

A Simple 3 Step Process of what to do and what to look out for.

The following pages will show you what to look out for and pointers on how you should respond to an advert to give you the best chance of success.

Step 1

The Advert

This is adapted from a real advert taken from a recent newspaper, and is typical of the kind of thing you might be applying for. Very often it is tempting to see a job title and decide whether or not a job is for you, but that's a bit like judging a book by its cover. Always read the advert carefully and pick out what's important to the employer. Can you fulfil their requirements, and if so, how? While you will want to show the breadth of your experience, you need to tailor your CV to make it easy for the employer to see how you meet the key criteria, the rest will be the icing on the cake. But they're unlikely to second guess that, given your seniority/ your career path/ your time overseas (or whatever), you'll automatically fit the bill.

If there's a chance to look at a website for further information, then do so. If they offer potential candidates the possibility of a preliminary conversation, then take it up. Send in an application that clearly shows evidence that you meet all the key requirements - make it easy for them to decide to see you.

Step 2

The Poorly Written CV

This is typical of the kind of CV people send to us for review. It is not by any means the worst example. On first examination parts of it are not too bad, and it comes in at 2 pages, which is a common, although not universally accepted standard. It makes a number of classic mistakes; space is wasted, irrelevant personal information is included. The writer of this CV assumes the person reading will be a technical expert, mentioning companies without describing them and leaves jargon unexplained.

What achievements and skills the writer has are lost in lists of responsibilities and marred by the use of clichés that have little or at best a very ambiguous meaning.

Perhaps above all it is far from immediately clear what kind of position or positions the person is suitable for and there has been no attempt to tailor the CV for the position being applied for. It is all too obvious the CV has been hastily thrown together and addresses too many audiences.

Step 3

The Well Executed CV

No CV should follow a formula, all writing with a sales objective, which a CV very definitely is, must be original. Not all good CVs will look like this one, but this is a great example to demonstrate key points. It is clearly presented, does not waste space and leaves the reader in no doubt what the candidate can do.

The relevance of previous assignments is clearly described, there are no periods of time left unexplained in the CV, and the only piece of personal information disclosed clearly has a relevance to the role being applied for. Qualifications and professional qualifications are grouped together.

Above all, it has been written with one objective in mind, to sell the candidate. No words are wasted, it continually advances the claim of this candidate, clearly separating responsibilities from achievements and demonstrating the relevance of them as they are described.



PERSONAL CAREER ADVOCATES

RICHMOND



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NEXT

Divisional Managing Director

Light Engineering – South East – Attractive Six Figure Package

This is an excellent opportunity to lead and grow a £50+m division within a very successful £200+m turnover private group. Our client designs, manufactures and sells a wide range of specialist components to well-known, multinational OEM customers in office automation, domestic appliance, renewable energy and similar sectors. Its success has been built on technical innovation, long-term supplier and customer relationships and an over-riding commitment to quality and service.

Reporting to the Group Chief Executive, you will take responsibility for 5 profit-accountable subsidiaries, currently employing c500 people, across Europe, North America and South East Asia. You will focus on divisional strategy, high-level business development, operational efficiency and sound financial management. It is expected that you will be invited to join the parent group board in due course.

Most likely a graduate mechanical engineer, you will almost certainly be an experienced Managing Director from the light engineering sector, with a proven track record of growing leading-edge and preferably international businesses. Knowledge of small batch manufacturing/assembly in relevant sectors will be a distinct advantage, as will first-hand experience of each of the four main elements of the role (i.e. strategy, sales, operations and finance). Most importantly you must have the vision, drive and personal qualities to make a real difference to the business.

The company is offering a competitive salary and bonus scheme and all of the usual benefits. Please apply by CV, stating your current remuneration to apply@retainedconsultant.co.uk.

Need a clear, evidenced example of success and experience in these areas

Make sure qualification is clearly mentioned

This is the experience and level of achievement you need to demonstrate – make sure you show how you made a difference.

A need to highlight management experience, especially at international level. It's important to highlight the number of staff you're managing

Demonstrate potential for growth

If you don't have experience of this, make sure it is clear how your experience is relevant to the job.

Make sure that you put over these qualities substantively and they can see why they should choose you.



