

design your future

Engels –  
communicatie voor rekrutering

studiegebied  
handelswetenschappen en bedrijfskunde

*graduaat*

*HR-Support*

1<sup>ste</sup> jaar



## Workshop 1: CVs and other documents

While there are not always enough jobs to go around, *some* people *are* getting hired. Every day, every hour, thousands of people are selected from thousands more who are ready, willing and able to work. The question is, why is it that some people get hired and some don't?

There are some obvious answers like education, connections, experience and even enthusiasm. But there is another reason that may be just as significant: bad résumé, cover letter and interview skills, especially for applicants right out of school or someone who hasn't interviewed in a long time.

### 1.1 Terminology

What do the following words mean? Discuss with your neighbour!

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| job ad/(employee-)vacancy |  |
| to apply for a job        |  |
| job applicant             |  |
| job application           |  |
| resume/résumé or CV       |  |
| application letter        |  |
| cover letter              |  |

Watch out for the word *resume*. In the United States a CV and a resume are different documents. A resume is a short document (2-3 pages). A CV in the United States is a much longer and more detailed document.

### 1.2 How to apply for a job

Read the following text. Some words or expressions are underlined. Discuss their meaning. Use the context for a better understanding!

#### How to apply for a job

##### Decide what kind of job you want

In order to streamline the job application process, examine what your needs and desires are for employment. You can narrow down your options by taking a few things into consideration:

1. **Consider the career field.** It is important to find work that is both challenging and rewarding for you. Knowing what you don't want to do is just as important and knowing what you do want to do.

2. **Consider the skills required for a particular position.** Feeling like your skills are being well utilized and acknowledged is key to feeling satisfaction at a job. Having an idea about which of your skills will be tapped, and which you will be able to develop, is key to deciding on a worthwhile job.
3. **Consider your salary and benefit requirements.** Be honest and realistic about this. If you need health coverage and require a certain amount of income per month, it is best to home in on jobs that fulfill those requirements.

#### **Do your research**

Before you begin sending out resumes and cover letters, look into the companies you are applying for. Know something about the company. Or, better yet, know a lot about the company. Many companies expect you to be familiar with what it is they do.

4. **Get a sense of the company's personality and values by reading its mission statement.** This information can come in handy when writing your cover letter and in an interview situation.
5. **Read up on new products or services the company is providing.** This information is often located in the company's "news" section. This section can also be a source of information on community activities the company is involved in.
6. **Review the jobs or careers section of the company website for insight into job openings.** You may find more options for employment in other departments or locations.

#### **Make sure your online presence is clean**

Employers and recruiters often scour the internet looking for you, and any negativity they see can push you to the back of the pack.

### **1.3 How to write a powerful CV <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uG2aEh5xBJE> (Utrecht University, 2016)**

1. In what order should you present the following information according to the video?

- professional experience
- interests & additional information
- extracurricular activities
- personal information
- education
- profile
- skills

2. Do you think the same order is used in every CV? Is it similar in Belgium?

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3. In which section would you put the following details?

You live in Kortrijk

You volunteer at a local children's hospital

Your date of birth

You like travelling and reading

You are in a youth movement

You studied at VIVES University College

Your holiday job

4. The resume: written summary

Even if the job you want doesn't require the submission of a traditional resume, having an up-to-date resume is highly recommended. Resumes not only outline your education and work history, but they can also point to specific projects you've worked on or awards you've won. Think about things you have done in school, in a previous job, in a volunteer position that speak to your commitment, your ability to solve problems, your ability to deal with difficult customer situations, your ability to get a job done. Work it into your résumé and your interview responses. Information to include on your resume should entail:

1. **Your current contact information**, including your full name, phone number, mailing address, and email address.
2. **Your educational background**. List the colleges you have attended (beginning with your most recent), the year you attended, and any degrees or certificates earned. You may opt to include your course of study (= grades per year and study efficiency).
3. **Your work history for the past few years**. Be aware that large gaps in employment, or multiple jobs within a short amount of time, will be something you may be asked about in an interview. Be sure to include dates of employment, the company name, your title, and a brief description of your activities. If you don't have a work history yet, you can also include relevant holiday jobs or internships at school.

4. **Your relevant skills.** This is your opportunity to list all the skills you have acquired through the years. Knowledge of office equipment, languages, familiarity with computer operating systems, software programs (such as Microsoft Office Suite or Adobe Creative Suite), typing speed, database experience, and other relevant information should be included in your resume.
5. **References.** Though you may not have to provide a list of references right away, it is wise to tap people early to ask whether they would consider being a professional reference for you. It is recommended that you secure at least three references. At least two of these references should be people whom you have worked with and who can speak to your job performance. Be sure you have your references' updated contact information, including mailing and email addresses, phone number, current title, and current company.

