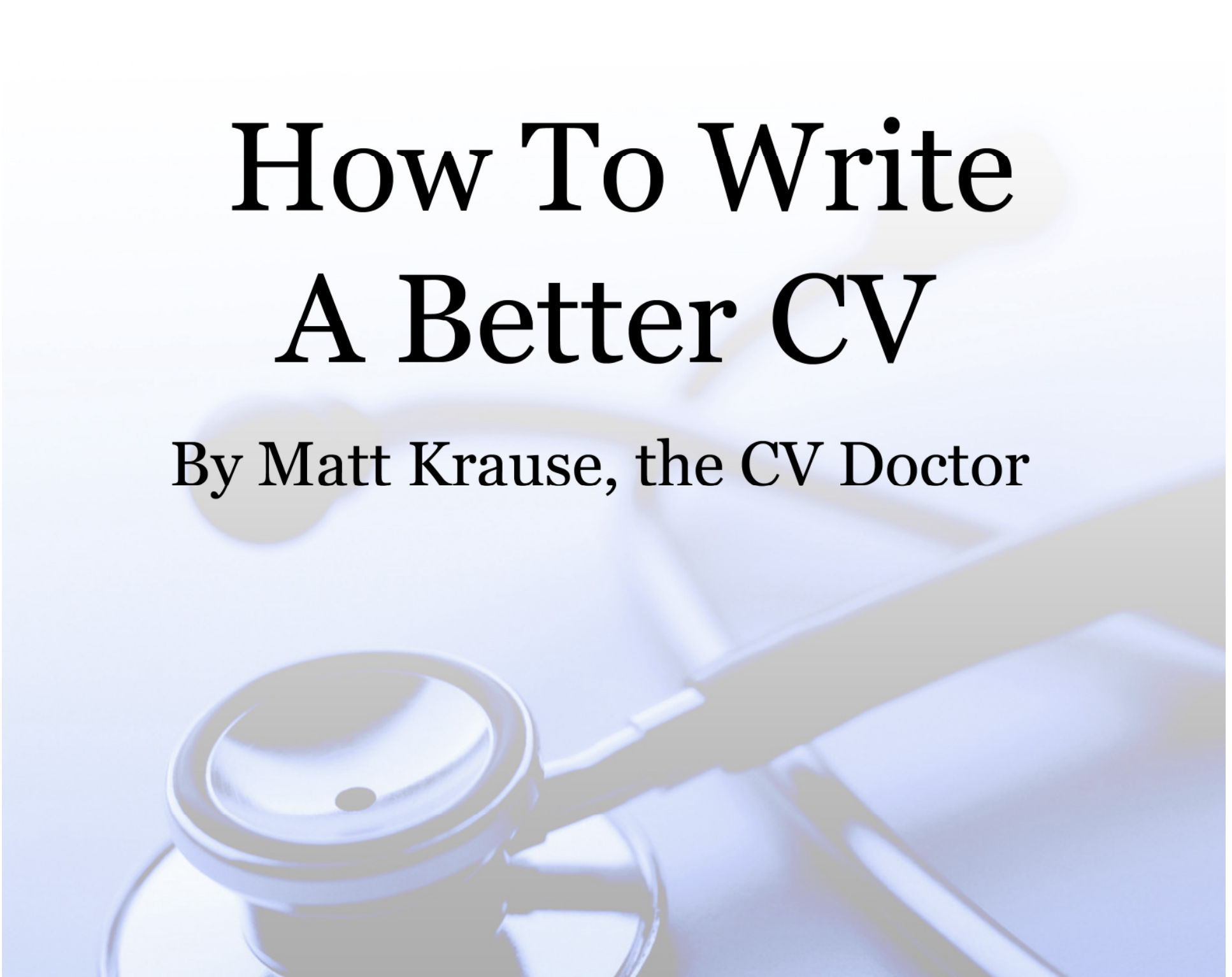


# How To Write A Better CV

By Matt Krause, the CV Doctor



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Why do you need a better CV?

Because it gets you the interview.

Better CV, more interviews.

If your CV rocks, companies will WANT to pick up the phone and call you.

Before you start writing,

Get your head in the right place.

How? Do four things before you start:

Step 1 of 4:

Get perspective:

A great CV gets you an interview, nothing more.

Step 2 of 4:

Think of the reader, not yourself.

Remember, the reader does not care about you.

He cares about his problem and how to solve it.

Step 3 of 4:

Define your target audience:

1. Their industrial sector
2. Their profession
3. Their job responsibilities

Step 4 of 4:

Imagine them using your CV:

- They already have a stack of 100 CVs on their desks.
- Their phones are ringing.
- Their bosses are yelling at them.
- They have a meeting in 3 minutes.