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NEXT

CURRICULUM VITAE⁰¹

MATTHEW SMITH⁰²

“SANDINGS”, 76 DOMINION STREET, BUTLER’S CROSS, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE,⁰³
HP17 8YT

DAY TIME TELEPHONE: 01296 727668

EVENING TELEPHONE: 01296 622618

FAX: 01296 985729⁰⁴

EMAIL RIDERBOY@YAHOO.COM⁰⁵

A PROACTIVE, RESULTS-ORIENTATED MANAGER AND PROFESSIONAL⁰⁶
EXCELLENT COMUNICATION⁰⁷ SKILLS AND 25 YEARS EXPERIENCE AND 13 IN
SENIOR MANAGEMENT ROLLS⁰⁸. LOOKING FOR A CHALLENGING POSITION IN
THE SOUTH EAST WITH A MINIMUM SALARY OF £145,000⁰⁹. COULD WORK IN
SALES, TELECOMS, LIGHT ENGINEERING OR PUBLIC SECTOR¹⁰.

STATUS: MARRIED WITH 3 CHILDREN

DATE OF BIRTH: 24TH APRIL 1960¹¹

- ⁰¹ There is no need to say this. It's obvious what it is.
- ⁰² No need to write this so large. Wastes space.
- ⁰³ Margins are far too wide. Waste of space.
- ⁰⁴ All the contact information could be much more economically presented on a line or two of text. Doubtful fax required. No mobile number, which is fine so long as Matthew is prepared to take phone calls on the daytime number that he's given but in today's world, it presents an obstacle to contacting him.
- ⁰⁵ Unprofessional, over personal, private email account.
- ⁰⁶ Fails to explain in first line the profession and level of candidate.
- ⁰⁷ Spell-check sometimes fails to notice errors in capitals, here with embarrassing results.
- ⁰⁸ Spell check does not pick up when you have spelt the word right but have chosen the version with the wrong meaning – this one is amusing but it's not the impact you'd like to have on the reader. There are several small errors through the CV – showing how important it is to ensure it is properly proofread.
- ⁰⁹ The advert asks for previous salary. This demand is provocatively presented.
- ¹⁰ Failure to tailor CV for this position, or even industry, embarrassingly obvious.
- ¹¹ No need to state personal information. Wastes space, unlikely to advance application and should not be considered by recruiters.



EDUCATION¹²

Dame Elizabeth Cadbury's school, Bourneville, Birmingham, 1971-1976

O Levels in Chemistry (B), History (B), Physics (A), English Language (A), English Literature (D), Maths (B), Geography (C)¹³

Dame Elizabeth Cadbury's School, Bourneville, Birmingham, 1976-1978¹⁴

A Levels in Maths (A), Chemistry (B), Physics (A)

University of Wales, Cardiff, 1978-1981

BSc Mechanical Engineering (2:1)

¹⁵2007-2011 Managing Director of Eastmade Home Electrics, Hong Kong

Responsible for a P&L of several million¹⁶; responsibilities involved the running of a site in Hong Kong and other sites in the far east¹⁷. Reporting to the head office of Eastmade in Kentucky¹⁸; ran the production of a wide range of manufactured services line of various products such as house hold goods including refrigerators, air conditioning systems (KNX¹⁹) and other lines.

Was also responsible for running the production of our strategy going forward²⁰ and several acquisitions (GOME Goods, Bangalore)²¹. Won several major contracts for the distribution of home-installed solar panels.²² Successfully disinvested from leveraged MBO of subsidiary²³. Used strong interpersonal skills and communication skills to drive operational

- ¹² In addition to the further comments below, this whole section is poorly laid out and not easy for the reader to pick the key information from. Also, for most executive CVs there is no need to give it so much prominence.
- ¹³ Doubtful basic school qualifications required in an executive CV.
- ¹⁴ No need to state same institution twice. Wastes space.
- ¹⁵ There is no heading to indicate to the reader that we have moved from "Education" to "Professional Experience". Also there is a gap between this job and his previous one for which no explanation is offered.
- ¹⁶ Should give the exact figure as advert requires more specific information.
- ¹⁷ How many sites?
- ¹⁸ No explanation of size of company, merely implication it is international.
- ¹⁹ Unexplained jargon.
- ²⁰ Cliché.
- ²¹ On one site or many?
- ²² How many? How big?
- ²³ Unclear statement of a potentially interesting fact.



efficiency going forward including transmigration of legacy bespoke software to EMG standards²⁴. Project management and motivation of staff through personal leadership and performance management²⁵.