#### 1.4 Vocabulary to use on your CV

##### CHARACTER

|                      |                  |
|----------------------|------------------|
| responsible          | verantwoordelijk |
| confident            | (zelf)zeker      |
| innovative           | innovatief       |
| reliable, dependable | betrouwbaar      |
| organized            | georganiseerd    |
| resourceful          | vindingrijk      |

##### PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE

|             |                    |
|-------------|--------------------|
| achieved    | verworven, bereikt |
| managed     | geleid             |
| planned     | gepland            |
| executed    | uitgevoerd         |
| coordinated | gecoördineerd      |

|            |              |
|------------|--------------|
| improved   | verbeterd    |
| created    | gecreëerd    |
| negotiated | onderhandeld |

**EDUCATION**

|                            |                             |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| graduated                  | afgestudeerd                |
| degree                     | diploma                     |
| associate degree           | graduaatsdiploma            |
| final grade                | afstudeercijfer             |
| thesis                     | thesis, masterproef         |
| extracurricular activities | buitenschoolse activiteiten |
| involved in                | betrokken bij               |

**SKILLS**

|             |           |
|-------------|-----------|
| proficient  | vaardig   |
| experienced | ervaren   |
| bilingual   | tweetalig |
| fluent      | vloeiend  |

## 1.5 The cover letter

A lot of job seekers today wonder if a cover letter is still appropriate to send with your resume and the answer is yes! **The cover letter can help your resume get noticed**, think of the cover letter as your resume's cheerleading section. **Talk about how your skills will benefit the particular company that you want to work for, and demonstrate how you have done some research into the organization.** Many job seekers struggle with their cover letters, but writing a good cover letter is a skill that can be learned and perfected.

### The basic elements of a cover letter

1. **Greeting:** Address your cover letter to the proper person. If possible, address the contact letter to a specific contact person. This demonstrates that you took the time to research the information and are not simply mass-emailing every employer you can find. A letter of application should begin with both you and the employer's contact information (name, address, phone number, email) followed by the date. If this is an email rather than an actual letter, include your contact information at the end of the letter, after your signature. Begin your letter with "Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name." If you do not know the employer's last name, simply write, "Dear Hiring Manager."
2. **Opening:** Write a personal, inviting opening paragraph that highlights how your skills are a perfect fit to the job. Explain where you heard about the job, particularly if you heard about it from a contact associated with the company. What is it you hope to gain from working in this role? What specifically interests you about this position? What unique talents would you bring to this position? How does the company's personality and mission align with your own values?
3. **Hook:** Highlight your past achievements as they relate to the job you're applying for. How does your background make you a valuable asset to the role and to the company?
4. **Skills:** Highlight additional relevant skills, such as computer skills, languages or certifications.
5. **Close:** Briefly recap your strengths as a candidate. Restate how your skills make you a strong fit for the company and/or position. State that you would like to interview and/or discuss employment opportunities. Explain what you will do to follow up, and when you will do it. Thank the employer for his/her consideration.
6. **Signature:** End with your signature, handwritten, followed by your typed name. If this is an email, simply include your typed name, followed by your contact information.

1. Have a look at the cover letter on the next page. Identify the different parts of the letter.

**Greeting:**

**Opening:**

**Hook:**

**Skills:**

**Close:**

**Signature:**

[Date]

Ms. Rhonda West  
Customer Service Manager  
Acme Inc.  
123 Corporate Blvd.  
Sometown, CO 50802

**Re: Customer Service Representative Opening** (Ref. ID: CS300-Denver)

Dear Ms. West

I was excited to see your opening for a customer service rep, and I hope to be invited for an interview.

My background includes serving as a customer service associate within both call-center and retail environments. Most recently, I worked on the customer service desk for Discount-Mart, where my responsibilities included handling customer merchandise returns, issuing refunds/store credits, flagging damaged merchandise for shipment back to vendors and providing back-up cashiering during busy periods.

Previously, I worked within two high-volume customer-support call centers for a major telecommunications carrier and a satellite television services provider. In these positions, I demonstrated the ability to resolve a variety of issues and complaints (such as billing disputes, service interruptions or cutoffs, repair technician delays/no-shows and equipment malfunctions). I consistently met my call-volume goals, handling an average of 56 to 60 calls per day.

In addition to this experience, I gained considerable customer service skills during my part-time employment as a waitress and restaurant hostess while in high school.

I also bring to the table strong computer proficiencies in MS Word, MS Excel and CRM database applications and a year of college (business major). Please see the accompanying resume for details of my experience and education.

