

CV ADVICE

For Agency Roles

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Crafting your CV to get your next job in a creative agency needs you to put all your communication skills into practice.

Whatever role you're going for – account management, strategy, digital, tech, project management, marketing and new business or creative – it needs to look clean, communicate concisely, and do as great a job of selling yourself as an award-winning ad. It may sound daunting, but we suggest following these principles and you'll soon be writing your CV like a pro.

Firstly, a few dos and don'ts about the look, feel and tone of voice of your CV:

Do:

Google some free CV templates and choose one that's clean, simple and allows the content to stand out. It should look contemporary, but not overly designed, using a typeface that is easy to read.

Keep to 2 pages, absolute max of 3. Think about it: when do you have the time to read 4 pages of A4 in detail? It's the same for your audience. Recruiters and hiring managers are time-poor, and will make their decision on whether to shortlist you within 30 seconds of looking at your CV. Harsh but true.

Be consistent in spelling and punctuation throughout the CV. Obviously, make sure that the spelling is correct!

Read your CV out loud. Does it sound like you? Or does it sound stilted and pompous? If so, give it a rewrite to make sure it sounds like how you would speak in the workplace. Culture fit is always a high priority for agency hiring managers, and tone of voice is a great way to get across how your personality is in line with theirs.

Don't:

A few things to avoid:

- Times New Roman
- Sectioning your CV with tables
- Putting words in **bold**, *italic*, underlined, or, worse, a **combination of all three** in the middle of a sentence
- Writing your CV in the third person. This is my biggest pet hate!
- Don't include a photo or date of birth, or details of whether you're married and have children

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So now, onto the content of the CV. Put simply, just remember the Who, Where, When, What and How, and you'll have it covered:

Who are you?

Top and tail your CV with the details that make you unique. I always like to see a very brief profile at the top of your CV to summarise your USP in a nutshell.

For example:

“Account manager with experience from top London agencies working on blue chip FMCG, retail and tech clients. I love a spreadsheet, have a knack for making clients happy, and am a tireless ambassador for fantastic creative work.”

Not too short, not too long, free of jargon, and the place to inject your own tone of voice into your language.

Don't forget to finish off your CV with your education, and any other important skills, hobbies, interests and achievements. You can include GCSE grades if you're a recent graduate (although there's no need to list all the subjects). If you've been working more than 5 years, you just need to put your degree and A levels. Remember technical skills and languages too.

Listing your hobbies and interests provides a great ice breaker in interview, so whether you've travelled across Asia, been a contestant on Bake Off or you just like a round of golf, don't be afraid to include it.

Where have you worked?

Remember your audience here: recruiters, HR managers and hiring managers. All these people are usually very pushed for time, and are unlikely to Google your company to find out what they do. This is especially important if you haven't worked in an agency before, or come from an overseas or regional agency that may be unfamiliar to London recruiters. So it's always worth adding a brief descriptor next to your company name, such as “Fully integrated, independent creative agency of 40 people, based in Melbourne.”

When did you work there?

We always suggest focusing predominantly on the past five years in your CV, with some detail too on the past 10 years. If your career has been longer than 10 years, we'd advise just the headlines of some of the highlights from your earlier career, which you remember well, are relevant to the job you're currently aiming for, and that you are confident to talk about in interview.

In terms of layout, be specific on the month and year that you started and finished each role, in an easily readable format.

Eg:

Jan 2015 – Feb 2020

Not:

1.15 – 2.20

We'd advise against the use of infographics or timelines that take time to decode. Just stick to words.

What did you do?

AKA your key responsibilities. List these succinctly, with bullet points, to give a brief overview of what your role involved, including some context so that we can see how and where your role fitted into the team.

Again, it's important to remember that your reader is unlikely to know the ins and outs of your current agency, so avoid jargon and acronyms.

Agency recruiters word-search CVs for key skills, so use the job spec as your guide, and make sure that your key experience such as the media channels, clients and sectors you've worked on are covered, eg:

- Reporting to an account director, with line management responsibility for two account execs
- Managing budgets ranging from £20k-£500k for client projects in web design & build, social media, brand identity, print and video, from strategy to production
- Key day-to-day contact for Client X, working on beauty brands Y and Z, and regularly presenting to Marketing Director

How did you do it?

This is where it gets fun, as it's here that you get to highlight your key achievements. The stuff that couldn't have happened without you. It's important to be both realistic and honest, but also make your strengths shine through. Eg:

- Developed a new creative sign-off process, leading to the successful delivery of Project X under budget and 3 weeks ahead of schedule. On the back of this, I wrote a client proposal for further business and the agency was awarded an additional project worth £100k.

Or:

- Part of the winning pitch team for the rebrand of Client Y, and appointed to be the strategic lead on the project at the client's request. Following the rebrand, sales have increased by 50%. I wrote the design effectiveness award submission, and was shortlisted in two categories.

Do you see how these examples show the difference that you made to the role? You've explained not only what you did, but also your relationship skills and initiative, how you benefited the agency and your clients, and ultimately, why you should be given an interview.

We hope these few pointers are helpful, the key is to ensure your personality and achievements shine through in a clear and concise, spell-checked and spotless CV.

To submit your CV to our **Agency Team** register with us now >>> **Register.**