's an advert, short and sharp – for you. It's a document that should be designed to say, in essence, "You'll benefit in a big way by having me on board."

So how do you do this – here are some ideas.

### **Covering Letter Idea #1: Make it Quick**

Long letters will almost certainly get you dumped. You have maybe 2 seconds to get attention. If you win those 2 seconds, you get another 2. Then another 2. And so it goes – all the way through you have to add interest and reasons for the reader to read on. A long letter can't do that.

It's not an opportunity to tell your life story. It's not the place to go on and on about why you're such a wonderful person, or to explain that maybe you're not the right candidate but you're applying anyway (so many people do this – I see it a lot).

All in all try to keep it to ½ a page, maybe 3 or 4 paragraphs – also see "Formatting" section.

### **Covering Letter Idea #2: Get Personal**

Ok – you can address your letter "To Whom it May Concern". Sometimes it's all you can do. But, if you take the trouble to be more personal you'll get more interest, more attention. It's also more likely to actually be read by the right person – instead of being channeled through junior staff for screening. And no matter how good you are – those junior staff, nice though they may be, probably won't understand your potential value or pass your proposal (because your job application is really a business proposal – "I'll give you this, and you give me that" – that's business) on to the right person.

And who is the right person? The person who has the power to hire you. Even if you're asked in the advert to send your application to HR, why not also send it to the higher-up-the-food chain Manager as well? Do some homework, get a name, address your letter – and if you're making a "cold" application know, now, that this is the ONLY way you should do so - sending it to "HR" will only break your heart.

### **Covering Letter Idea #3: Clarify and Direct**

You're in a battle for the mind of your reader. You want to capture it. You want to win response and action – in your favour. So mission #1 is to clarify what you're looking for – what position, what role, what category or function do you fit?

If you're replying to a job advert – state clearly what job you're responding to. If you're doing a 'cold' approach – do the same. The reader's mind won't focus on anything else until it knows the answer to that question. Give it right up front. You're the director of this movie – take the lead.

### **Covering Letter Idea #4: Word Processing**

Ok – just before we go on – you've got to get this right. Get someone to check your letter – don't assume your MS Word or word processing skills are up to scratch. Getting things aligned, balanced, properly done so that it looks professional – not DIY – is crucial. DIY won't give the right first impression.

Remember you have 2 seconds. And before any reading gets done – an instant impression is already cast by the overall "look" of your letter. Anything out of whack will lead the reader down the wrong path.

### **Covering Letter Idea #5: Heading**

Bet this isn't something you've done before. But it's a key strategy for newspapers, advertisers, and now ... job hunters. And there are good reasons advertisers use it ... it gets results. Make it work for you.

Include a headline. You want attention, right? So, demand it. Grab the reader's eyes with your headline. Center it, make it bold, make it one line or less (although going to a second line isn't a problem). Make it larger text (although keep it just a little larger). And make it relevant to the reader – it should immediately give a sense of benefit to the reader. "Accountant – available to organise, streamline, and get things back on track." is an example. Or, "Sales Rep available to break new ground, win back clients, and help build an outstanding Financial year."

Are you willing to lay yourself on the line like this? If you're not – then why should any employer hire you? If you are – then say it – clearly, confidently – in a headline.

### **Covering Letter Idea #6: Formatting**

Keep your paragraphs to 2 or 3 lines at the most. The format should never have large chunks of text – chunks or blocks that the reader's eye just scans over. So, keep paragraphs short AND use bold formatting to highlight keywords (keywords – not whole paragraphs). This will make it easier for the reader to catch the right message from you.

### **Covering Letter Idea #7: Opening Line and 3 Best Points**

"You may be interested ...", "You may see the benefit ...". "You" grabs interest. Most covering letters start with "I". But what's on the reader's mind? "Me", "My problem", "My department's problem", "My company's problem". "Me" is "You" to you. Get it? You want the reader to sense that you're a solution to a problem, that you're bringing some benefit, that reading on will bring the 'answer to a prayer'. That's a great way to start out.

[Quick note here – knowing what your strengths are, what benefits you provide often are challenging questions – but knowing the answers, so that you can present them confidently in a covering letter or even in an interview requires more than just a 10 minute effort. To help you get there thoroughly and certainly take the "3 Steps to a Great New Job" course – you'll see it featured on the [www.JobSearching.co.za](http://www.JobSearching.co.za) website. Look out for it.]

Now, follow the general principle outlined below – identify some benefit, desired outcome or even a problem; then propose yourself as a solution or provider of the benefit; then give a credibility check – by including some hard facts about your experience, qualifications – basically why anyone should believe your claim to being 'the one'.

You can say something like this:

"You may be interested in organising and streamlining your accounts processes – if they're behind they can be a real headache and a risk to the company."

Or this ...

