



# There's Room at the Top

A Fast-Track Guide  
to writing a CV

Bragging with a purpose!

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## **The NHS is undergoing another big change.**

The chances are you will be put in a position where you'll have to apply for the job you are already doing, or perhaps it's time to move on. Either way, you'll need a CV.

If you have one, it's bound to need freshening-up, if you don't, here's where you start.

You don't need 'a CV' you need the right CV, written in the right way, to be sure you get the job of your dreams, or stay where you want to be. CV's are like clothes... better tailored.

Take the time to do yourself justice, show us what you are really made of.

It's time to Brag with a purpose.

Good luck and I hope the next few pages help.

Roy Lilley

Spring 2019

# B

## Brag

**brag** *v.&n.* **1** talk boastfully **2** boast about **3** a card game, like poker

Right, let's be clear about this. Forget the cards! And, I'm not talking braggadocio, or braggart, here. A braggadocio (Great word, isn't it?), is someone given to empty boasting unlike a braggart who, justified or not, does it all the time. No, forget that.

I'm talking about letting people know how good you are, being up-front about your achievements and your experiences. Too many managers get passed over for promotion or preferment because they are too shy to talk about the great things they've achieved.



**There's something about the British.** We can't seem to celebrate success.

Do well, buy a nice car, park it and be certain to come back and find a big scrape down the side of it.



**Be successful in the USA...** buy a nice car, park it in the street and expect to come back and find a crowd around it. They'll be admiring it and telling each other how soon they will 'have one just like it'.

So bragging? We're talking strategic bragging. Planned boasting and targeted flaunting! Why not. If you've got it, flaunt it. And, that's the first message. Make sure you have something to brag about! We all have something to brag about. Nine times out of ten, we just forget what it is.



TIP

Be like the character in Gilbert and Sullivan's, Mikado, and 'have a little list'. At the back of your note book, diary (If you still have a paper pile, ugh!), personal organiser or a secret place, keep a list of things you have learned skills you have developed and good pieces of work. Add to it every week, without fail. Come appraisal time you'll have something to talk about, a lever to use for promotion and the basis of freshening up your CV.

- **Dealt with a really difficult situation on the phone** – make a note of it. It is a bona-fide achievement.
- **Sorted out a sticky problem** with a patient or staff? Make a note of it, it is a 24crt. accomplishment.
- **Solved a problem, delivered the impossible**, jumped tall buildings in a single stride? Write it down.

... why not, it is a copper-bottomed piece of career insurance. You are good at something!

- **Done a stunning proposal, a presentation to die for**, a report in record time? Keep a copy, put it into your appraisal file or attach an anonymised version to the paperwork when you go for your next job.



**You are good, very good but sometimes you need help remembering. If you don't remember, if you don't brag a little, no one will do it for you.**

### **What about your staff?**

Find some reasons for bragging about them. Let them hear you say things like:

*'I couldn't have done it without this great team of people'.*

Brag about an individual; *'We're really lucky to have Amanda working with us. She's done us proud with this project...'*

Thinking about going for a new job? This takes some careful bragging!

..... time to turn bragging into a fine art.



## Your CV... bragging and you.

How's your CV? Where's your CV? On a file somewhere? In the Cloud? On a stick? Down the back of the armchair? In the bottom of the parrot's cage?

You should:

- Know where it is
- Have a list of things to add to it
- Be able to up-date it, pronto



**Tip.....** Get your head around the idea that there is no such thing as a 'CV'.

Really? Yup. Think of a CV as an introduction to you. If you were in a room of people you may well introduce yourself differently to different people. Older people, younger people, people whose first language is not English. It is the same with a CV. You will need the same basic information but presented differently for different circumstances.

An internal CV, for internal promotion. A CV that emphasises your people management skills for a people job and your planning skills for a planning job. Horses for courses – get the idea? As you change, so does the CV. Think of your CV as a tool to help you achieve what you want. Sometimes you need a hammer, other times a screw-driver.

Here are the basics of a CV that brags, boasts and brings you into the limelight without anyone realising.

## The secrets of the Stealth CV

It is a good bet you are not the only person to be sending a CV for a job interview, promotion or whatever. So; first impressions count. **You've got ten seconds** to impress and get yourself filed in the '*must see*' pile and avoid the '*dump this lot*' pile. If there are a hundred applicants and there often are, you have to be the *one-in-a-hundred*.



## How do you do that?

Easy. Sell your best stuff on the front page. Just like a shop window. In other words, match your experience to the job advert and get it on the leading page. Put your personal or educational details, your out of work hobbies and all the other junk at the back.