I am confident that I can offer you the customer service, communication and problem-solving skills you are seeking. Feel free to call me at 555-555-5555 (home) or 555-555-5500 (cell) to arrange an interview. Thank you for your time—I look forward to learning more about this opportunity!

Sincerely,

Sue Ling

Enclosure: Resume

## 1.6 Customize your letter

These days, if you use the same cover letter and resume for every job, you can literally apply for hundreds of jobs in a day, assuming your forefinger doesn't cramp up from the incessant mouse clicking.

But the object of the game isn't to fire off as many applications as possible. The goal is to get a phone call or an appointment for an interview. You may have convinced yourself that using a stock cover letter makes sense in your case. Maybe you're a weak writer or you've rationalized that it's better to pour all your efforts into one strong cover letter than to [customize letters](#) for every job opening. But that logic may not get you the interview you're after. You just can't fake a letter customized for a particular job at a particular company, no matter how strong your stock cover letter may be.

So don't feel like the time you spend writing cover letters is wasted, even if it's a considerable amount of time. To the contrary, take pride in agonizing over what you're writing. It's not unreasonable to spend the better part of a day, or more in some circumstances, crafting a great cover letter. If you can find the time to research the company a bit and, within your letter, tie that research together with your skills and experiences, you'll be way ahead of the game.

## 1.7 Guidelines to write a cover letter

**Cover letter format:** Be sure your cover letter uses a standard business-letter format. It should include the date, the recipient's mailing address and your address. A good cover letter should be no longer than one page. Make sure your cover letter has three or four concise but convincing paragraphs that are easy to read.

**Font:** Use a traditional font such as Times New Roman, Arial, or Calibri. The font size should be between 10 and 12 points.

**Be concise:** busy hiring managers don't have time to wade through letters that could pass for novels. Get to the point as soon as possible, and break any paragraphs seven lines or longer into short, easily digestible ones. When you are writing your cover letters as emails brevity is even more important. The nature of the email calls for concise communication, in part because it's harder to read on screen than on paper. However, don't fall prey to the one-line cover letter that some job seekers try to pass off. It goes something like this: "Please see attached resume, and thank you for your time and consideration." You should be able to write a convincing cover letter in a few brief paragraphs.

**Keep it professional but friendly:** while a resume is generally a formal document, cover letters give you a chance to reveal your personality. Not only do you want to show that you're a good fit for the position, but you also want the reader to like you. Appropriate use of humour, combined with a friendly and professional tone, can help endear you to the hiring manager.

**Focus on the employer's needs:** if every other sentence of your letter begins with "I" or "my," you need to change the focus. Research the employer and find out what qualities they look for in employees and their future goals. Then use your letter to prove that you are the answer to their problems. The most compelling letters demonstrate what you can do for the employer, not what the employer can do for you.

**Be original:** your cover letter will stand out if you employ some creativity. For example, you could include a brief summary of your most challenging project. You could incorporate excerpts of performance reviews to highlight your record of success.

**Get a second (or third) opinion.** Ask friends or family members to review your resume and cover letter for typos/misspellings. They may be able to point out things that are missing, or items that could be rephrased. If possible, get advice from someone working in the field you are applying for. Speaking to recruiters or hiring managers may be beneficial as well, as they are familiar with the qualities and qualifications employers are looking for.

## Workshop 2: Telephoning

### 2.1 Listening: Give us a bell



<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0596ddb/player>

What does 'give us a bell' mean? Do you know any alternative expressions?

### 2.2 Calling in HR

Can you think of a few reasons why you would need to call or take a call when working in HR?

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- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

### 2.3 Translate these useful sentences

1. Sorry, kunt u wat luider spreken? Ik heb je niet zo goed verstaan.
2. Kunt u wat langzamer spreken?
3. Momentje, ik verbind u door met de secretaresse van mijnheer Johnson.
4. Wilt u een boodschap achterlaten?
5. Zal ik een boodschap doorgeven?
6. Ik zorg ervoor dat ze u zo snel mogelijk terugbelt.