"You may need to achieve tough sales targets this financial year – winning back clients, breaking into new territories."

Then: "Perhaps I can assist – here's a quick profile:"

Then you bullet list your 3 best points – this is where you add a believability factor, credibility:

- I have a BComm Accounting degree from UNISA.
- 5 Years Accounting experience in medium sized manufacturing businesses.  
(adapt this to suit your target)
- Have built a reputation for cutting costs, reducing processing time, and 'no problem' audits.

Get the picture?

### **Covering Letter Idea #8: Ask for the Interview**

Now after being all confident and bold – what do you do next? Back off? No. You ask for the thing that's going to take your proposal forward. You ask for the interview. "I'm looking forward to discussing how I can make an impact – please could we schedule a 20 minute discussion – I'm contactable on 083 658 1111 anytime."

### **Covering Letter Idea #9: Show Intent – Follow Up**

If you're going to be bold. If you're confident. If you know you can be of value and benefit – you do right? – then will you persist? Yes. Will you show determination? Yes. Is it ok to do so? Yes!

So – show that even if the reader chooses to ignore your letter, that's not going to be the end of it. Say that you're intending to follow up by phone, and say when you're planning to do so. Be specific and stick to it. Don't just give up. Persist – it may just be the edge you need.

### **Covering Letter Idea #10: Don't Always Include a CV**

Huh? That's right. With a CV comes baggage. HR baggage. On a cold call you'll find your CV being routed to HR – the official channel. That's often not what you want. All you want is the call showing interest, the CV can follow – preferably be personally delivered when you go for the interview. The CV gets put aside for later reading, the CV gets filed, the CV gets rerouted to HR, the CV gets forgotten, the CV spoils your high impact first impression. So, if you're doing a 'cold' approach be careful – your CV may actually jeopardise your chances. Try it – your covering letter (your sales letter) may just be the different approach you need.

Right – so there are some ideas to help you "smash" barriers and "grab" attention with your cover letter. Not an exhaustive list but certainly ideas that although they work – brilliantly - are largely ignored by job hunters in general.

YOU, on the other hand, know that in a job market where there are more people than jobs, you have to be smarter, bolder, and more persistent. You have to have a strong sense of how you can make a difference. **And you have to present your case confidently, clearly, and perhaps a little differently to how you've done it in the past.**

**WARNING!** having the clarity of purpose and confidence to present yourself boldly and persistently isn't something a lot of people have. You may be struggling with this too. It can be a real obstacle to job market and job hunting success – employers like people who have a good grip on who they are and what they can deliver. Again, the "3 Steps to a Great New Job" looks extensively at what your strengths are, where you're going and how you're going to get there. Visit [www.JobSearching.co.za](http://www.JobSearching.co.za) and look for it now.

[Remember: you can get the "3 Steps to a Great New Job" FREE if you're a member of the [Career and Success Community](#). Its a special group of focussed job hunters and people intent on improving their work situation and success in life. They support each other. They provide encouragement and bright ideas. They network for jobs. And they make use of the 100's of pages of cutting edge job hunting, motivational and success information available free there.

Examples of information available on the Career and Success Community website FREE:

### **"Special Release Articles"**

- "Your CV – How to Remodel it for Hard Hitting Impact in 60 Minutes or Less."
- "How to Easily Answer the 4 Toughest and Most Common Interview Questions."
- "How to Figure Out Where You Need to Be Going With Your Career - in 60 Minutes or Less."

### **E-Books**

- "Think and Grow Rich" by Napoleon Hill
- "Awaken the Giant Within – Abridged" by Anthony Robbins
- "Born Rich" by Bob Proctor (featured in "The Secret")

### **Courses**

- "3 Steps to a Great New Job"

Visit [www.CareerAndSuccess.info](http://www.CareerAndSuccess.info) now.

# 10 Easy-to-Do Ways to Quick-Fix Your CV

By Gerard le Roux - Professional CV Writer & Job Hunting Coach

C'mon, admit it. You're afraid that your CV is just getting "lost in the pile" - on recruiters desks, in HR people's inboxes, and it's even being ... filed ... never to see the light of day *ever* again. You know the line agencies use, *"Don't worry, we've got your CV on file."*

I say, "worry, worry a lot."

Now, as long as there are more people than jobs the possibility of getting lost in the pile is going to be very real. But let's not kick ourselves while we're down by ignoring good advice about how to make our CV a more powerful, interest pulling, response generating, compelling personal sales document. Okay?

Your CV can absolutely help you get to the next level of your career. It can win more job interviews. It can win higher paying job offers. It can lay the ground work for a positive, rewarding recruitment process.