What does that mean for you?

You have 10 seconds before they throw your CV in the trash.

Tell your story fast, and tell it good.

Now that your mind is in the right place, you are ready to start writing...

## The basic structure of a CV:

Ayşe Moran (continued)  
0532-000-0000

Garanti Leasing  
Financial Forecasting Specialist

Dec '99 - Jun '01  
Istanbul, Turkey

- Worked on XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX XXXXXX XXXXXX XXXXX XXXXXXXXXX  
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
- Integrated XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX XXXXXX XXXXXX XXXXX.

Sabancı Holding, Software Development Dept  
Software Specialist

Jul '98 - Dec '00  
Istanbul, Turkey

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**Education**

2002 – 2004 XXXXXXXXX University, Istanbul  
Engineering Management Master Program

1994 – 1998 XXXXXXXXX University, Istanbul  
B.S. Computer Engineering, GPA 3.42 / 4 (5th highest rank in the Computer Engineering Faculty)

**Other Training**

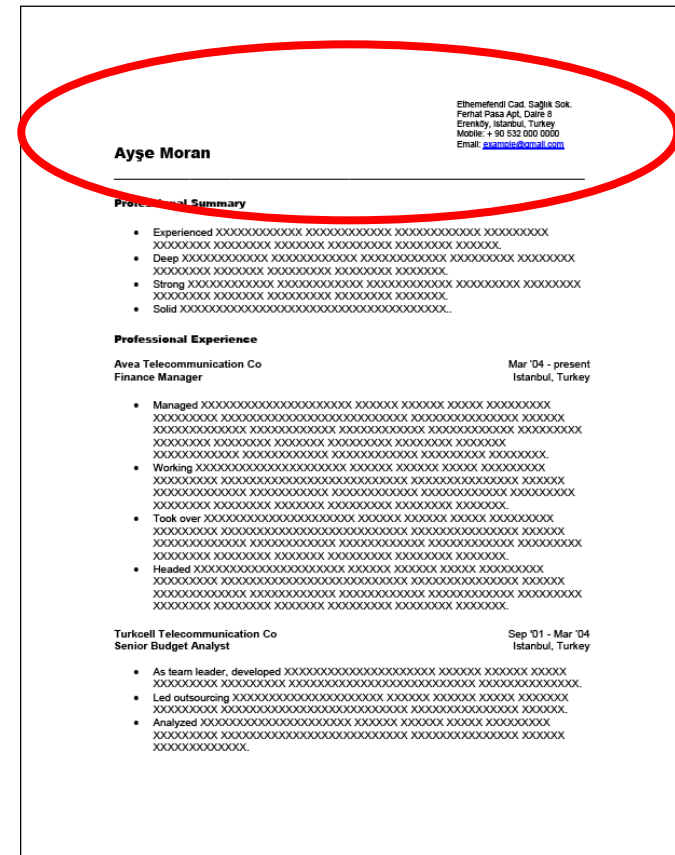
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**Languages**

Turkish (Native), English (Fluent), German (Beginner)

## The header: what goes there:

- Your name
- Your mailing address
- Your phone
- Your email address
- Your photo (optional)



Should you put a photo on your CV?

Yes, if...

- The company asks for one, or
- You only have a few years of work experience, or
- You are applying for jobs where public appearance is especially important (retail sales, restaurant or hotel management, etc).

No, probably not, if...

- You have at least a few years of work experience, so you have accomplishments which are more important than your tie color.



If you include a photo, use one that highlights your personality.

The photo on the left has very little personality. It says, “This is a bald man with glasses, and he got his photo at Alfacolor.”

