

Chapter 2

Applying in a digital world of work

Annex 8 - The 7 steps to make a video CV

Step 1 - Plan before you film and decide the format

Before you start filming, consider what is being asked of you in the job posting and how you can best present your case through video to suit it. The thought of creating a video job application can be daunting: not only what you will say, but also how you will present on camera and all the technical aspects to think about.

However, with some planning, you can create a professional-looking video resume that leaves a good lasting impression. For most industries, a simple video presented to camera, filmed at home on a phone or computer will fit. For others, a more visually creative video where you do not feature at all, but let your talents speak for themselves would impress. Thus, consider what video format works best for you.

Are you comfortable talking to the camera on your computer or phone, or would it be easier to have a friend “interview” you? Or, how about a slideshow with a voiceover? Be creative and choose the option that feels natural to you.

Step 2 - Write your script

Keep in mind that a potential employer may not have time to watch each video application from start to finish, so it is important to make an impression as quickly as possible. Aim to keep the entire length of your video less than a minute (maximum 3 minutes).

Start by introducing yourself with a persuasive opening statement, your elevator pitch: why are you the best person for the job? Then you can go into further detail about your relevant experience and accomplishments. What you include will be dependent on the job and your industry, generally it should include the following: Your quantifiable achievements; Your skills and experience, tailored for the role you are applying for; A little bit of personality and tactful humour, if appropriate. Instead of listing past roles and responsibilities, you can also decide to take the opportunity to share an experience, an attitude or quality about yourself that has relevance to the position but that might not shine through on your resume. For example, one applicant listed “bike trip leader” in the “Special Skills” section at the bottom of her resume. Her video focused on this part of her background and, through photos and stories, showed that she is an energetic leader who can build community and work in teams over a shared experience. It was exactly what the employer was looking for and the applicant, thus, was hired.

Step 3 - Rehearse and avoid reading directly from the script

Once you have finalized what exactly you want to cover, plan the main points you would like to convey and jot down clear ways to say them. Writing your ideas ahead of time encourages intention and clarity; however, it should not seem as though you are reading directly from a script, so rehearse beforehand until you are completely comfortable. Make sure to speak clearly and slowly, smile, and let your personality shine through.

Be aware of your body language. Avoid crossing your arms or shifting on the spot, as you want to present yourself as confident and open. Address the camera so that you are maintaining eye contact, like you would in an in-person interview.

The way you dress should also reflect the role you are applying for, so choose an outfit that you would wear to a face-to-face interview.

Step 4 - Shoot your video

Do some test runs first to make sure your video is clear and audible on speakers and headphones. Reduce background noise, choose a well-lit setting. Do not film against a window; rather use it as natural side lighting. Make sure you focus the camera on your face but avoid having the camera pointing up too close to you and shoot as many takes as necessary to get it right. It can also be invaluable to have a friend record with you to get an alternative perspective.

Step 5 - Edit your video

If you are doing your own editing you can use your computer's pre-installed video editing software or try another free video editing program. Usually they are intuitive and easy to use. If you cannot figure something out, there are a myriad of YouTube tutorials to show you how. Bear in mind that for a beginner it can be a time-consuming task, so avoid using too many graphics or animations; however, a title with your name and contact details is a good idea. The aim should be to create a coherent video. Remember, you are being judged on your skills, personality, and presentation, not your video editing skills.

Step 6 - Watch your own video

You should watch your video to discover possible silly mistakes. Consider having a trusted friend or mentor to honestly check it out too. A fresh set of eyes can help notice mistakes or idiosyncrasies that you may have overlooked. The wonderful part about a video application is the level of control it enables. If a take does not go well, you can erase it. It is an interview minus the mishaps and the chance to make an awesome first impression with the added ability to take as much time as necessary to get it right.

Step 7 - Submit your video application

Once you have saved your video in a common format such as MOV, MP4 or AVI, uploading to YouTube or Vimeo will likely be the most convenient way to share with a potential employer. You can choose to keep your video private (so that only people with the link can see it) or you can make it public. If you want your video to be seen publicly, be sure to use appropriate general tags such as "video CV", "video job application", as well as tags to suit your role, for example "marketing manager resume".

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