1991-2006 WuO. Several jobs (last one Ops Director in Asia)²⁶

Responsible for all operations of international office (production, supply-chain, back office etc). Biggest responsibility was making SCM²⁷ fit for purpose going forward after significant dislocations resulting from adverse trading conditions that hit suppliers²⁸. Five direct reports²⁹. Asked by CEO to sort out SCM via introduction of new TQM and MRP based systems utilising state-of-the-art software³⁰. Given responsibility for operations on my own in 2005³¹. Had to re-engineer finance function to ensure group optimisation³². Move to BPM and COE model in hr project managed and given over to new Global head of HR³³.

Previous jobs involved sales and specialist advice to company colleagues.³⁴

1988-1991 Garland's Design Engineer. Small batch manufacture and assembly.³⁵

1984-1988 Walker & Co. Junior Mechanical Engineer³⁶

Qualifications: Chartered Mechanical Engineer: MIMechE (Institution of Mechanical Engineers)³⁷

Hobbies: tennis, films, playing with the children (sometimes!). Qualified riding instructor and own several horses, which have been used in charitable events³⁸.

- ²⁴ Pejorative, clichéd, ill-evidenced and uses jargon.
- ²⁵ Too general. What were the results?
- ²⁶ Inappropriate abbreviation and chance to demonstrate progression lost.
- ²⁷ Unexplained abbreviation.
- ²⁸ Achievement lost in a list of responsibilities.
- ²⁹ Next door or on five continents?
- ³⁰ Jargon. A potentially interesting achievement is left unexplained.
- ³¹ Promotion? More could be made of this.
- ³² A hint at financial skills. Could be explicit.
- ³³ Unexplained jargon. Scale of achievement hard to judge.
- ³⁴ Opportunity to detail experiences lost.
- ³⁵ Criteria mentioned but no context.
- ³⁶ Even distant jobs can yield interesting achievements. None are given here. There is also a three year gap left unexplained here.
- ³⁷ Qualifications should be listed with education for greater clarity.
- ³⁸ Serves no purpose, unless the charitable activities are significant and relevant.



Matthew Smith, BSc, MIMechE

“Sandings”, 76 Dominion Street, Butler’s Cross, Buckinghamshire, HP17 8YT
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Professional Profile

I am a Managing Director with considerable experience of growing light engineering businesses across the world, but mostly in Europe and Asia. Both a graduate and chartered mechanical engineer, and recently a Managing Director with Eastmade Electrics, responsible for all their South and East Asian operations, I have held management responsibility for more than 4500 staff and turnovers in excess of £300 million. A proven manager of money and operations, my experience includes small batch manufacturing and assembly in office automation and domestic appliances. I am now seeking a new role where my energy, knowledge and passion for business can be fulfilled.

Education and Qualifications

BSc Mechanical Engineering, 2:1, University of Wales, Cardiff
MBA, Cranfield University
MIMechE, Chartered Mechanical Engineer of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers

Languages

German (fluent), Mandarin (conversational)

Career History

2007-2011: Eastmade Home Electrics: Managing Director, Hong Kong

Eastmade is the leading manufacturer of kitchen appliances and air-conditioning systems. With around 12,000 employees worldwide and a turnover of \$3 billion, US-headquartered Eastmade has global operations and customers. My final package amounted to around £145,000.

I led the South and East Asia manufacturing division with a turnover of \$500 million, 4,500 employees on 12 sites, in 5 countries and a global client base. My challenge on taking over the division was to manage a period of hectic growth, while addressing numerous challenges created by previous, poorly implemented, expansion. My main achievements included:

- Growing the division from 1,200 people mostly in China to the numbers above also in South Korea, Vietnam, India, Bangladesh and Indonesia.
- The \$500 million acquisition and integration of Indian based GOME products, a light engineering company with 10 factories throughout the subcontinent and in Vietnam.
- Designing the strategy and subsequent delivery for our entry into the home air conditioning market, mostly in Japan, worth \$50 million annually.
- Discovering serious financial mismanagement of a partially owned subsidiary in Jakarta, and managed our exit from the arrangement, saving \$25 million over three years.