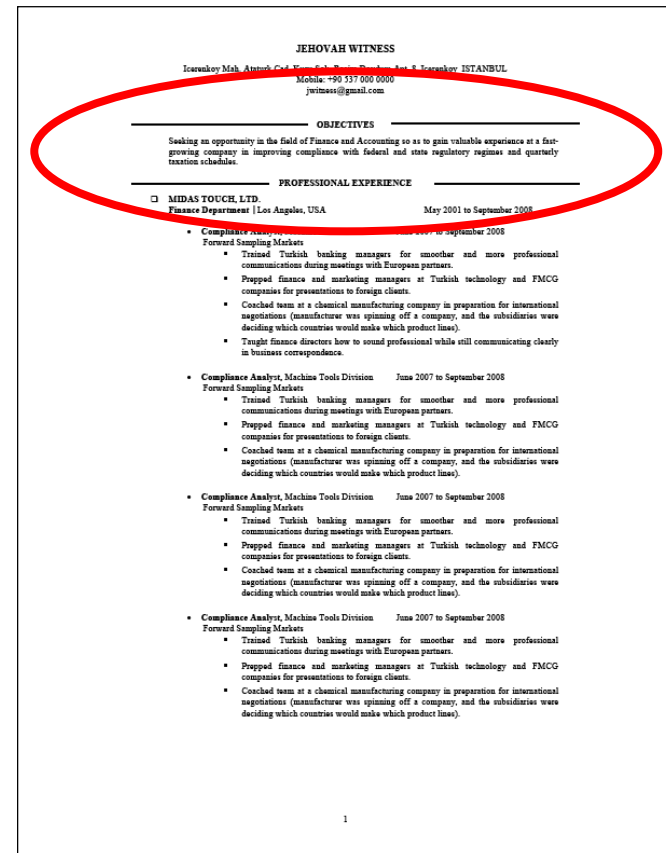
The photo on the right has more personality. It says, “This is a smiling, confident man who looks good in a suit.”



## Career Objectives:

They describe:

- What kind of company you want to work for
- What kind of responsibilities you want next
- What you want next from your career



But remember:

The reader does not care about you!

So, don't waste his time with your Career Objectives.

Actually, sometimes Career Objectives are okay...

If you are a recent university grad, with very little work experience (less than 3 years)...

Then, you can use Career Objectives to show the reader how you will help him succeed.

So in that case, don't say:

“Seeking an opportunity to gain valuable experience in a fast-moving consumer goods company.”

Instead, say...

“Seeking to streamline the day-to-day operations of a company’s shipping department, so the department is free to add more value to the company’s overall operations.”

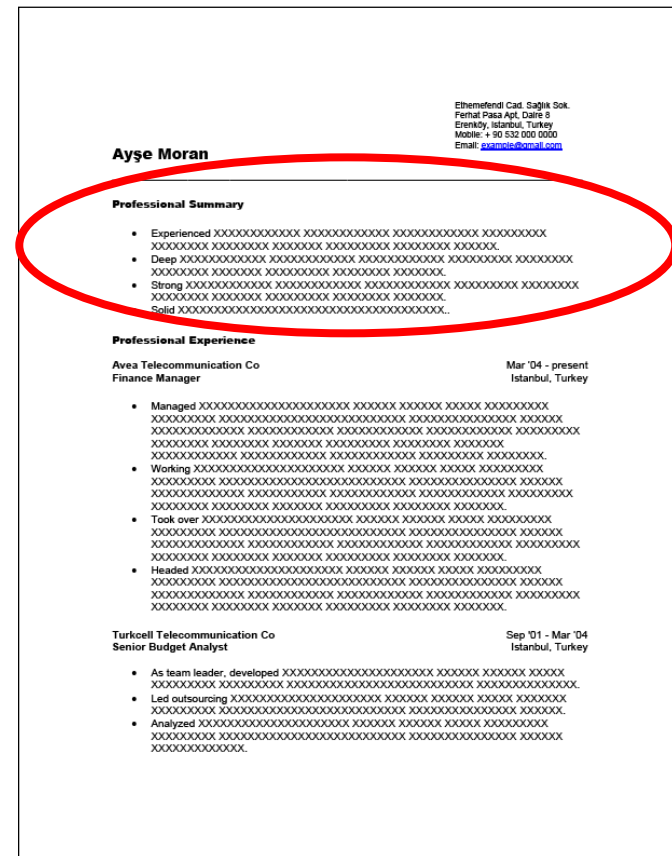
But remember, for most people, Career Objectives are a complete waste of time and space.

Instead, use an Executive Summary to tell your story.



## Executive Summary:

Sometimes called a “Professional Summary”, it is a summary of your strengths and experience.



The point of the Executive Summary is to tell your story in 10 seconds.

## A good Executive Summary:

- Tells a dynamic story in less than 10 seconds
- Has only 4-6 bullet points
- Is clear and easy to read, not stuffed with keywords
- Can only apply to you – it does not sound generic, like it could describe anyone

And most important of all:

A good Executive Summary fascinates the reader, it tells him you are going to solve his problems, and it makes him want to call you right now!

