



Using CVs and LinkedIn to showcase personal brand

Age range: 19+

 **BARCLAYS** | LifeSkills



Session overview

Time	Key learning outcomes	Resources
60 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin to define a personal brand to help them stand out to potential employers. Be able to draw on different experiences to demonstrate transferable skills on a CV. Recognise how LinkedIn can help create networks and make contacts. Understand the benefits of creating a tailored and unique CV. Begin to define a personal brand that may help them stand out to potential employers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CV Tips tool online and printed PDF version for each member of the group. Young person's own CV or Kier Taylor-Brooks' on the CV Tips tool. LinkedIn Tips tool online and printed PDF version for each member of the group. Young person's own LinkedIn profile (if they have one, or Kier Taylor-Brooks').

Always start the session by agreeing ground rules with the group. For advice on this and other ways to establish a safe learning environment, download the content guide [here](#).

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Activity one

Building a stand out CV

1. Presenting your personal brand

- Explain that in this session the group will be developing and improving their CV. Let the group know that although a traditional CV is not the only application format for all sectors and employers, the same principles that you are going to discuss still apply.
- You may wish to find out from the group what stage they are at with their CV or what they already know about CV writing. Ensure the group record their ideas, so that you can use them as a reference at the end of the session. For example:

How much should CVs be adapted for each job?

What are common problems with CVs?

What is the most important thing an employer is looking for?

What are the group looking to achieve and what do they want from this session, e.g. do they have a specific job in mind to apply for or have they had any experience applying for jobs using their current CV?

- As an icebreaker to get the group thinking about presenting their personal brand through their CV and LinkedIn profile, try this short quiz.

1. How long do employers spend looking at a CV before deciding to interview that individual?

A. 7 seconds¹

2. What is the recommended length of a LinkedIn profile summary?

A. 3-5 paragraphs²

3. What percentage of recruiters use social media to find candidates?

A. 92%³

4. Which two social media platforms are the most widely used by recruiters?

A. LinkedIn (87%) and Facebook (55%)⁴

- Consider the concept of a 'personal brand' by asking them what their favourite brands are (e.g. sports, fashion, food, technology). Why have they chosen these, and what is it that makes them stand out from their competitors? Now ask them to think about how others who could be viewed as a brand – they may want to consider some they know themselves or their favourite sportsperson, e.g. a TV personality, musician, celebrity chef etc. How might people describe them? Prompt the group by asking what that person's friends, family, employers, fans or followers might say about them and why. Refer back to the quiz answers to make the link between presenting an effective personal brand and standing out in a competitive landscape.

1 [Glassdoor](#)

2 [The Balance Careers](#)

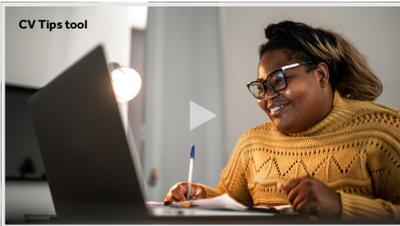
3 [Time Doctor](#)

4 [Talent Works](#)

Activity one

Building a stand out CV (cont'd)

2. CV essentials



- Ask learners to consider the following questions; when have they used a CV? Have they been successful in getting a response or securing an interview with an employer? What do they think is the key content to include?
- Encourage the group to share their CVs and allow a few minutes for them to look through each other's. Alternatively, you can display Kier Taylor-Brooks' CV on the screen using the [CV Tips](#) tool. Ask them to highlight the key content and discuss what they think is effective, such as including examples to support skills, using positive language, discussing your specific role in a project, etc.
- Collate a list of what they consider to be key content and use this to gauge their knowledge and inform how much time you spend on the following activities. Allow for personal reflection time about whether they have been successful getting an interview with this CV.
- If you are working with students who need more support identifying skills they feel add value to their CV, why not get them using the [CV builder](#) interactive tool. This guides them through building a CV step by step, with top tips to help spark ideas.

3. Working through the CV Tips tool

- Load the [CV Tips](#) tool at the front of the room, and work through each section, asking for comments and questions as you go. Use the activities below to draw out discussion around particular elements of the CV.