**But it's got to be done right. It's got to be smart. It's got to "kick-butt".**

So here are 10 ideas to help you 'quick fix' it. Nothing will ever replace getting it written by a copywriting and recruitment professional – but in all likelihood this is urgent – right? So a quick fix is all you have time for. Follow the steps below and you'll be way ahead of your competition.

**WARNING!** Just remember- none of the following advice should be seen as 'hard and fast' rules – you should use your experience and judgment in applying them to your unique situation.

## **CV Quick Fix #1: Preparation**

If you want results – if you want an employer to pick up your CV and say "Now this person looks good! Let's call him." then you've got to put some 'intelligence' into the writing. It's basic sales and business: "Give the customer what they want". Here's how the principle applies to your CV:

Brainstorm what the employer is really looking for. What are the basic reasons for him/her wanting an "Accountant", "Admin Manager", "Sales Manager", "Project Manager", etc around. Make a list of all the benefits they're likely looking for. If you struggle with this – conduct some 'informational interviews' with people you know in the field and ask them for some input. Or imagine you are the employer – what are the key things you'd be looking for? Make your list.

Then you need to ask – "With knowing what the employer wants – what are the things

(experience, qualifications, achievements, etc) that they'll likely find interesting or impressive about me?"

Review your CV asking yourself if those key things are sufficiently highlighted or prominent. Are they? Do they stand out – or are they getting lost in a crowd of other less important points? Ask – "If the employer only spends 10 seconds on my CV – what will he remember?" Make sure you construct the whole CV on a platform of knowing what the employer likely wants and needs, including and highlighting things that they're looking for and will be impressed by.

### **CV Quick Fix #2: Include an Objective Section**

The first thing the reader should see is that you have a clear purpose with the CV. You're applying for a specific position. Your intentions should be clear. Most people, however, leave the reader to figure this out for themselves. They may think that because they said something about their intentions in the covering letter (if they had one), that's ok. It's NOT! The covering letter often gets dumped along the way.

So your CV should start out with a clear "Objective". But now be careful!! Most objective sections miss the point altogether. It's shouldn't be about what YOU want ("I want a senior position in a professional company that gives me opportunity to advance ...").

*It should be structured around what the reader will see as a benefit to them.*

There should be 2 elements, 1) What position you're after, "Financial Manager", "C++Programmer", "IT Project Manager", etc.; and 2) What benefit you aim to bring in that role. For example, "IT Project Manager – aiming to get projects on track, finished on time, and to meet quality standards that leave clients eager to throw more business at us."

Use your own words – but create an objective that gets the reader's mind positively prepared for the rest of your CV.

### **CV Quick Fix #3: Be Smart About Your References**

Good, or bad, references can make you or break you. A bad reference can make you drop faster than a ton of bricks. But here's how to use your good references in your CV to get attention, and have a subtle but telling impact on the reader – influencing them, making them call YOU first.

Go through all your written references. Dig out old e-mails in which colleagues and superiors have complimented you on your work. Highlight key sentences that focus on your ability to perform well. Include these extracts throughout your CV – certainly, and at least, you should include one on your opening page. Just look for a gap somewhere and put it in. Format it - bold and italics. Make a feature of it. Also add the name and position of the person who made the comment, especially if someone senior to you.

It accomplishes 2 things. 1) It adds believability to your profile; and 2) It adds interest and breaks the monotony of a CV – resulting in you getting more attention.

#### **CV Quick Fix #4: Format - Font Size and Line Height**

Use traditional, common, professional fonts – like Times New Roman, Verdana, Garamond, Tahoma, Arial. DON'T try getting too fancy. And use, depending on which font you choose, size 9pt or 10pt – perhaps 11pt if you're using Garamond or Times New Roman. Don't go too big – it looks old fashioned, unprofessional, and sometimes even childish.

And use line spacing to make your paragraphs more readable. Use the "Format/Paragraph" function in MS Word to get a line height of 1.25pt or 125% (normal is 1pt or 100%.)

CV Quick Fix #5: Format - Use of Bold, All Caps, Underline, and Italics

Go light on these elements.

Here's how to use them to get attention:

- 1) Identify the keywords that will likely be of interest to the reader – words that will lead them to see you as a close match to their needs (look at things like your qualifications, key achievements, skills, titles, etc);
- 2) Make sure you highlight those words – using bold, italics, all caps, etc.; and lastly,
- 3) Go back and make sure you haven't made the mistake of highlighting every second word! Be economical with your highlighting. Don't make it look 'busy'. When reading your CV your eye should be made to stop at those points, quickly taking them in, before moving on. If there are too many of them the eye will start skipping over them – and then you're back to square one.

#### **CV Quick Fix #6: Use Your Achievements**

Here's why "Achievements" are important.

They show that you're not just a "bum on a seat" at work. You add value, you get things done, you make a difference. They show the reader that if they hire you, you're likely to provide some benefit. That's the message achievements send. And it's all good.