## Examples of Executive Summaries:

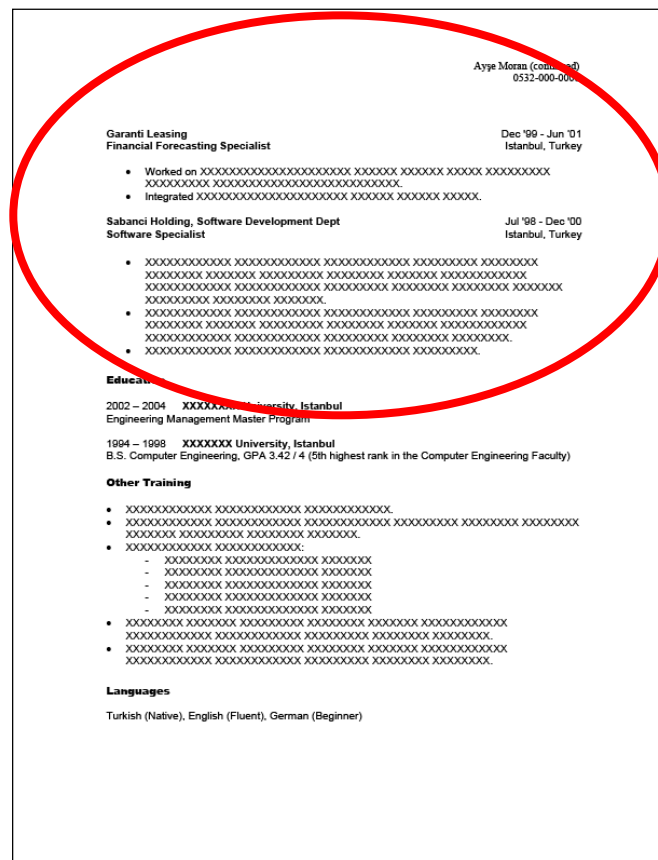
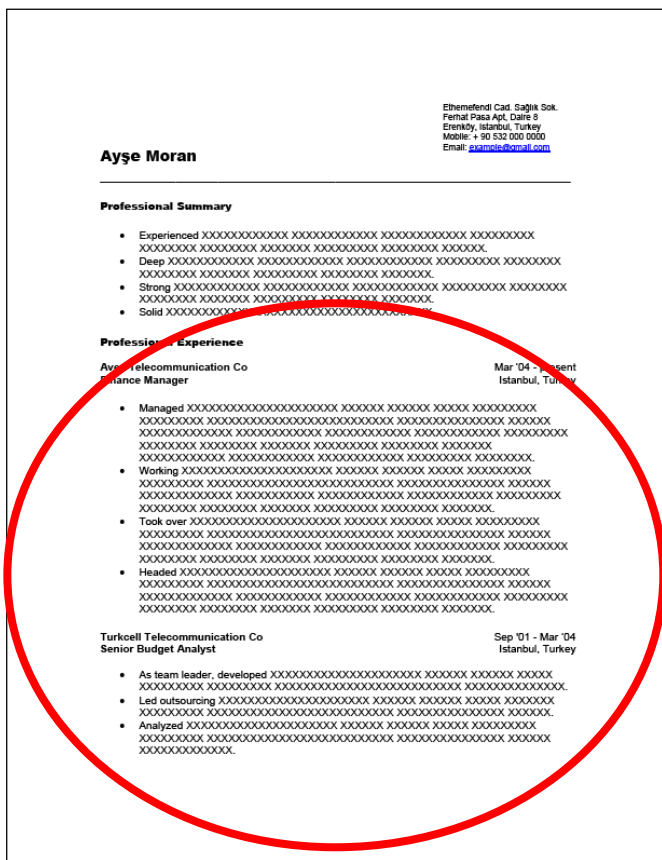
### **PROFESSIONAL OVERVIEW:**

- Experienced FMCG segment manager who knows how to attract Gen X and youth markets.
- Designer of market-changing POP campaigns that enhance revenue and customer loyalty.
- Innovative business-to-consumer marketer with national campaign implementation experience.
- Resourceful team leader who can localize and rollout programs across international boundaries.
- Influential and persuasive relationship builder who can clearly articulate new concepts to clients.

### **Executive Summary**

- Experienced architectural engineer managing teams of 50-300 people, projects spanning multiple countries, and construction budgets up to \$450 million.
- Solid professional and academic background in steel arch design for bridges, highways, and retractable stadium roofing systems.
- Excellent persuasion and presentation skills for selling projects in both corporate and governmental forums.
- Outstanding record of accuracy in forecasting absolute generation requirements for withstanding wave-form stresses.

## Professional Experience: Your work history!



Put the most recent jobs first, and the oldest jobs last:

**Vodafone Telecommunications Co**  
**Systems Development Manager**

**Feb 2006 – Dec 2008**  
**Istanbul, Turkey**

**Ulker Consumer Products Co**  
**Marketing Systems Analyst**

**Mar 2003 – Feb 2006**  
**Istanbul, Turkey**

**Garanti Financing & Card Services Co**  
**Systems Developer & Business Analyst**

**Dec 2001 – Mar 2003**  
**Istanbul, Turkey**

**Yapi Kredi Bank**  
**Software Specialist**

**Jul 1998 -- Dec 2001**  
**Istanbul, Turkey**

List your achievements, not your job descriptions.