At this stage it is all about getting an interview. A short list of your capabilities and a list of your major, stunning achievements – enough to make the selection person say;



*'Wow, I must meet this star, they are a match made in heaven'.*

Chose a layout that grabs them by the eyeballs. Plenty of white space (*Like this e-book*), easy to read, with headings and section breaks that jump off the page.



Use a word processing package and stay away from desk-top publishing. If you've got fancy lines, three hundred typefaces, drop shadows, boxes, clip art and embossing tools, you'll be tempted to use them. They will look horrible, amateur, immature and naff. Got the picture? Oh, and use good quality A4 paper, preferably 100gram for both your CV and covering letter. Not coloured paper, paper recycled from the hair of the armpit of a Tzumistan mountain goat, or the pretty stuff with the flowers on.

## How long?

Two pages. Yup, two pages of careful, thoughtful well chosen words. Tops.

Yes, I know you have a million qualifications, experience up to the eyeballs and are an all round dish of the day. But, unless you are asked for something in detail, two pages is enough. Your prospective new boss doesn't want your life history – they just want to know if you are worth time, interviewing.

## Get organised

- Use paragraph headings as sign posts and bullet points as markers. Keep sentences and paragraphs short and punchy.
- Include some stuff on where you are working now and the job you are doing. Make it relevant to the post you are seeking
- You need to brag about your achievements. This is your sales leaflet and must tell the prospective, sceptical, new boss, why they should invest in you. How are you going to show them a return? Sell them your benefits.
- Die, rather than send in a CV with mis-spellings or poor grammar. You will look sloppy, thick and casual. So, use the good old spell-checker and if you are not sure, get a friend to read you CV though. Look for typo's and mstkes. (They are easy to miss!)... [I'm hopeless at it.](#)



### Should you use a professional CV service?

Big job, lot riding on it, make or break? Well a professional CV is a possibility. Have a look on the Internet and you'll find ten thousand companies who offer a service. Some are real swish outfits and some are former managers who have set up shop in the back-bedroom.

If you have a particular career problem a pro-CV writer might be a good idea. They will want to know everything about you and everything about the prospective job. This will take time.

Be clear what their fees are. Some of the companies are part of job agencies or headhunting firms and use the CV-writing offer as a come-on to find prospective employees for their client base of prospective employers.

You'll need to spend some time harvesting information. Here are the brutal basics:

- your full name, address, home telephone number
- date of birth (*Not age*)
- marital status (*Divorced? Use 'single'. Separated? Then you are still 'married'. Never, never, never, list any type of failure on a CV. Don't use divorced even if you were the tragically wronged, innocent party. You would say that wouldn't you?*)
- nationality (*This is really if you are applying for jobs*)

abroad or if you are a British/EU national and your name does not sound British. [Brexit is going to make this much more difficult](#)), you need to be aware.

- driving licence details. (If it is clean, say so. If not, say nothing. Remember – nothing negative)

### **Educashun!**

- List your qualifications in reverse chronological order (*Latest first*)
- List your professional qualifications, membership of professional associations and if you are a member of a profession that has a register, include your ID number
- If you have completed a college or university degree or HND or Diploma, etc, list the courses you studied if your subjects were relevant to the job.

Don't forget any training courses you've been on. Include internal company courses and any evening classes or distance learning you have done in your own time. Don't leave out charity work. If it is smack-on-the-nose relevant put it in the jobs section. If not, bung it into the 'interests' section.



### **Mind the gap**

Got a gap in your chronology? A period unemployed? This makes prospective employers think of prison, illness, 'time in detox' and just about everything else bad. Have a good reason for a gap and get in down on paper.

- Start with your most recent or last job and work backwards. For each position (*Been promoted? Present that as a new job and show the dates separately*)
- List your job title (*e.g. Manager, Supervisor, etc*)
- Show the job title of the person you reported to (*e.g. Director, Manager, etc*) this underlines your seniority
- Start and finish dates of all jobs
- What did you do? Spell it out along with the main responsibilities
- List your skills responsibilities, achievements and duties. Match them to the job you are looking for



**TIP:** Be positive about your skills and use words that ‘sell’ them. **Good** written skills, **excellent** people skills, **wide experience** with patient and user complaints. **Sell, sell, sell!**

- Impress with your level of responsibility. *‘Managed a department with a budget of £10m and managed 150 staff’.*
- Increased productivity/savings/revenue? Say so and quantify it. Say by how much, include volumes and numbers.



**Time to brag, with style and skill and cunning.**

What are your achievements?

Yup, I know you’ve done it all, been there and got the T-shirt. However, don’t go over the top. Think about what you’ve done. Pick the four or five achievements that most fit the specification of the job you are after. Major on them. You can list all the other amazing stuff, later in the CV. Target what they are looking for in a candidate, with what you have done.

What else can you do?