**2.4 Speaking: Useful telephone vocabulary and phrases**

Telephoning requires special skills **as** there are a number of difficulties that are specific to telephoning. The first and foremost difficulty is not being able to see the person you are communicating with. This lack of visual communication often makes people, who can communicate quite successfully in other situations, nervous. Add to this the typical hectic pace of business communication, and you have a particularly difficult situation.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Making contact</b></p>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hello / Good morning / Good afternoon ...</li> <li>▪ This is John Brown speaking</li> <li>▪ John Brown speaking</li> <li>▪ This is John Brown calling</li> <li>▪ This is John Brown</li> <li>▪ I'm calling on behalf of Mr. X ...</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Asking for someone</b></p>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Could I speak to ..... please?</li> <li>▪ I'd like to speak to ..... ..</li> <li>▪ I'm trying to contact .....I'm calling from Paris / New York / Sydney ...</li> <li>▪ Can I have extension 321? (internal number at a company)</li> <li>▪ Is Jack in? (informal for Is Jack in the office?)</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Taking a call</b></p>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ X speaking.</li> <li>▪ VIVES University College, good morning, how can I help?</li> <li>▪ Can I help you?</li> <li>▪ What can I do for you?</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Asking for a name / information</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Excuse me, who is this?</li> <li>▪ Who's calling please?</li> <li>▪ Can I ask who's calling, please?</li> <li>▪ Who's speaking?</li> <li>▪ Are you sure you have the right number / name?</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Checking information</b></p>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Would/could you spell that, please?</li> <li>▪ Can I read that back to you?</li> <li>▪ Could you be a bit more specific?</li> <li>▪ Could you explain that in more detail?</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Asking the caller to wait</b></p>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hold the line please.</li> <li>▪ Could you hold on please?</li> <li>▪ Just a moment please.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Connecting</b></p>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Thank you for holding.</li> <li>▪ The line's free now ... I'll put you through.</li> </ul>   |

|   |  |
|---|--|
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ I'll connect you now / I'm connecting you now.</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Giving negative information</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ I'm afraid the line's engaged. Could you call back later?</li> <li>▪ I'm afraid he's in a meeting at the moment.</li> <li>▪ I'm sorry. He's out of the office today. / He isn't in at the moment.</li> <li>▪ I'm afraid we don't have a Mr./Mrs./Ms/Miss. ... here</li> <li>▪ I'm sorry. There's nobody here by that name.</li> <li>▪ Sorry. I think you've dialled the wrong number./ I'm afraid you've got the wrong number.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Problems understanding</b></p>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The line is very bad ... Could you speak up please?</li> <li>▪ Could you repeat that please?</li> <li>▪ I'm afraid I can't hear you.</li> <li>▪ Sorry. I didn't catch that. Could you say it again please?</li> <li>▪ Sorry, I'm not with you.</li> <li>▪ Sorry, I don't follow.</li> <li>▪ Sorry, I'm not sure I know what you mean.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Leaving / Taking a message</b></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Can I leave / take a message?</li> <li>▪ Would you like to leave a message?</li> <li>▪ Could you give him/her a message?</li> <li>▪ Could you ask him/her to call me back?</li> <li>▪ Could you tell him/her that I called?</li> <li>▪ Could you give me your name please?</li> <li>▪ Could you spell that please?</li> <li>▪ What's your number please?</li> </ul>   |

**2.5 Try using some of these words and phrases in a conversation with your neighbour.**

**Situation 1:**

**Student 1:** You want to talk to the head of HR to discuss your application.

**Student 2:** You are an HR assistant taking calls. The head of HR is currently out of office.

**Situation 2:**

**Student 1:** You are an HR consultant working at Adecco. There is construction going on next to your office, so it is difficult for you to hear what's being said.

**Student 2:** You are looking for a job and would like to schedule an appointment.

**2.6 Appointment dates**

During some conversations you might make an appointment with someone. In that case, you will have to write down a time and/or date. What prepositions do you use for these dates and times?

Think of the example sentence “We will meet [preposition] [date or time].”

**Match the prepositions with the dates and times**

- |                               |                             |                  |                   |                            |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>first of the month</i>     | <i>summer</i>               | <i>Friday</i>    | <i>week 25</i>    | <i>the morning</i>         |
| <i>the day after tomorrow</i> | <i>9 am</i>                 | <i>July</i>      | <i>next month</i> | <i>night</i>               |
| <i>the third quarter</i>      | <i>New Year’s Eve</i>       | <i>Christmas</i> | <i>this week</i>  | <i>every Tuesday</i>       |
| <i>the end of the season</i>  | <i>June 30<sup>th</sup></i> | <i>lunchtime</i> | <i>last year</i>  | <i>the 27<sup>th</sup></i> |
| <i>the weekend</i>            | <i>yesterday</i>            |                  |                   |                            |

| in | on | at | (nothing) |
|----|----|----|-----------|
|    |    |    |           |

## 2.7 Telephone interview



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BMpm--LPIQw>

What is the topic of the video?

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Write down four tips and tricks and explain why you should do this

1.

2.

3.

4.

What tips do you think you would need to pay attention to?