But it gets better. It makes you a more credible candidate. Especially if you compile your achievements according to the following formula:

P A R. Problem - describe the challenge/problem faced. Action - outline the action you took. Result -explain what result was achieved (be specific, quantify it, give details).

This way the reader gets the right message - it's backed up with the facts, it gives them some idea of how you tackle things, and reinforces your initial claim (see your 'objective' section) to be a good candidate for the job.

THAT'S how to present information in your achievements section. And have an achievements section for every job you include in your CV.

Just keep it brief! Keep it to 3 or 4 lines at the most. And if possible only include the accomplishments most likely to impress your potential employer – ie keep it relevant and applicable to their needs/interests.

### **CV Quick Fix #7: Keep it Short**

The thing is, no-one really enjoys reading CV's. So making it long (4, 5 or more pages) is a risk. Key information gets spread out and diluted. This, instead of sending a concise, clear, compelling message.

So how do you keep it to 2 or 3 pages?

Sorry – no info here – it's the subject of a special report all of it's own – **see the last article on page 20** "How to Write a 2 Page CV" and you'll find a full list of techniques you can use.

### **CV Quick Fix #8: Use Simple Language**

You have a choice: Use big words, long sentences, jargon, lots of acronyms, and corporate 'speak' and LOSE the attention and interest of your reader; OR use simple language, concise sentences, and everyday words and WIN the attention, interest and mind of your reader.

Obviously option 2 is better. No-one is going to respect or love you more if you say,

"Re-defined and re-structured the organisational key performance indicators, and implemented human resource development initiatives and programmes to build competence and transferable, sustainable, ..."

... than if you say,

"Set exciting and achievable goals, got people motivated and trained."

In fact as you've no doubt already recognised, the second option has far more 'energy' and just will get more attention and response from employers. Option 1 will likely not be read at all – the long words and corporate speak will just be lost in a sea of boredom!

### **CV Quick Fix #9: Get Your Word Processing Right**

Just one point here – get someone who really knows how to align things properly, how to use MS Word or whatever word processor you use, to get your document looking like it's been written by a pro.

Get the alignment of words, paragraphs and margins right, use correct page and margin sizes, set up your tabs properly, be consistent in the formatting of text ... all that stuff – don't spend hours agonising over it yourself – just get someone who knows what they're doing to tidy it all up for you.

### **CV Quick Fix #10: The Order of Information**

Generally HR people and Recruiters will expect to see the following headings so you shouldn't deviate too much from what they expect: Personal Details; Educational Details; Computer Literacy; Career/Work History; References.

BUT ... ALSO give them **these** at the start of the CV: Objective; and Profile headings. The 'Objective' we've already dealt with. Next give them a quick summary of your **professional profile** – all your best points bullet listed, short and snappy – as applicable to the position on offer.

Perhaps include your qualifications, years of relevant experience, positions/titles held, companies worked for (especially if high profile companies – trade on their brand, show that you were trusted by them), any key/recent/impressive achievements and perhaps an extract from a reference that really 'fingers' you as a high calibre worker/manager/executive, etc. THEN go on to your more conventional CV elements – Personal Details, Education, etc.

All of the 10 points above will help you be more successful when applying for a job. **No question.** Make the changes now.

**They're the best ideas for a quick fix you'll find anywhere.**

**WARNING!** Just remember though that success in the job market is often NOT about the 'quick fix.' It's a far better approach to figure out what your "passion" is – what you're *really* interested in, what you *really* enjoy doing – and then pursue a career doing *that*. You'll get the guidance you need to get that right at [www.JobSearching.co.za](http://www.JobSearching.co.za)

# 10 Interview Success Strategies

By Gerard le Roux - Professional CV Writer & Job Hunting Coach

Basically no-one likes the prospect of being interviewed.

Hey, sometimes it works out ok.

But it's the not knowing what to expect ... the prospect of some tough interviewer 'hitting' you with all these awkward questions ... feeling uncomfortable ... not knowing what to say ... umming and erring ... or the dreadful feeling that you're waffling on too long.

It may be a panel interview – with like, 4 or 5 interviewers casting their beady eyes and ears on you. It may be a line manager, it may be HR, it may follow a pre-defined script, it may be loose and relaxed. Questions may be asked to throw you off guard. It may focus on your soft skills, management skills, technical skills, ability to work in a team, your attitude. Anything.

Or perhaps it's some snotty-nosed little punk that's interviews you – he doesn't know you. He doesn't understand what you do - or what difference you can make. But because he's a link from where you are to where you want to be, you indulge his little power-trip, attitude and incompetence.

**Sometimes it goes ok. Sometimes it's a total waste of time. Sometimes you ace it. Sometimes you just don't know. That's interviewing for you.**

Ok – so let's examine some key ideas on how you can get yourself ready, walk in, and "take it away" successfully.