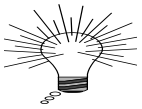
**Make a list:**

- Computing skills you have and stuff you can make work: PC, Mac, Microsoft Windows latest version, Excel, PowerPoint, Access, basic web development, blogger, SoMe and all that sort of thing
- Speak a foreign language? Très-bon! Say so. Indicate the level; spoken, written, business or technical, restaurant, night club, pillow talk! Fluent? Good working knowledge, familiar, rusty. Be honest and don’t get caught out.
- What else? Keep it relevant, please.



## Outside work interests?

Sports, hobbies, run a boys club, do meals-on-wheels, organise a charity, Park-Run? Brag a little and show what a nice, warm, community minded person you are.



## References

Don't include them on the initial CV but think about who you will approach and ask them, in advance, to support you. Some professions will want to take up references before interviewing you. 'Professional and personal references available on request.'



## What gets left out is as important as what goes in

### Don't include:

- Some CV guru's will say no photographs. They argue; you may think you are lovely and no doubt your mother does, too, but, unless you are applying for a role in the next James Bond movie (or perhaps airline cabin-crew), leave it out. I'm not so sure. If you have a nice passport size picture that makes you look business like, gorgeous and lovely, why not include it? Don't use holiday snaps or pictures that are in any way technically or presentationally dodgy.
- Had something go pear-shaped? Job, relationship? Don't mention it. Remember, nothing negative.
- Reasons for leaving previous jobs? Leave them out but be prepared to be asked at interview.
- Previous salary information. They might ask later. Just assume that you are worth what they are offering (and more)!

..... And don't use:

- Title pages, binders and folders
- If you are a science whiz that has published loads of papers, sorry now is not the time to list them
- Photocopies that are obviously photocopies – it makes it look like you are in the *give-us-a-job* hunt. In any case your CV should be tailored and targeted for each specific job



Is this for you?

Some recruitment guru's suggest you open your CV with a short 'mission statement'. The idea is to encapsulate 'you', your vision, experience and aspirations in 30, or so words.

Feel comfortable with that? Give it a try and see how you end up.

Make a list of your talents, skills and aspirations. Think about your main strengths, attitudes and the direction in which you want to go. Ask yourself the question; 'Where do I want to be in five years time?'



**You might find it easier to discuss them with a partner or close friend.**

**Work on it together.**

You should end up with something that looks like this:

*'A qualified management professional able to lead and motivate others, aiming to achieve senior management responsibility in the developing area of web-based services.'*

**Now you try:**

'A qualified ..... able to  
....., aiming to achieve  
.....in the *developing* area of  
.....'

Comfortable with that? Good Stick it at the front – Brag a little!

**Finally, finally.....**

Make every word count. Remember, you are selling you!

Use words like:

*Delivered, operated, consolidated, administered, evaluated, negotiated, accomplished, achieved, initiated, generated, pioneered, purchased, demonstrated, increased, created, planned and promoted.* Every word you use should be screened to check that it's positive rather than passive.

Make sure that your wonderful CV arrives on the desk of the inquisitor unfolded, stapled in the top left-hand corner, only and un-crumpled. Invest in a hardback envelope. Or, in a clean easy to open pdf.



TIP:

Make sure your name and contact number is on every page of the CV – put it in the footer.

## E-mail applications

The old snail-mail is taking a bashing . Increasingly you're going to be emailing your CV to prospective employers.

There are some traps:

- If you send your CV in the main body of an email, it might change format when opened by the recipient, so use a [pdf format](#).

If you send your CV as an attachment, you might find out, too late, that the company has a policy of deleting all emails with attachments because of the risk of viruses.

Word, Mac Pages, Open Office, Apache? Call up and find out in advance what they want you to do. When all else fails, there is always snail-mail!

### **Need a covering letter? Do this:**

- Address your letter to the correct, named person within the organisation and be sure to check all the spelling, names and so-on.
- Type (I mean, word process) the addresses and body copy and top and tail the salutation and sign-off, by hand. Use 'Dear Mr Big-Bloggs' and end 'Yours sincerely'. Forget Dear Sir and Yours faithfully.
- If you're responding to a job advert, give the full title of the position, mention where you saw the ad and give the appropriate reference number at the top.

Your letter should look something like this

**Dear Mr Brown,** - *in your own hand*

REF: 2001/6/78/ Locality Manager

Further to your recent advertisement in The Grenada, I am writing to apply for the above position.

I am a public service professional and a self-motivated team player and leader. I have demonstrated my ability to work within budget and have an in-depth understanding of current good practice and legislation.

I enclose my CV and ask, please, to be given the opportunity to attend for interview.

**Yours Sincerely**

**Gladys Snoods**

That's it, good luck!