3a. Personal statement

- Ask the group to read the personal statement and highlight what they think makes it impactful. What does it tell you about this person's personal brand? For example, their use of positive and emotive language displays their confidence, they have tailored their statement to a particular sector, they have highlighted their breadth of knowledge.
- Allow a few minutes for the group to come up with ideas and key phrases that they could include in their own personal statement.

Activity one

Building a stand out CV (cont'd)

3b. Skills

- Explain that there are certain skills that are increasingly important to employers, which increase employability prospects and enable us to adapt and thrive as workplaces change. Ask learners to suggest what skills these might be, and make a list.
- Highlight any of the core transferable skills they might not have mentioned; problem solving, creativity, communication (listening and presenting), leadership, proactivity, resilience (staying positive), adaptability.
- In pairs or individually, ask the young people to come up with examples of when they have demonstrated some of these skills. How could they best include them on their CV? Are there any that they feel they need to improve or practise? How could they do this? For example;
 - Being captain of a sports team – requires the ability to lead and work well as a team, resilience when the team doesn't perform as you hoped, coming up with creative ways to motivate teammates, and proactivity to organise training sessions and enter tournaments.
 - Fundraising for charity – involves creative thinking to plan a way of raising money, problem solving to overcome challenges of engaging people in the event, effectively communicating information about the event to generate interest and encourage donations.

3c. Work, education, interests & hobbies, achievements

- Referring back to personal brand and using this person's examples, give the group some time to consider what skills, experiences, achievements and interests they could include to make their CV stand out. Discuss the need to showcase their talents but avoid simply putting everything down if they have lots of experience to choose from.
- This is a good point to think about structure. Emphasise that this person has put their work experience above their education, and started with their most recent role, so that employers see what is most relevant.
- Remind them to use clear examples and statistics to show impact where they can. Highlight where this person has specified the number of people who attended the university ball that they planned, and their proven levels of social media engagement for the event, to illustrate this.

4. Core transferable skills

- Explain that work and personal experiences can be made relevant to different jobs. Read aloud the scenario below and ask them to consider in small groups what transferable skills the young person can demonstrate to help them get their dream job. The core transferable skills are problem solving, creativity, communication, leadership, aiming high (proactivity), resilience (staying positive), adaptability.

Activity one

Building a stand out CV (cont'd)

Since graduating with a psychology degree last year, I've been working in a contact centre. Dealing with various customer enquiries involves asking the right questions to fully understand how I can best assist, and sometimes means handling some of the more dissatisfied callers. I developed an innovative way of improving our efficiency by creating a hub for my colleagues and I to share solutions to frequently encountered customer issues.

I enjoy the fast-paced environment, but I've decided I want a job where I can use my creativity. I have applied for roles as a web designer but it's been difficult as it feels like I'm starting from scratch. I keep up to date with the latest in web design by reading blogs and researching online, and have started attending a free coding course in the evenings. I recently volunteered to build a website for a friend who is a freelance personal trainer, and she's been able to start growing her business as a result.

- Explain that transferable skills aren't just relevant for a first job – when people want to change careers or take on new responsibilities, they often need to draw upon other experiences.

Extension

- Explain that values are a set of beliefs personal to the individual who holds them, and are shaped by perceptions and past experience. They influence and guide both behaviour and attitude in a range of situations. As well as skills, identifying and expressing personal values can be a way of standing out to employers.
- To extend students' understanding of how to build and demonstrate their personal values, take a look at the [Personal brand: building your professional identity](#) lesson.

5. Supporting your CV

- Ask the group to suggest other ways an employer might expect to receive a CV. For example, if they were applying for a role in a creative industry, they could include links to an online portfolio or attach examples of their work. Suggest that they research online, get in touch with HR departments at relevant organisations and speak to their network to understand whether they need to deliver their CV in a different format for their chosen industry. They could also direct employers to their LinkedIn page – if you are continuing on to 'Creating an impactful LinkedIn profile', this is a good way to introduce the session.
- Get the group to look back at the answers they recorded at the start of the session. Ask them to reflect on how their learning has progressed:

have any of their ideas about CV writing changed? Is there anything they would now do differently having had this session? How would they rate the improvement in their knowledge and understanding?

