

When is an achievement a good achievement?

The work experience section on most CVs usually mirrors a job description. A strange phenomenon when you consider employers look for evidence of achievement, skill and value.

Clearly stating your achievements separately from your responsibilities is a very positive way to give information about your skills, abilities and value. The work history within your CV could read, for example:

Company XYZ	Jan 04 – Mar 09
Short one line description of company XYZ	
Responsibilities	
*	
*	
Achievements	
*	
*	
*	

This alone will give you a good chance of success. Listing more achievements than responsibilities will further aid your cause. Writing a good, compelling achievement will put you to the top of the pile. Following a simple sentence structure will help you to turn an achievement into a good achievement:

(F) Feature: The *way* you did this. Start the sentence with a feature word (e.g. consistently, successfully, actively, continually, efficiently)

(A) Action: What you did. Use a verb (e.g. maximised, minimised, exceeded, re-vitalised, created, launched, coordinated) followed by a few words describing what you did.

(B) Benefit: State the benefit to the company, customer etc...

Example: “Continually (F) exceeded monthly personal sales targets (A), helping the team to perform over target for the first time in 5 years (B).

Example: “Successfully (F) organised all travel arrangements for overseas conference (A), ensuring budgets were kept to and directors minimised time wasted (B).

Applying this structure to your experiences is a sure-fast way to produce a long list of good, compelling achievements. The only job left is selecting the most appropriate achievements for each specific employer, since you can't list all in a 2-page CV.

That's why job-seekers who spend time producing more achievements than they actually need for their CVs fare well at interview.

As the saying goes, 'It usually takes me more than 3 weeks to prepare a good impromptu speech'.