



WHAT IS A PERSONAL PROFILE?

A personal profile, otherwise known as a personal statement, CV profile or perhaps even a career aim, is essentially the blurb of your career portfolio.

This small paragraph sits at the top of your CV, concisely and effectively displaying who you are, your skills and strengths relevant to the sector or job role and your career goals.

Sounds like quite a mouthful, but personal statements are no problem to write, we promise. They're actually really similar to cover letters, except you'll be selling your best points to a potential employer in about four sentences, rather than an A4 page.

IS A PERSONAL PROFILE NECESSARY?

The short answer is you don't *need* to have a personal statement. However, a study revealed that on average recruiters spend 8.8 seconds looking at your CV, so rather than letting your CV get lost in this 'repeated' process, you should give them a reason to read on.

Personal profiles are the perfect way for you to grab attention and persuade recruiters to continue reading your CV because you're telling them from the off exactly why they should hire you. Personal profiles are also particularly handy if you're trying to enter a highly competitive sector such as PR, advertising etc. As you can imagine, recruiters from these fields deal with hundreds of CVs on a regular basis and will simply flick past your CV unless they spot that competitive edge or something unique.

You should also consider writing a personal statement if you're uploading your CV to an online job board, as this gives you the chance to highlight your career goals and give your CV more context.

While this is valuable information for recruiters, it's just as important for you to get it right, as your personal statement will enable recruiters to match you with the right job and ensure that the role is fulfilling and suitable for both parties.

HOW TO STRUCTURE A PERSONAL PROFILE

We know writing a personal statement can seem quite daunting but honestly, once you've started writing it, the rest will come naturally. Here's a breakdown of the basics of creating your statement.

The most important thing to remember is that statements are usually around four sentences in length, and no more than six. Aim for anywhere between 50 and 200 words.

DOES MY PERSONAL PROFILE NEED A TITLE?

The simpler your CV layout, the better. Complicated formatting can cause recruiters additional time ensuring it is in the correct format to forward onto key clients etc. So whilst looking unique and different works for sending your CV direct to specific types of companies, a simple layout is easier to manage in general – make the content stand out not the over complicate the design.

You don't really need a title for your personal statement. It sits under your name and contact info, and before the first chunk of your job or education history, so it's pretty obvious it's an introduction to you.

Secondly, make the spacing a little bigger and try increasing it to 1.5. As it's the first thing a recruiter will read, you want this to be as clear as possible – it's often a real decision maker.

WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR PERSONAL PROFILE

When drafting your personal statement for your dream job, split it into three sections: who you are, what you can offer the company, and your career goals.

TIP: Bullet point things you might mention under each of these sections, then list the qualities that position you as the ideal person for the job.

PART 1

In the 'who you are' section you might state that you're:

- A recent graduate with a 2:1 degree in Creative Writing from the University of Surrey seeking an entry-level position in...
- A highly-skilled mechanical engineer looking to resume a position in...
- An ambitious purchasing manager looking to progress into...

PART 2

In the 'what you can offer the company' part, you're selling your absolute top skills and strengths and backing them up with evidence. If you're tweaking your CV because you're applying for a particular job, use the job spec to create your statement. For example, if the employer is looking for someone with attention to detail and you've got experience meticulously proofing essays or presentations etc., then say so.

If you're crafting a more general personal statement with a job title in mind, be sure you include achievements that are noteworthy and will make you stand out in that field. For example, if you're looking for a position within graphic design and you've got extensive Photoshop experience working on a major campaign, not only can you claim you have these skills in your personal statement, but you can back them up too – perfect!

The important thing to remember here is not to litter your personal statement with a trail of buzzwords. You might well be an 'extremely driven strategic thinker with excellent communication skills and extensive experience in marketing', but all you've really done here is told the recruiter that you've worked in marketing with no proof of your other claims.

Try to highlight real, relevant skills and back them up with evidence to make the statement strong. Try something like this for the middle section:

- During my degree, I have developed an excellent eye for detail due to the heavy demands of assignments and research. As a result, I am also able to work under pressure, especially when balancing my educational workload with my volunteering placement at local nursing homes.
- Knowledgeable engineer with a wide skill-set, including condition-based maintenance, through working on automated systems such as...
- Through utilising my communications skills when working in managerial positions at large corporations, I have developed successful working relationships and resultantly, an advantageous professional network.

PART 3

The final section of the personal statement is to highlight your career goals. More than anything this shows the recruiter that you're a professional worth investing time and money in. Take a look at these examples:

- I am looking for a challenging, fast-paced environment within media to utilise my written knowledge and develop my creative skill set further.
- Looking to re-establish a career in a progressive organisation which requires engineering expertise, after taking maternity leave to care for a new-born.
- I am looking to secure a challenging role in a market-leading automotive company where I can bring fresh strategic vision and value to the business.

DOS AND DON'TS

Here's a quick breakdown of the key points to remember when crafting that all-important statement.

DO

- Get straight to the point – recruiters don't like to much waffle!
- Provide evidence of your skills and experience, but be brief! Offer just enough to hook the recruiter.
- Remember that you're marketing yourself.
- Make the statement look purposeful – you need show you know what you're talking about, without sounding too arrogant.
- Reflect the job specification in your statement.
- Be real! Recruiters ultimately want to know you as a person and what you can bring to the table.
- Proofread for spelling and grammar.
- Read it aloud to make sure it flows properly. Probably best to get someone else to run an eye over it too.

DON'T

- Overuse buzz words – You might want to chuck a few in there, but a overstated stream of empty qualities and meaningless words is just off-putting.
- Mix the grammatical person – remember either first person or third, not both.
- Be boring – you want to sound unique with noteworthy qualities.

PERSONAL PROFILE EXAMPLES

'I am a recent graduate with a 2:1 degree in Creative Writing from the University of Surrey seeking an entry-level position in copywriting. During my degree, I have developed an excellent eye for detail due to the heavy demands of assignments and research. Over the last year, I have also balanced an editing position at Surrey's media society, where I have devised content ideas and managed a small team of writers, proving that I have potential to excel within a professional writing field. I am looking for a challenging, fast-paced environment within media to utilise my creative knowledge and develop my writing skill-set further.'

'A highly-skilled mechanical engineer looking to resume a position in industrial construction. Extremely knowledgeable with seven years industry experience. Possesses a wide skill set, including condition-based maintenance, through working on automated systems on large-scale building projects. Looking to re-establish a career in a progressive organisation which requires engineering expertise after a short career break to take care of a new-born.'

'I am an ambitious purchasing manager looking to progress into a senior purchasing position within the automotive sector. I have developed communication skills when working in managerial positions at large automotive corporations, nurtured successful working relationships and, resultantly, possess an advantageous professional network. Due to over 12 years of experience within this industry, I am fully equipped with commercial awareness and product knowledge. I am looking to secure a challenging role in a market-leading automotive company where I can bring fresh strategic vision and value to the business.'

