

NEXT STEP REVEALS THE TOP 10 MISTAKES MADE ON CVs

Advice on what not to do to get your dream job

Getting your CV right can mean the difference between securing an interview for your ideal job and having your application quickly consigned to the bin. Understanding that first impressions really do count, Next Step has identified the 10 most common mistakes they see committed on CVs to help people avoid these pitfalls.

Next Step advisers up and down the country have found that as many as one in four CVs contain spelling errors, with candidates regularly mixing up 'their', 'they're' and 'there'. They also found that job seekers regularly use colloquial language such as 'ain't' and 'gonna' in CVs.

The Next Step website contains lots of useful information and advice to help people ensure that their CV is spot on, including a step by step CV builder.

Next Step adviser Anthony Rous said: "We see hundreds of CVs on a daily basis to try and help people improve their chances in the work place so we often see the common mistakes that people make. We want to help candidates avoid all the major CV no-no's in order to position them in the best possible light in the eyes of prospective employers. With every vacancy attracting many applications, it's vital that your CV helps you stand out from the crowd - for all the right reasons!"

Below are the top 10 CV blunders identified by Next Step which are to be avoided at all costs:

1. Spelling or grammatical errors

There is nothing more off-putting for an employer than a CV that is riddled with spelling or grammatical mistakes! Always use the spell-check function on

your computer or double-check words you're not sure about with a dictionary. It's always worth asking a friend or relative to proof read your CV before you send it out.

2. Sloppy formatting

A CV which uses inconsistent fonts, a mixture of headings and text sizes, or paragraphs and bullet points that do not align will look confusing and messy. Decide on the font and format you want to use and stick to them throughout the document.

3. Too long or too short

Get the length right. CVs are often too long with far too much information or too short with hardly any information at all. It should be two pages in length, maximum.

4. Poor structure

Your personal statement needs to be your biggest selling point, so it's a good idea to put this first. This is the first thing a prospective employer will see so it needs to be relevant to the job you are applying for.

5. Gaps in employment

If there are times when you didn't work – for example, because of maternity leave, travelling or sickness – these need to be explained. Never assume an employer will know your life history, and gaps in information might be viewed with suspicion.

6. Being negative

You don't need to go into the reasons why you left your last job on your CV – it's irrelevant to your application. A prospective employer is unlikely to be too

impressed by someone who complains about their old boss or the long hours they had to work. Stay positive and upbeat.

7. Shoddy quality

It's highly unlikely that a potential employer will take you seriously if you send out your CV on scrappy paper. Presentation is just as important as content, so invest in some high quality paper and also make sure there is enough ink in the printer before printing!

8. Full references

You don't need to include full references on your CV. If the employer is really interested in you, you can supply these after your interview. A line that simply says 'References available on request' at the bottom of your CV will suffice.

9. Irrelevant information

Simply sending through a standard CV or one that has been written for a different role will not impress a potential new boss. Employers like to see a CV appropriate to their vacancy so check the job requirements and tailor your CV accordingly.

10. Lying

Don't - you will be found out! Remember that your CV should always be a true representation of yourself. In any case, you should not need to resort to lying about your experience or qualifications. Instead, believe that your skills and talent are enough to help get you the job.

Anthony adds: "Our [CV Builder](#) is a great online tool for helping people avoid the mistakes far too frequently made by job applicants. By steering clear of these common CV mistakes and using our step-by-step guide to creating a great CV from scratch, you are sure to maximise your chances of securing that all-important interview."

You will find the Next Step CV advice and CV builder at direct.gov.uk/nextstep

There is also a section on covering letters. A good covering letter makes the employer sit up and take notice so it is worth taking the time to get this part right too.

Next Step offers free and impartial careers information and is available online, over the telephone and with a local adviser face-to-face. To find out how Next Step can help, search online for Next Step, call 0800 100 900 between 8am - 10pm, 7 days a week, for telephone advice or to make a face-to-face appointment at a location near you.

Everyone can register online with 'My Next Step', a secure, personal online space where you are able to assess your skills, build a CV, find a suitable course and discover what other support, including financial assistance, could be available.

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Notes for Editors

Next Step is available to all adults in England, aged 19 and over (or 18 and over if a Jobcentre Plus customer), whatever their qualification, skill level or employment status, fuelling the potential of millions of adults, through three integrated service channels:

- Online: direct.gov.uk/nextstep
- Telephone: 0800 100 900, 8am – 10pm, 7 days a week
- Face-to-face: Call 0800 100 900 to arrange an appointment in your area

The service is also available, over the telephone, with bi-lingual advisers in the following languages:

Punjabi	0800 093 1333*
Sylheti	0800 093 1444
Somali	0800 093 1555
Urdu	0800 093 1118*
Gujarati	0800 093 1119
Polish	0800 093 1114
French	0800 093 1115
Farsi	0800 093 1116

Lines are open Monday to Friday, between 9am – 5pm. *Urdu and Punjabi lines are open 9am – 8pm

Careers services in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are the responsibility of the Devolved Administrations.

Skills Funding Agency

The Skills Funding Agency funds and regulates adult further education and skills in England.

It is responsible for channelling funding swiftly, efficiently and securely to further education colleges and other providers, primarily in response to customer (employer and learner) choice on programmes. It operates through customer focused services: National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) and Next Step.

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