A job description shows what any average person would do in that job.

But you are not an average person. You are not just a warm body sitting in a chair.

So tell the reader what you achieved, what made you special, what people remembered you for after you left.



## Job descriptions vs. achievements:

### Job description:

**Global Logistics Systems Co.**  
**Domestic Distribution Manager**

**Feb 2003 – Dec 2008**  
**Frankfurt, Germany**

- Developed industry experience while establishing and maintaining the overall transportation and warehousing development plans.
- Coordinated technical, operational, and customer service teams across the Western and Eastern European region.
- Communicated with third-party suppliers and internal teams, including distribution task force and cross-border expediting groups.

### Achievements:

**Global Logistics Systems Co.**  
**Domestic Distribution Manager**

**Feb 2003 – Dec 2008**  
**Frankfurt, Germany**

- Optimized cross-dock operations for major consumer goods retailer, resulting in 23% improvement in on-time delivery performance, while cutting transit costs over 10%.
- Improved communication amongst technical, operational, and customer service teams across the Western and Eastern European region by integrating order tracking system with SAP.
- Reduced loading dock wait times for refrigerated trailers with advance manifest notifications, at a time when cooling system maintenance schedules were increasing.

Keywords. Choose them well, and put them on your CV.

Why?

Because today, most CVs get scanned into a database...

Then the hiring manager goes to his computer, types in a few relevant keywords, and the database gives him a list of people to look at.

If your CV is missing the right keywords, he'll never see it.

Tip: Find important keywords in the job listings.

Here's an example...

This is a Demand Planner listing from Kariyer.net:

**Job Description:**

- Providing accurate and timely estimates as required at all stages of the marketing planning process,
- Tracking analysis of results to improve future performance,
- Reducing inventory levels and supporting service targets through accurate estimation,
- Preparing estimation risk analysis to alert supply chain on risky products,
- Following-up and reporting estimation deviation KPI's,
- Making trend reporting.

If you are applying for this job, make sure your CV includes these keywords: marketing, planning, tracking, analysis, inventory, service, supply chain, reporting.

Use action words, especially verbs.

Dead words make you sound average, like you did nothing but sit at a desk and push paper.

Action words, on the other hand, give your CV life.

They make it sound like you contributed something, like you achieved something, like when you left the company, it was better than before you started.

Example of dead words changed to action words:

Dead words:

“Coordinated Turkish PR and marketing activities.”

Action words:

“Led Turkish PR and marketing activities.”



With the dead words, it sounds like everyone else did the work, and all you did was sit at a desk and schedule a couple meetings. You added no value to the process.

With the action words, it sounds like you contributed something. You led people and you delivered solid results for the company.

Use numbers.

One number is better than 100 pretty words.

Numbers mean you put money in the bank, and that's what every company wants.

Use numbers to give your achievements size, weight, and shape.

See the difference:

No numbers:

“Contacted customers, followed up on orders, and resolved problems when necessary.”

With numbers:

“Managed customer service for 75 customers in 4 countries. Worked with 3 other departments to improve on-time shipping performance, raising customer satisfaction from 68% to 93%.”

Sometimes, numbers and achievements look even better when you put them inside a bigger picture.

This is called “context”. Use it to your advantage.

Feel the difference:

Great achievement, but no context:

“Built communications strategy for a new brand, managing campaigns that led to 28% turnover growth.”

Same achievement, with context:

“Built communications strategy for a new brand, managing campaigns that led to 28% turnover growth when market grew by only 10%.”

## Education:

To most employers, two years of real-world work experience are worth more than 4 years of school.

And by the time you are 30, your work history is far more important than your education history.

But education is still a standard part of every CV, so make it good!

Education includes:

- Name and location of school
- Years you went there
- Name of degree
- Grade point average if you did well (if you didn't do well, it is not necessary)

**Education**

2000 – 2002    Middle East Technical University, Ankara  
Industrial Design Management Masters Program

1994 – 1998    Istanbul Technical University, Istanbul  
B.S. Industrial Engineering, GPA 3.72 / 4.00 (3rd highest rank in department)



Other stuff:

Computer skills, languages,  
other trainings, military  
status, driver's license,  
hobbies, etc.

