

JANUARY 2020

A Recruiter's Guide To Writing A Powerful Personal Statement

Advice by Laura Ross, Business Manager



HELLO

An employer will scan your CV for only a few seconds (harsh but true) so it is important that you nail a really good personal statement - one that grabs the reader's attention and makes them want to read through your CV carefully.

A personal statement can make the difference between selection and rejection. We provide tactics to help you identify and promote your achievements to prospective employers. Writing your personal statement will become a pain-free process!



This guide is written by **Laura Ross**, a recruiter who has been helping candidates showcase their abilities to prospective employers since 2010.

01

STRUCTURE

Written at the top of your CV, the personal statement appears under your name and contact details.

At approximately 100 - 150 words or 3 - 4 sentences you need to keep it factual.

Write in the first person and keep a professional tone.

NAME

City Location
Contact Telephone Number
Email Address

Personal Statement



Your personal statement is your first chance to sell yourself to an employer, pick your best working attributes and relate them to the job you are applying for.

02

CONTENT

Most personal statements are very similar (because people find them so hard to write). Make your personal statement stand out by grabbing this opportunity to self-promote.

It is important you show the employer the value you will add.

Tell the employer who you are and what you can do for their business, splitting the statement into 3 parts.

Beginning: Share your expertise, years of experience and qualifications.

Middle: Provide more information about your suitability for the specific vacancy - make it relevant to the job specification.

End: Close with a note of your current aims and availability/notice period.

03

SELF PROMOTE

Your CV is the tool that will secure you an interview so self-promotion is imperative.

During your job search the benefits of self-promotion far outweigh your own discomfort or reservations.

When you realise what makes writing about yourself so hard you can take positive action to make it easier.

Do you recognise any of these?

- Rarely recording achievements - making the detail hard to recall.
- Fear of sounding arrogant - which could undermine your own success.
- Feeling that you “just do your job” rather than appreciating all that you contribute.

04

INFO GATHERING

Information for your personal statement can come from a wide range of sources:

- Appraisals and performance reviews
- References
- LinkedIn recommendations
- Colleagues and friends
- Tutors, coaches and mentors

Of course, teamwork is very important but don't shy away from including details of the role you played in that team success.

ASK MEMBERS OF THE TEAM HOW YOU CONTRIBUTED - THEY'LL BE A GREAT SOURCE OF INFORMATION.

05

BREAK IT DOWN

Another trick is to brain dump all your ideas under these categories.



And ask yourself questions like:

- What am I good at?
- What facts back up my success?
- What am I really interested in?
- What am I proud of in my working life?
- What steps have I taken to get where I am?
- What are my strongest traits and behaviours?
- What would people be interested to know about me?

06

ACHIEVEMENTS

The easiest way to self-promote without sounding arrogant is to quantify your achievements.

Here's a few ideas:

- Sales values and increases in sales
- Time saved
- Cost savings
- Developing and implementing a new service / product / idea
- Customer satisfaction or customer engagement
- Process improvements
- People development
- Safety improvements
- Problem solving
- Efficiencies
- Awareness raising

07

BE RELEVANT

Every prospective employer is interested to understand the **value** you can add to their business, so remember to review your personal statement for each application as the achievements that are most pertinent to one may not be as relevant to the next.

The employer will be looking for role aptitude and relevant experience so it is important that your personal statement matches the specific requirements in the job specification.

If you don't take the time to ensure your personal statement is relevant to each job application it will appear that you've been a bit sloppy, or even lazy.

ENSURE IT'S
RELEVANT TO EACH
JOB APPLICATION

08

BE CONSISTENT

Use the Employment History section of your CV to provide context to your achievements and remember, it will be a red flag for the person reviewing your CV if there are any anomalies between this section and the information in your personal statement.

Check your LinkedIn profile too - the information there and your personal statement should not contradict each other.

Knowing that there is accurate information across your profiles means that when you are called for interview you'll be able to confidently talk about your achievements without fear of being tripped up.



09

BUZZWORDS

Don't fall into the trap of using cliches to describe the unique person you are. It is a big turn off for the reader.

Also, try to avoid company or industry-specific jargon and acronyms that could be meaningless to the reader, undermining the significance of your efforts.

Try to avoid using buzzwords like these:

- ✗ Results-oriented
- ✗ Blue-sky thinker
- ✗ Passionate
- ✗ Dynamic
- ✗ Team player
- ✗ Track record
- ✗ Leverage
- ✗ Strong inter-personal skills
- ✗ Paradigm shifter
- ✗ Expert

10

GETTING IT WRONG

Jack graduated from Aberdeen University with a 2:1 honours degree in marketing. I have undertaken several internships with a range of companies and am looking to secure a position which utilises my strong social media skills.

Ambitious, driven and enthusiastic I work well as part of a team, using my initiative when required.

- A mis-mash of the first and third person.
- Lack of information on the internships.
- Too many buzz-words and no specific or quantified detail on accomplishments.

11

GETTING IT RIGHT

(EARLY CAREER PROFESSIONAL)

Whilst a final year student at Aberdeen University (where I graduated with a 2:1 in marketing communications) I completed a 6 month internship with creative agency, The Best Company. During this placement I devised a campaign to raise awareness of Make A Difference charity. This enabled me to put my theoretical learning into effective practice, develop rapport with a key client and contribute to the campaign plan, budget and execution.

I'm proud to be part of the team which delivered a project which was subsequently short-listed for Best Creative Campaign of the Year 2019.

- Friendly and professional tone. 
- Specific company mentions.
- Insight to personality.
- Achievements clearly outlined.

11

GETTING IT RIGHT

(MORE EXPERIENCED PROFESSIONAL)

I'm a supply chain professional working for over 20 years' in management positions for retail and transportation businesses. I offer extensive experience in the implementation of MRP/ERP systems, including capacity planning and forecasting. During the last 5 years this experience, coupled with an aptitude for data analysis and monitoring, has delivered £2 million in cost efficiencies. My most recent projects include purchase system rationalisation and management of a £500,000 office upgrade.

The founding member of "Change Champions" within two organisations, I engage quickly with process improvement initiatives and am seeking to secure a new position with a small, growth company where I can make a tangible difference. My current notice period is 4 weeks.

- Professional tone. 
- Achievements outlined.
- Career aspirations included.
- Notice period.

12

REMEMBER TO

- ✓ Ask someone you trust to read your personal statement - if it doesn't make sense to them it'll never work for someone who doesn't know you.
- ✓ Review your personal statement, tailoring it for every application with achievements most relevant to the role.
- ✓ Use your personal statement as the basis for online biogs and profiles.
- ✓ Ensure you record your achievements as they happen. From moments of brilliance to months of hard work - it makes writing your personal statement so much easier.
- ✓ Keep your personal statement up to date.
- ✓ And a really important point that many people forget - make sure your personal statement represents the REAL YOU, not the person you think the recruiter is looking for.

If you have any questions, get in touch.

01224 327 000

hello@tmmrecruitment.com

tmmrecruitment.com