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Creating a CV all about marketing yourself

By [Steve Hart](#)

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The days of your CV being little more than a list of previous jobs are long gone, says resume writing specialist Denis Odlin. He says your CV needs to stand out and act more as a marketing brochure than page after page of job titles and achievements.



A CV is a personal sales brochure, according to Denis Odlin. 'And the point of that sales brochure is to get you an interview.' Photo / Supplied

Odlin is the local manager of Aussie CV writing firm Successful Resumes and says the number of people willing to pay between \$225 and \$400 to have their CVs sharpened up "has gone crazy" since the start of the year.

It's a clear sign that people are ready to move on to new roles even if the job market is still depressed in some areas.

"It seems like everyone is positive again," says Odlin. "Which is great news – we can barely keep up with demand from clients."

But there is a formula to follow when it comes to CV writing, says Odlin.

"We have spoken to senior people in recruitment agencies – mainly in Australia – to find out what they want from a CV," he says. "And with that insight we are able to help our clients with a CV that will give them the best chance of getting a foot in the door."

What Odlin has found is that long, detailed CVs are out and easy-to-understand CVs that list recent jobs with achievements noted are in.

"No one has time to read between the lines and try to second-guess what the job applicant is saying," he says.

"So a good CV really needs to deliver the crucial information about the candidate in the first half of the front page.

"If you haven't sold yourself on the first page then it is game over and the recruiter will move on to the next resume. So your CV needs to make a strong positive impression very quickly." Odlin says a CV is little more than a personal marketing document and job hunters need to understand they are selling themselves to employers and need to market themselves like a product.

"A resume is a personal sales brochure," he says. "And the point of that sales brochure is to get you an interview. It is not about getting you the job, it is about getting you in front of the employer.

"People don't like thinking of themselves as a product or a service but that is what job hunters are. It is a ruthless and tough world out there and you can't be complacent about the way you market and present yourself.

"Our resumes are all about differentiating the person from everyone else and making it clear what their strengths are. We don't try to tell their whole life story but promote those things that will make them special to

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an employer."

Odlin says common mistakes in the CVs sent to him by clients wanting his services are often based on the first CV they wrote after leaving school.

"And every time they get a new job they add a page to their CV which by the time it reaches me is eight to 10 pages long," he says.

"These people have followed the same model that worked for them 10 to 20 years ago and haven't adapted their CV to what the market expects. So these CVs are way too long and too detailed."

The other common CVs Odlin gets to see are from people who have a mixed employment background, worked in a few different industries and been self-employed.

"They may have started their own business and it didn't work and what they find when they look for a job is that they don't get considered," he says. "It is just a sad fact of being in New Zealand. People are very conservative as to whom they hire here.

"So I work hard to help these people present themselves clearly to prospective employers."

Odlin says it is common to see CVs that don't represent the job hunter too well at all.

"I think people are too close to what they do to stand back and write a CV that markets them to the best of their ability," he says. "I had one client who had been pushing out her CV for 18 months and didn't have a sniff of an interview.

"After meeting with her – because we interview everyone we write a resume for – I found she had some hidden talents and successes that didn't feature in her CV at all.

"So I worked with her to bring out all her achievement and the resume we wrote landed her an interview within 24 hours of it being sent out."

Odlin says writing your own CV doesn't always work because people will frequently take what they do for granted and see nothing too special in it.

"Writing your own CV is like cutting your own hair," he says. "That's why we insist on a face-to-face interview, or at the very least a telephone interview, so we can pull together the best CV we can for clients," he says.

"It might take an hour or more of just chatting and listening to the person talk and my ears prick up as soon as I hear about what they enjoy doing and what makes them successful."

And when it comes to marketing yourself, should you include a photo of yourself on the CV? Odlin can't see the harm if you are applying for a customer facing role and look attractive.

"But I don't think recruiters are that keen because they don't want to be challenged about discriminating someone based on their looks," he says. "So it is a difficult one ... it is a judgment call on the part of the job hunter and partly down to the relevance of the job.

"I think that too often recruiters and employers forget that it is people that are behind the pieces of paper and a photograph could remind them it is a person they are dealing with."

Among the biggest clangers he's seen job hunters do is using an inappropriate email address such as sexy1@hotmail. "When I see things such as these I advise people to get a new email address that won't have the same negative connotations," says Odlin.

"Similarly, I don't think it appropriate to list your existing work email address either."

Steve Hart is a freelance journalist.
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