## **Interview Success #1: Preparation-Position**

The first bit of info you need in order to prepare properly is what position you're applying for. What's the title? What's the role or function? You've got to have some idea. Avoid taking the "I'll take anything that comes up" job hunting strategy. It's for losers. Winners are focussed, they know what they want, they don't leave things to chance. So, know what position you're interviewing for.

Then your homework begins. Brainstorm the position – what will it likely involve? What will the different duties be? How does the position fit into the success of the department or organisation? What will likely be what's expected of you in the role? If you're struggling to come up with ideas – speak to someone who fills a similar role or speak to more experienced people to get ideas.

Why do this? 2 Reasons.

Your mind will be getting itself ready, getting into the groove of the role/subject for discussion. And secondly, knowledge like this will give you the basis for knowing what's likely to be discussed in the interview, and therefore you'll be able to prepare more thoroughly. More on this later.

### **Interview Success #2: Preparation-Company**

"Do some research on the company." Nothing new here. So you visit their website take a look around and there you go – you've done "some research on the company". Right? Wrong.

Now first – most often when going to agency interviews they won't divulge the name of the employing company at all until perhaps the last minute before your company interview. That's typical. And infuriating. Anyway ... let's take two angles on this subject.

#### **1) When you know the name of the company. When researching the company, here's what you're looking for:**

- How do they make money? What processes are involved? Where do you fit in?
- What news is there – what's recently been launched, what new technology is affecting their business or sector, what contracts have been won, what's the industry outlook?
- What problems, challenges, obstacles and competition are being faced?
- What keeps the business people in this sector awake at night - worrying?
- What could be 'hurting' them - their efficiency, smooth running of company/department etc?
- Where are they losing money/efficiency/clients/profits/time and why?
- In what areas do you see yourself fitting in and making a strong contribution?

Here's your purpose: Knowledge is power. It impresses. It helps you to envision how you can help make things better – don't leave that to the last minute, or to the interview room. Your mind needs time to process what you learn and come up with answers that could make all the difference. Check out websites, speak to contacts, read relevant trade journals – gather your intelligence.

#### **2) If you don't know the name of the company. Here's what you should try:**

Push the recruiter hard for information on the company. Tell them you don't necessarily want the name but you want as much info as possible to prepare properly – remind him/her tactfully that they stand to make a big commission if you get the job. But if no luck with that – you'll have to ask some questions in the interview with the employer.

Tell the interviewer how you were not told the company name until the last minute – then ask if you can just quickly discuss the company (see questions above in scenario 1). It's not much but it's something. Just don't forget to do it.

### **Interview Success #3: Preparation-Attitude**

This point is brief but crucial. Manage your expectations. Don't expect that you're going to get the job. You probably won't. Harsh? Maybe. But the statistics show it. Negative? Yes, a little, but by 'negative' I don't mean insolent, cynical, bitter, depressed, down on yourself, or pessimistic. The job market is just like that – people get hired for all sorts of crazy reasons – you may be the best person for the job – but you won't get hired. It happens. All the time. So just understand that that's how it works.

The benefit of being a little 'negative' in your attitude? You'll feel more relaxed. It's a mistake to rest all your hopes on one interview to get your next job. Prepare as if it's the only interview – but don't invest too much in the result (one way or the other) of that one interview.

It's much better for your nerves and stress levels to line up as many interviews as possible.

### **Interview Success #4: Preparation-Key Questions**

So you know the position. You know the company.

In your experience, using common sense too, what are the 5 key tasks/functions and outcomes you'll likely be asked to deliver if given that job?

Done it? Ok – well there you have a rough blueprint of what's likely to be explored in the interview. The interviewer will be trying to establish whether you can deliver on those 5 key things or not.

As a person of some experience yourself (or in discussion with someone who has) what questions would you logically raise if you were in the interviewer's seat? What would you want to know? What examples would you ask for? What would you be looking for and how would you go about extracting it?

Brainstorm, discuss – get clarity. Again, get your mind in the groove – so that when you face the 'fire' of the interview, you're ready and waiting.

### **Interview Success #5: Preparation-Answers**

So you know the position. You know the company. You have a good idea of what questions will be asked. Now – how do you answer? Just two tips here:

**1) Keep it short.** Don't be intimidated by long silences. They're a tool used by the interviewer to make you go on and on and divulge irrelevant, sometimes compromising information which is

then interpreted as representing the "real" you. So, answer the question quickly. Then shut up. Don't waffle. Rather ask the interviewer if they'd like you to expand on any one facet. Let them lead you. Don't assume you know what information they want – you'll risk being very dull and boring, and totally off track.