Aye Moran (continued)  
0532-000-0000

**Garanti Leasing** Dec '99 - Jun '01  
**Financial Forecasting Specialist** Istanbul, Turkey

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**Sabancı Holding, Software Development Dept** Jul '98 - Dec '00  
**Software Specialist** Istanbul, Turkey

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**Education**

2000 – 2002 **Middle East Technical University, Ankara**  
Industrial Design Management Masters Program

1994 – 1998 **Istanbul Technical University, Istanbul**  
B.S. Industrial Engineering GPA: 3.2 / 4.00 (3rd highest rank in department)

**Other Training**

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**Languages**

Turkish (Native), English (Fluent), German (Beginner)

Space is limited. Do not let the “other stuff” section steal valuable real estate from your accomplishments. Show valuable things only.

For example, if you speak German fluently, that is very valuable and you should include it.

However, if you are an engineer who designed airplanes for 15 years, no one cares that you took a “Using the fax machine” training course 10 years ago.

If you are a student applying for your first job, listing your computer skills is very important.

Employers want to know that on your first day, you won't ask, "What is Excel, again?"

References:

Don't list them on your CV.

Every line on your CV is valuable real estate.

Don't waste space listing other peoples' names.

Even if your references are Bill Gates and the presidents of 3 countries, leave their names off.

You are selling your accomplishments, not theirs.

If your relationship with them is really important, your work with them will show up in your lists of accomplishments.

Should you say “References Available upon Request”?

If you have extra space on your CV, those words are okay.



But employers already know references are available upon request, so you can get rid of that line.

Use the extra space for more important words, or make your CV easier to read by leaving that space blank.

## Tips for recent university grads:

Things recent grads can show:

- Internships they did
- Clubs they belonged to
- Awards or scholarships they won
- Outside training courses they took

If you just graduated, employers don't expect you to have the real-life experiences of a 40-year old.

They just want to know you did more at university than drink beer and sleep late.

## Some CV “Do's and Don'ts”...

**DO:** Use active words, especially verbs.

## Inactive words:

Contributed to...  
Gained experience in...  
Responsible for...

## Active words:

Activated...  
Increased...  
Persuaded...

DO: Use bullet points.

Bullet points make your CV easier to read.



## Without bullet points:

Global Logistics Systems Co.

Feb 2003 – Dec 2008

Domestic Distribution Manager

Frankfurt, Germany

Optimized cross-dock operations for major consumer goods retailer, resulting in 23% improvement in on-time delivery performance, while cutting transit costs over 10%.

Improved communication amongst technical, operational, and customer service teams across the Western and Eastern European region by integrating order tracking system with SAP.

Reduced loading dock wait times for refrigerated trailers with advance manifest notifications, at a time when cooling system maintenance schedules were increasing.

## With bullet points:

Global Logistics Systems Co.

Feb 2003 – Dec 2008

Domestic Distribution Manager

Frankfurt, Germany

- Optimized cross-dock operations for major consumer goods retailer, resulting in 23% improvement in on-time delivery performance, while cutting transit costs over 10%.
- Improved communication amongst technical, operational, and customer service teams across the Western and Eastern European region by integrating order tracking system with SAP.
- Reduced loading dock wait times for refrigerated trailers with advance manifest notifications, at a time when cooling system maintenance schedules were increasing.

**DO:** Use parallel grammar structures.

What is a parallel structure?

In a parallel structure, all sentences begin with a noun, or all sentences begin with an adjective, or all sentences begin with a verb.

Parallel structures make your CV easier to read.

For example...

This is not parallel:

- Confident when presenting to large groups.
- Raised \$1,000,000 in venture capital.
- Manager of complex engineering projects.

This is parallel:

- Confident presenter who explains complex subjects clearly.
- Persuasive fund-raiser who can raise millions of dollars.
- Resourceful manager of complex engineering projects.

DO: Cut unnecessary or meaningless words.

Every line on your CV is important. Every centimeter is valuable.

If a word doesn't add meaning, remove it.

If you can say something with 3 words, don't use 4.

For example...

The red circles show unnecessary words:

- Prepared  the printed material,  like catalogues, brochures, and manuals.

The shorter, better version:

- Prepared printed materials – catalogues, brochures, and manuals.

Don't waste the reader's time – let him focus on important words only.

DON'T: Leave misspellings and grammar errors.

Use your computer's spell-check, and then read it carefully yourself.

But don't stop there – get at least two friends to read it, too. And if you are not a native speaker, get one to edit it.