- For inspiration on more creative ways to apply for jobs, you could look at the article [How being proactive got Alfred hired](#).
- Give learners a copy of the [CV Tips](#) handout and signpost to the [CV Builder](#) tool online.

Activity one

Building a stand out CV (cont'd)

Activity summary

- Ask individuals to present one thing they will add to their CV after attending this session, or if there is further time, to complete now.
- Remind them that it is always good practice to ask some else to proofread your CV before sending it to a potential employer or posting it online, and they should update it for each application as well as whenever they have a new skill or achievement to add.
- Where appropriate, once you have submitted a CV, tell the group that they may wish to follow up with the organisation for feedback.

Activity two

Creating an impactful LinkedIn profile

1. Presenting your personal brand

- Explain that this session will be an opportunity to gain a better understanding of LinkedIn and what goes into creating a stand out profile. As the world's largest professional network with 575 million users, LinkedIn can complement a CV if used well. It can be used when searching and responding to job adverts but also as a way of making speculative approaches to employers. It can also be used to keep up with industry news and trends by following organisations which are of interest.
- As an icebreaker, use the quiz from page 4, or show one of these clips highlighting some tips on making sure your social media profile is employment ready: barclayslifefskills.com/socialmediatips.
- Ask how many of the group already have a LinkedIn profile. Invite them to address some of the following questions:

Why do they think it is valuable?

What makes LinkedIn different from other social media platforms? (It is specifically designed for professionals and business)

If some of them have a profile, what are their experiences of using it? What features are they aware of?

How might different sectors use LinkedIn differently?

- The LinkedIn blog features 'success stories' from users who used LinkedIn to further their careers. A good example is Danielle's story, which you can watch at opportunity.linkedin.com/en-gb. Watch the video and discuss with the group. Highlight that Danielle saw a job advertised after following relevant organisations on LinkedIn and completing the skills section of her profile.

Activity two

Creating an impactful LinkedIn profile (cont'd)

2. Working through the LinkedIn Tips tool

- Load the [LinkedIn Tips](#) page at the front of the room, and work through each section, asking for comments and questions as you go.

Have any of them got their own profile?

What contacts have they come across who have an impressive profile?

Would they change or improve anything on their profile or others?

How are they talking about their core transferable skills?

What groups or organisations could they follow to showcase their interests?

- Most social media platforms have the ability to share statuses or posts. Ask the group to come up with some appropriate statuses or suggestions of content for posts that would showcase their skills and interests and present their personal brand. Make sure to discuss what they think would be statuses or posts to avoid, for example a status negatively describing a past or current employer, talking about personal issues, or posting an unprofessional article.

3. Looking for more resources on using LinkedIn?

- Looking for more resources on using LinkedIn?
- Why not share these LinkedIn tools for more job search support:

LinkedIn for students

- Learn how [LinkedIn](#) can help your students with their professional future. With guidance on how to create a profile, application and interview tips, advice on networking and how to search for the right job for them, this tool provide your students with the knowledge to feel confident in their LinkedIn profile.

Job Search Checklist

- In this [checklist](#), your students can explore how to attract employers, grow their professional skills, and connect to new job opportunities through a great LinkedIn profile.

Rock your LinkedIn profile video

- In this [tutorial](#) your students will be led through how to create a LinkedIn profile that best represents them, with tips on choosing a profile photo, creating a custom headline, writing a personal summary, how to highlight work experience and more.

Summary

- Ask individuals to present one thing they will add to their CV after attending this session, or if there is further time, to complete now.
- Remind them that it is always good practice to ask some else to proofread your CV before sending it to a potential employer or posting it online, and they should update it for each application as well as whenever they have a new skill or achievement to add.
- Where appropriate, once you have submitted a CV, tell the group that they may wish to follow up with the organisation for feedback.

Try next

If you have time within the session or as a follow up, you can use the following related resources on the LifeSkills website. Suggest that students also spend some time looking through some of the articles and tools to help prepare them further.

Blog

[Getting ahead in social media](#)

Tools

[Tactics for approaching contacts](#)

[How to write a cracking cover letter](#)

[Wheel of strengths](#)

Article

[5 tips for writing a great job application](#)

Video

[Top tips for effective networking](#)