**2) Use lots of examples in your answers.** They add credibility. They add interest and believability. It's all good. How to do it? Use the P – A – R formula. Problem faced. Action taken. Results achieved. Tell a little story. But keep it short. And be specific when dealing with results – use figures, percentages, situation before vs. situation after, etc. Answers given in this fashion are a strong persuader. Use it.

The previous 4 strategies focussed on Preparation. Now if you're in big demand in your field of work then this is not a problem you really need to focus on. BUT if you want to become that in demand person – then it is critically important to know YOU and know your INDUSTRY, including the companies you want to work for. The "3 Steps to a Great New Job" e-course provides excellent guidance on this. See [www.JobSearching.co.za](http://www.JobSearching.co.za).

### **Interview Success #6: Timing**

Be early. But on-time early. Not "what's this person doing here an hour early?" early. Be 5 minutes early. Not 45 minutes early. Get to the building as early as you like – but don't walk in to the office earlier than 5 minutes early. Too early has an air of desperation about it. Of course, on the other hand, don't be late. You'll feel rushed, sweaty, and you'll have no time to catch a breath and compose yourself.

### **Interview Success #7: Appearance**

Here are some points – obviously for unusual jobs, like fashion model, musician, etc you'll have to use your own discretion, but here are some general rules:

- Dress up rather than down.
- Be smart rather than casual.
- Don't be flashy, be conservative.
- Be clean.
- Brush/comb your hair.
- Be fresh – not sloppy, not jaded, not stale or worn.
- Wear deodorant. Although DON'T wear perfume/aftershave. Just don't. In the confines of a small interview room it can be overpowering. It's irritating for the interviewer to go around the rest of the day with your aftershave ever present on their hands or papers or desk, etc.

- Don't smoke just before the interview. In fact don't smoke at all. It's such a big turn off to a non-smoker that it could just prejudice your chances (you may get one of those "you're overqualified" type feedbacks).
- Take a tooth-brush/paste and use it before the interview.
- Don't try to be sexy and don't dress sexy. Don't wear short skirts. Don't reveal your cleavage. It may be your best asset – but really, if you want to be taken seriously, rather tone it down. Invest in an expensive suit/outfit. Be professional.

Hopefully the things above are "obvious" to you – but in my experience interviewing people – somehow these things were forgotten by many, many people.

### **Interview Success #8: Send the Right Signals**

Following on from the above, but on a behaviour theme:

Practice your smile. Practice a firm (and dry) handshake. Practice looking people in the eye – not in a weird, prolonged way – but just enough to look confident, friendly and strong.

Show propriety – orderliness, politeness, be agreeable, show courtesy and decorum, be modest, well mannered, etc. Sure, you want to be yourself, and confident, but just reign it in a little, ok, until you've established more of a relationship. And guys, don't flirt with the receptionist. Sit upright. Don't lean back or forward. Be relaxed but not sloppy.

You want to come across as a nice person to have around – not as a risk, liability or overwhelming.

### **Interview Success #9: Questions to Ask**

Yep – asking questions is important. But only if you ask the right ones. There may be questions burning in your bones, like "what's the money!?" but resist, resist, resist asking them, the time to ask them is once interest has been established from both sides (2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> interview perhaps). Although the one exception is money – it's good to establish early (the recruiter or HR person will want to establish this too) that the position is compatible with your expectations. But rather focus most attention on questions like these:

- How did the vacancy arise?
- What are some of the failures in the position so far?
- What are some of the successes in the position/department so far?
- What would you like to see the new person accomplish in the first 3 months?
- What does Management value most in the person filling the role?

**WARNING!** Ask these questions in your own words. And know why they're good questions - if you don't, don't ask them. You don't want the interviewer saying - "what do you mean?" and then you say "uum, I'm not really sure!?". Okay?

Why are they important? They 'mine' crucial information. They provide insight and help you to tailor your presentation to suit the client. They show confidence. They show you want to get to the heart of the position - in order to provide a solution. Not many other applicants will ask them, so you'll stand out.

### **Interview Success #10: Answering Tough Interview Questions**

There are any number of tough questions. And any number of slick answers that could work or backfire badly. The bottom line is – the interviewer knows it's a tough question. They're expecting it to be uncomfortable for you. So the first thing you should do is smile and take a breath. Listen carefully to the question (every question in fact), make sure you've understood it correctly, ask for clarification if required, and then take a moment to gather your thoughts. Don't hurry your answers.