**DON'T:** Use an unprofessional email address.

**Bad:**

[sexygrrl69@hotmail.com](mailto:sexygrrl69@hotmail.com)  
[crazed\\_murderer@yahoo.com](mailto:crazed_murderer@yahoo.com)

**Good:**

[murat.erdogan@gmail.com](mailto:murat.erdogan@gmail.com)  
[aysehongur@yahoo.com](mailto:aysehongur@yahoo.com)



## File formats: sending your CV by email:

The most common options are:

- Word (.doc)
- Pdf (useful because 98% of computers can read them)
- text-only (often in the body of an email)

Note:

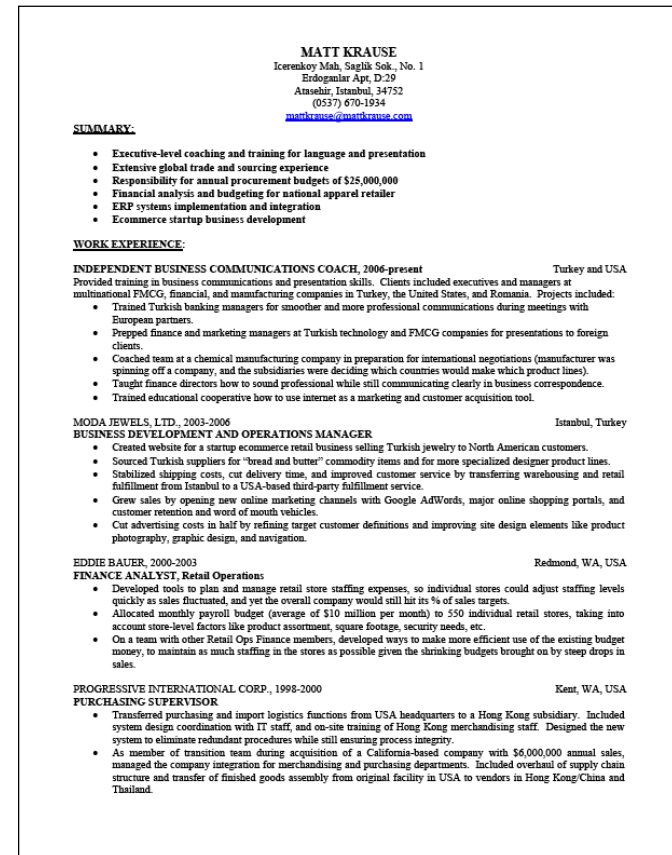
If you are using Word 2007, remember that it saves most files as .docx.

Many companies are still using old versions of Word, like Word 2003.

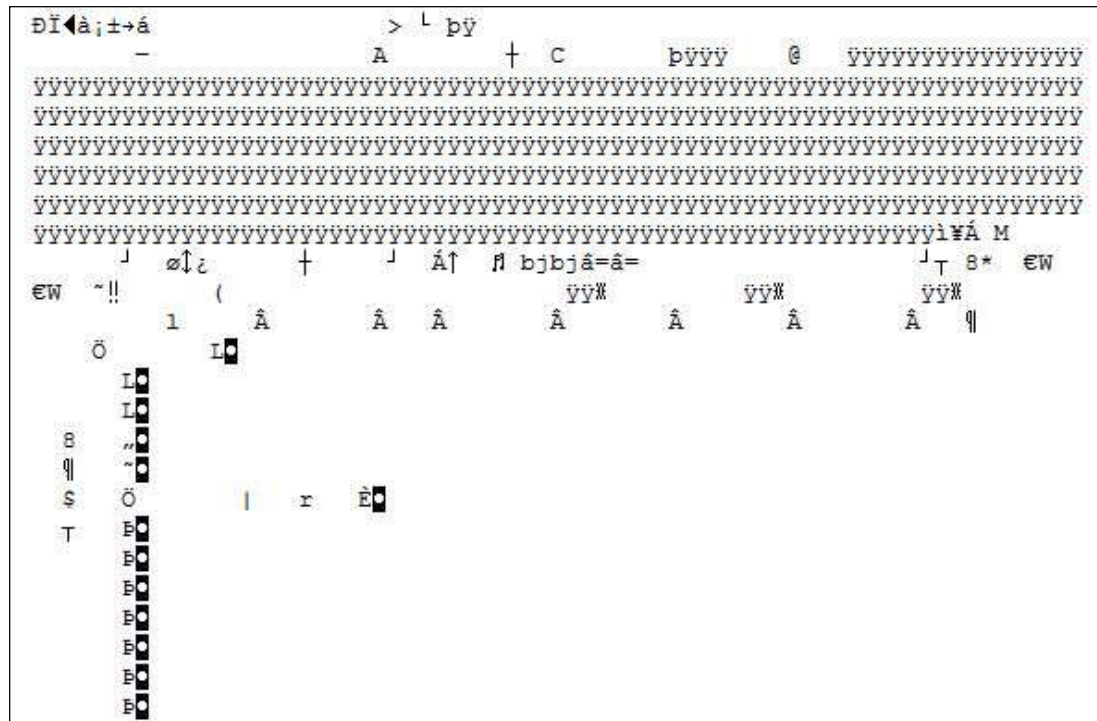
Old versions of Word don't do .docx.