2006-7: Leader and Main Organiser of the “Great Asian Pony Trek Cancer Marathon”

- 01 Clear presentation of contact details in minimal space.
- 02 First sentence states clearly candidate fits the profile.
- 03 Rest of professional profile addresses the requirements of the advertisement.
- 04 Degrees and professional qualifications stated together.
- 05 Relevant skills missing from previous CV.
- 06 Quick description of the company, establishing relevance. Package mentioned.
- 07 Facts and figures relevant to the advertisement.
- 08 Challenge of the role clearly stated in one sentence.
- 09 Presentation of achievements clearly in bullet points separate from responsibilities.
- 10 Gap in CV’s chronology addressed with a relevant activity.



This was a voluntary, unpaid project that I had been planning for some years, since my first wife's death from ovarian cancer. Using my business contacts in Europe and the USA, and my political contacts in Asia, as well as my experience as an owner and part-time trainer of horses, I organised a year long trek of 25 cancer survivors from around the world from Kazakhstan to Hong Kong. Gathering considerable regional media attention, the trek raised £30m for major cancer research charities.

1991-2006: Wenig und Off GmbH (WuO): Regional Operations Director (Asia) (2000-2006)¹¹, Head of Sales (Asia) (1994-1999) and Senior Sales Engineer (1991-1994)

Headquartered in Schalke, Germany, WuO are the world's leading component manufacturer for domestic appliances, heating and cooling systems, home entertainment and from 2000 onwards wind turbines. In 2003 their global turnover was €5 billion, with more than 15,000 employees in 15 countries across Europe, Asia and North America.

My most senior role was as **Regional Operations Director for Asia (2000-2006)**. Taking this role after the conclusion of my MBA, the challenge was to redesign the businesses delivery and back-office operations, without sacrificing quality for cost reduction. My most important achievements included:

- Leading the programme to redesign our entire supply chain management (SCM)¹² system. This involved significant redesign, re-negotiation with suppliers, disposals of assets and internal change process.
- Introduction of the Total Quality Management (TQM) business management strategy and the Manufacturing Resource Planning (MRP) system. Backed by new IT infrastructure, these systems saved us £1 million per annum while securing quality.
- Radically re-designing the finance function, replacing existing leadership with new staff and off shoring much delivery capacity to the Philippines¹³
- Replacing the previous, inconsistent and old-fashioned Personnel function with a new structure utilising business partners and a centre of excellence. Surveys discovered senior management rated the new system 150% more effective than the old¹⁴

Previously from **1994-1999** I was the **Head of Sales (Asia)**. Based in Hong Kong, the size of the team I led, and our total sales, grew steadily throughout these years. My achievements included:

- Leading the company's expansion in South Korea and Japan, with 75% growth in challenging market conditions.
- The company's first sales in mainland China and Vietnam.
- Growing the team to 35, with a sales figure of \$350 million, by 1999.

From **1997-1998** I spent half of my time at **Cranfield University**, sponsored by the company¹⁵ to undertake a **MBA**. My Master's thesis was on the subject of cultural barriers to selling in the Far East from a European engineering perspective.

My first role at WuO, from **1991-1994**, was as a **Senior Sales Engineer**. Initially based in Western Europe, my specialism in miniaturisation meant I was increasingly asked by colleagues all over the world to help them win new clients, and further develop existing ones. Notable achievements included:

- A \$10 million component contract with a Brazilian refrigerator manufacturer, our largest sale to date in that emerging market.
- Development of an existing client base in Taiwan and South Korea leading to a 25% growth in sales volume per annum for two years running.

¹¹ Clear description of progression in long period in one company.

¹² Jargon explained.

¹³ Evidence of financial competence.

¹⁴ Proven ability to redesign operations.

¹⁵ Evidence candidate well thought of.



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PERSONAL CAREER ADVOCATES

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