Here are some examples:

- **Why do you want to work here?** – Don't make stuff up. Only speak from your research and about things that have truly impressed you. Otherwise just say, well I haven't really seen enough of the company to answer that – but my first impressions have been good so far (give impressions).
- **So tell me about yourself?** – Give 5 seconds on your personal life, give 20 seconds on your professional history/life, give 5 seconds on some interests you have, a little bit of trivia to end off with.
- **What are your strengths and weaknesses?** – For strengths, focus on 2 or 3 qualities you have – and be prepared to back them up with examples. Keep your comments relevant to the position you're interviewing for. Regarding weaknesses – 1) Focus on an area that you're lacking in for that position, perhaps a lack of knowledge of a computer program the company uses or specific/unique body of knowledge – a lack that can be easily addressed/developed through a course or by reading a book. Or 2) Take a weakness from your distant past – discuss briefly how you've remedied it over the years so that it's no longer a problem.

It's useful to have a mentor, someone you respect, someone with experience who can guide, test, and coach you. It'll be time well spent. Right, so you don't like being interviewed. But if you're better prepared. If you know what to expect and how to deal with the challenges then you'll be more effective, you'll get better results, and you'll land better job offers.

# How to Write a 2-Page CV

By Gerard le Roux - Professional CV Writer & Job Hunting Coach

You know the frustration. You know the stress. I mean, looking for a job is hard enough.

And then you get hit with ANOTHER curve-ball.

"Please send a CV of no longer than 2 pages." the ad says.

And yours is 6 – or 10 – or 20.

And "How in x&%!@ do I get my 15 years of experience into 2 pages – and still cover all the bases?!"

Good question. So here are some ideas of how to get your "2-page CV" and make it work for you.

## **2 Page CV: How To #1 – Understand What "2-Page CV" REALLY Means**

The whole thing about 2 pages comes from recruiters/companies who are concerned with the following: 1) The cost of fax paper and toner; 2) They don't want their fax machine busy for hours on end; 3) They don't want to page through 10 pages when it could be just 2; 4) They want to eliminate people who like to send through 20 pages including all their Primary School certificates etc (happens a lot). And, 5) At a more sophisticated level they also want to see if applicants can get to the point, can they present themselves concisely, can they sell their skills/expertise fast – it's a test of their mind and thought processes, their ability to communicate, it's a gauge of "technical mastery." (Don't you just love all the big words HR people like to use! Not!)

Actually, yes, here's the thing – they'll gladly accept your 20 page CV, written on loo paper – IF YOU'RE THE RIGHT PERSON FOR THE JOB – and you represent a commission of R40 000 when they place you (in the case of recruiters)!!

But so often people who are totally unsuitable for the position advertised are the ones who send the 20 pages. There's actually no obsession with 2 pages – if you're clearly the right person for the job you have some latitude.

So "2-Pages" really means –

**"Don't waste my time with pages and pages of irrelevant details. Make your presentation fast, make it powerful, be concise, tell me what I want to hear, show**

**me pronto. Take 2, 3, or 4 pages but make it easy to read, not too detailed, make it relevant, make it snappy."**

## **2 Page CV: How To #2 – Some Obvious First Steps**

- Don't include a big cover page that announces your CV. "CV of Joe Soap" – you know, with scrolls, columns, handshakes etc. Just rip it out. Now. It does nothing for you. In fact it irritates and annoys.
- What's on your first page now? All your "Personal Details"? Now ask yourself, "Which of those personal details is going to really impress the reader – what's going to make them sit up and say – "we've got to interview this one!?" Your date of birth? ID number? The fact that you've got a Driver's License (ooh and it's "unendorsed!"). C'mon!!! These are not important details – at least not at this stage of the recruiting process. Don't give them your prime CV 'real estate'! By all means include them – usually just a few are needed, like ID number, Full Name, Languages (only if it's more than just English, English is a given), Nationality (only sometimes when there could be some doubt). That's it.
- What font size are you using? Don't go too big. It differs depending what font you're using but here's a guideline: Times New Roman, Garamond – Don't go bigger than 11 or 12 max – you can go as small as about 10 with your body text. With Verdana, Arial, or Tahoma you can go to about 11 max and as small as 8 or 9 safely. Too big and you look unprofessional.
- What line spacing are you using? Don't use more than around 125% or 1.25. Just a note here, if you use a small font, also adjust your line height up a little (like to 125%).
- What are your margins set at? Don't go bigger than 2cm all around. In fact you can go down to 1cm.
- Are you using the whole left half of the page for headings? Most CV's do that. But it takes valuable space. Rather use the whole width of the page.

## **2 Page CV: How To #3 – Look at Your Content Closely**

What details are you including? Let's look at some areas of concern:

- Education: Are you including even long ago, or very old, outdated and irrelevant (like junior school subjects, etc) courses, subjects or details. Are you perhaps taking up valuable space with courses not related to your current career path? Or are you taking up space including academic results which don't actually do you any credit or even if they're good still have no bearing on your suitability as a worker?