Save your Word documents as .doc, not .docx.

You know that beautiful Word document you worked so hard on?...



Here's what it looks like when you convert it to a text file:



So keep all three file formats available at all times...

If you make your CV in Word, save it as .doc...

Then convert it to .pdf, and open the pdf to make sure it looks okay...

Then convert it to text-only also, and open it up in Notepad (on a PC) or Text Editor (on a Mac), and clean it up so it looks nice.

Then, whatever format the company asks for, send your CV in that format.

If they ask for a specific format, don't send your CV in another format.

Circulating your CV:

If no one sees it, it doesn't exist!



Start by setting up an account at the internet job sites, and post your CV on there:

- [Kariyer.net](http://Kariyer.net)
- [Yenibiris.com](http://Yenibiris.com)
- [SecretCV.com](http://SecretCV.com)
- [Monster.com](http://Monster.com)

But when a company asks for your CV, do NOT forward it to them from an internet job site like kariyer.net, secretcv.com, etc.

Why? They look terrible!

Look at this example...

This CV was forwarded from secretcv.com:

Kişisel Bilgiler

**Adres :**  
CADDEBOSTAN ÇİÇEK ÇIKMAZI  
Caddebostan / İstanbul Anadolu / Türkiye

**Telefonlar :**  
**Ev Telefonu :** 0216  
**Cep Telefonu(1) :** 053  
**Ulaşılamadığında :**  
**Telefon:** 053

**Doğum Tarihi :** 04.11 **Ehliyet :** Var  
**Medeni Hal :** Bekar **Sigara Kullanımı :** Kullanıyor  
**Askerlik Durumu :** Muaf **Engellilik Durumu :** Yok  
**Cv Güncelleme Tarihi :** 15.01.2009 **Uyruk :** Türkiye  
**İş Deneyimleri Toplam Deneyim Süresi :** 11 yıl 3 ay / Aday Çalışmıyor

**Kasım 2002-Temmuz 2008**  
**Deneyim Süresi :** 5 yıl 8 ay **YILDIRIM OTOMOTİV SAN ve TİC LTD.ŞTİ - İstanbul Anadolu**  
**Sektör - Bölüm - Pozisyon :** Otomotiv - Satış - Şef / Amir  
**İşin Tanımı :**

**Ayrılma Nedeni :** Diğer  
**Raporlama Yaptığı Kişinin Ünvanı :**

**Kasım 1999-Kasım 2001**  
**Deneyim Süresi :** 2 yıl **YILDIRIM OTOMOTİV SAN ve TİC LTD.ŞTİ - İstanbul Anadolu**  
**Sektör - Bölüm - Pozisyon :** Otomotiv - Satış - Satış Temsilcisi  
**İşin Tanımı :**

**Ayrılma Nedeni :** Diğer  
**Raporlama Yaptığı Kişinin Ünvanı :**

Post your CV on internet networking sites, too:

- [LinkedIn.com](http://LinkedIn.com)
- [Xing.com](http://Xing.com)

However...

- The best jobs aren't posted on the internet.
- Most jobs are found through personal relationships.

So the internet is good, but your personal contacts are more important.

Use your personal network!

Ask people if they know of any openings in your field.

Ask your friends, your family, your former co-workers, your professors, everyone you know.

If there is a position open,

and if you have a friend in the company...

Ask him to walk your CV and cover letter directly to the hiring manager.



Even if your friends don't know of any job openings:

Ask them for the manager's name in the relevant department at the company they work for.

Why? If you send your CV directly to the manager you want to work for, he might notice you. If you send it to HR instead, he'll never see it.

Even if that manager doesn't have a job opening, he probably has a friend at another company who does.

And if he wants to help his friend, and if he likes your CV, he might send it to him.

Tip: Don't just send your CV to people and ask them if they have a job.

Send it to them and ask them how to improve it.

They are more likely to look at it that way.

Final words to remember:

- A better CV will get you more interviews.
- The reader doesn't care about you. He cares about his needs.
- Don't start writing until you understand the reader's needs.
- The reader is busy. You have 10 seconds to impress him, before he throws your CV in the trash.

By the way,

Did you know that there's also a free 8-week course, showing you real-life examples of how to apply these rules?

You can find the free course on the Matt Krause homepage, at [www.mattkrause.com](http://www.mattkrause.com).