**Only include the best of the best, only include the most relevant detail, only include stuff that may have a direct bearing on a decision to interview you or not.**

- Work History: Firstly know that your experience older than 10 years or so isn't as important as your recent years. So don't fall in love all over again with your old jobs! Summarise them, chop them, focus on their essence, make it clear and concise. They need to be listed but not

exhaustively. It's unlikely that they covered crucial areas that will affect a hiring decision.

Secondly regarding your more recent career – learn to categorise your job functions. Yes, instead of listing each point on a separate line form function categories (Eg – Administration, Client Service, Sales, etc). Then put multiple points concisely in each category.

Something like this, as an example: "Client Service – Answering telephonic queries, making service calls, monitoring follow ups and response times." That's one line instead of a probable 3.

And keep this in mind too ... it bears repeating ...

**Only include the best of the best, only include the most relevant detail, only include stuff that may have a direct bearing on a decision to interview you or not.**

## **2 Page CV: How To #4 – What About Long Lists of Projects or Courses or Skills?**

Yeah, you may have some long ones – and they may be important. A good example is IT skills – if you're in IT – you've worked with many programs, you've developed knowledge of packages, languages, technologies, etc. They're important. Or you may have completed many projects that all have some bearing on your attractiveness as an applicant.

What to do?

Include an Addendum at the back of your CV. In the main body of your CV – say the first 2 or 3 pages -include the most valuable detail. Then refer readers to your Addendum for further details if they want more.

That Addendum could include another 2 or 3 pages if you like – but it's not the best of the best. It's additional. Or it provides an added insight into the depth of your skills or knowledge.

## **2 Page CV: How To #5 – Position Combining**

Consider this: You've been at a company for 5 years. You're a Sales Manager. But when you started you were a Sales Rep. Do you list it as 2 different positions (with all the added space required) or do you list it as one – with a comment that you "started out at the company as a Sale Rep but due to good performance were promoted to Sales Manager after 2 years?"

That's 2 lines VS perhaps half a page. And it tells a better, but still accurate, story, doesn't it?

## **2 Page CV: How To #6 – Give Thought to How You Word Things**

The basic message here is: Don't be long winded. Use short sentences. Always ask yourself, "Is there a simpler, briefer, more straightforward way of saying this?" "If I were telling my 10 year old what I do, how would I say it?"

Simplify. Clarify. Use easy language. You'll find it uses a lot less space.

**In Conclusion:** Don't be obsessed with having a 2 page CV. If you're a good candidate you have some latitude – just don't irritate by sending long winded, irrelevant details. But if you're looking for a new look, a sharper image, if you're looking to make a more powerful impact – it's worth giving your CV the 2-page makeover – you'll come out with a better sense of who you are and what you can deliver too. And you'll be sending the message:

**"I'm a clear thinker, I'm a good communicator, I won't bore you, I'm confident in my abilities, I get to the point, I'm decisive, and I know what I'm about."**

And that's all good.

## Final Note

I really hope this info has been of use to you.

The job market can be a real 'dog' sometimes. There's rejection. Sometimes one feels like one's losing one's mind. But hang in there. Good things do happen, sometimes unexpectedly, and especially if you work smart (ie see information above) and persist.

I'm going to give you a subscription to my advice e-mail called Job Search Success to provide further insights and ideas to help you with your job hunt and career. If you received this e-book from a friend then you can subscribe for yourself just by sending a blank e-mail to [jobsearchclinic@getresponse.com](mailto:jobsearchclinic@getresponse.com)

Some other useful resources:

- The **Ten Day Job Hunting E-Course** – FREE. Just send a blank e-mail to [tendays@getresponse.com](mailto:tendays@getresponse.com) or visit the [Free Job Hunting ECourse](#) website.
- The **WOW!CV Website** – [www.WoWCV.net](http://www.WoWCV.net) – for advice and ideas regarding your CV.
- The **Job Search Clinic** website and my Blog - [www.JobSearching.co.za](http://www.JobSearching.co.za) with motivating ideas, videos, and products to help you.
- The course I've been developing for the last 5 years **"3 Steps to a Great New Job"**, a course with the power to change the course of your life in a big way – helping you feel more purposeful, happier, more productive and more rewarded in your job and career. Visit [www.JobSearching.co.za](http://www.JobSearching.co.za) to register. It's not free but very affordable and convenient to do (via e-mail). Stop Press: You CAN now get it free if you're a member of Career and Success.
- And NOW – **the smartest thing to do** is to join the **Career and Success Member's Only Community**. It's R30.00 per month. That's right only R30 and you get the opportunity to share ideas with smart people, get 100's of pages of specific job hunting and success information, and network for jobs. Read more about it here: [www.CareerAndSuccess.info](http://www.CareerAndSuccess.info)

I'll also be in touch via e-mail if I find other things that may be of help in your search for a great new job.

Look out for my e-mails. All the best.

**Gerard le Roux**

CV Writer and Job Hunting Coach