

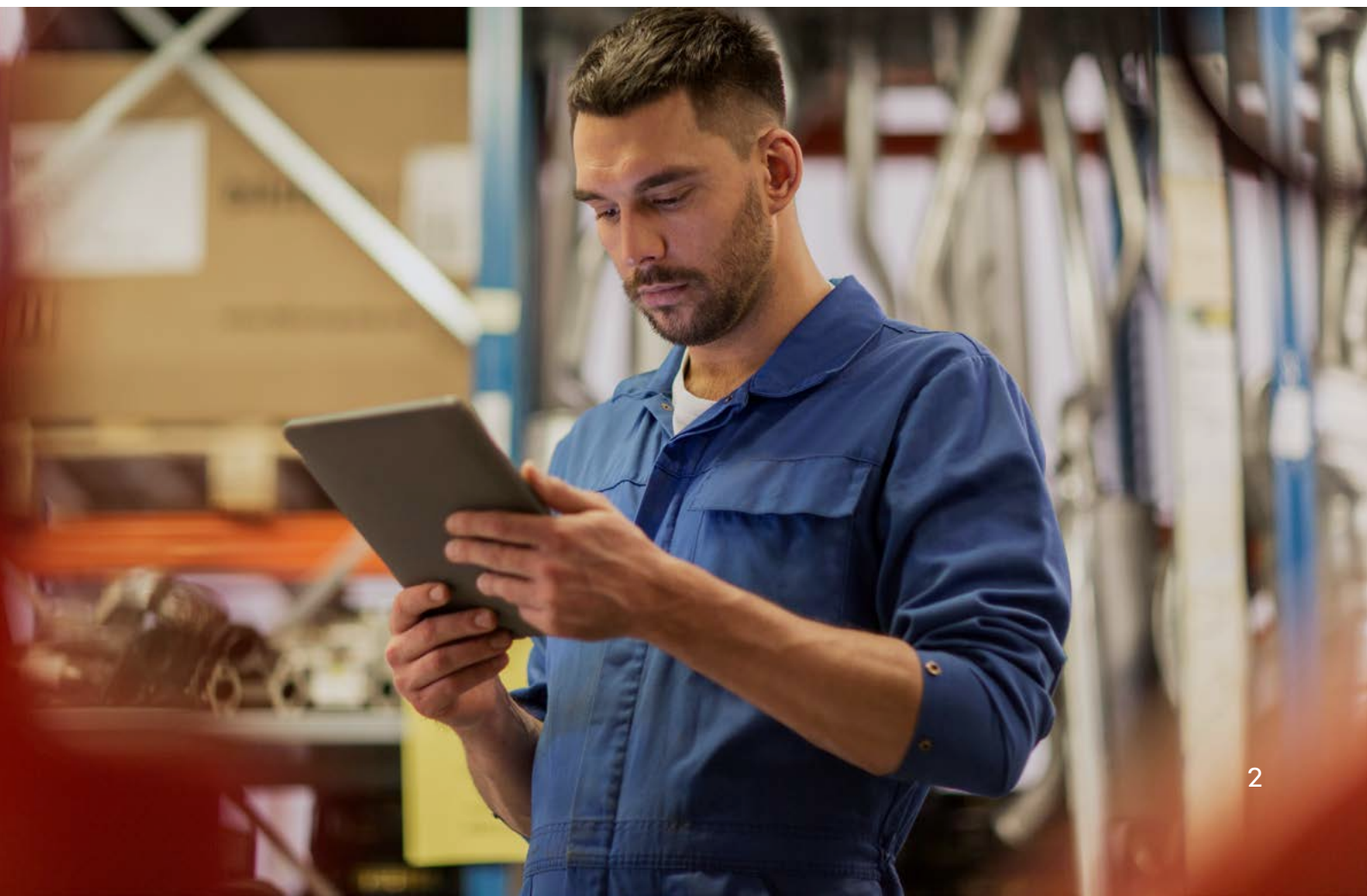


**Selling yourself:  
how to write the  
perfect mechanic CV**

# Changing jobs might seem like an overwhelming idea

But change can be a very good thing, whether you're anticipating a slowdown in the market or just on the lookout for something different. If you're a mechanic searching for a new role, the best way to showcase your skills in a crowded job market is to make your CV and experience stand out. If you've never written a CV before or your current CV is outdated and in need of a polish, this guide is for you.

At M&E Global we recruit for contract mechanic roles all over the world, and we know all the ins and outs of the industry – including exactly what recruiters and clients are looking for. In this guide, we reveal all you need to know about writing the perfect CV, how to explain any gaps in your career such as after leaving the military, and how to sell yourself to get the best jobs.



## **Find your motivation for moving**

Perhaps you've been considering a change for a while, or you're just starting to look for different roles as a heavy vehicle mechanic. Before you start to write your CV, it's important to work out your motivation for finding a new job. At M&E, we find that for a lot of mechanics, they feel that their career has progressed as far as it can with their employer and their work now feels stagnant and unvaried.

Everyone's reason for choosing an overseas contract role is different, but we do see similarities. Many of our contract mechanics have recently served in the armed forces and are looking for a role that helps them transition into civilian employment in a way that feels familiar. Some don't have military experience but have worked for big manufacturing companies in the car industry and feel that their current jobs are under threat. For some, it's the allure of working overseas – maybe somewhere warmer than the United Kingdom for example, or wanting the experience of a different culture – where the job prospects are better and there's a chance to learn new skills or even a new language.

If you do choose an overseas contract role, you can be sure that along the way you'll build your confidence, expand your cultural awareness, build friendships and contacts and add value to your CV.

## **Writing the perfect CV**

If your career so far has not required a CV, perhaps you've always worked in the military or have held the same position for a long time, then writing your first ever curriculum vitae (CV) can seem daunting. However, when compared to some of the other challenges you may have experienced in your career – especially if you've served in the military – it really is a simple task. Once it's done, you don't need to think about adding to it again until something changes, for example, if you gain more experience or a new qualification.



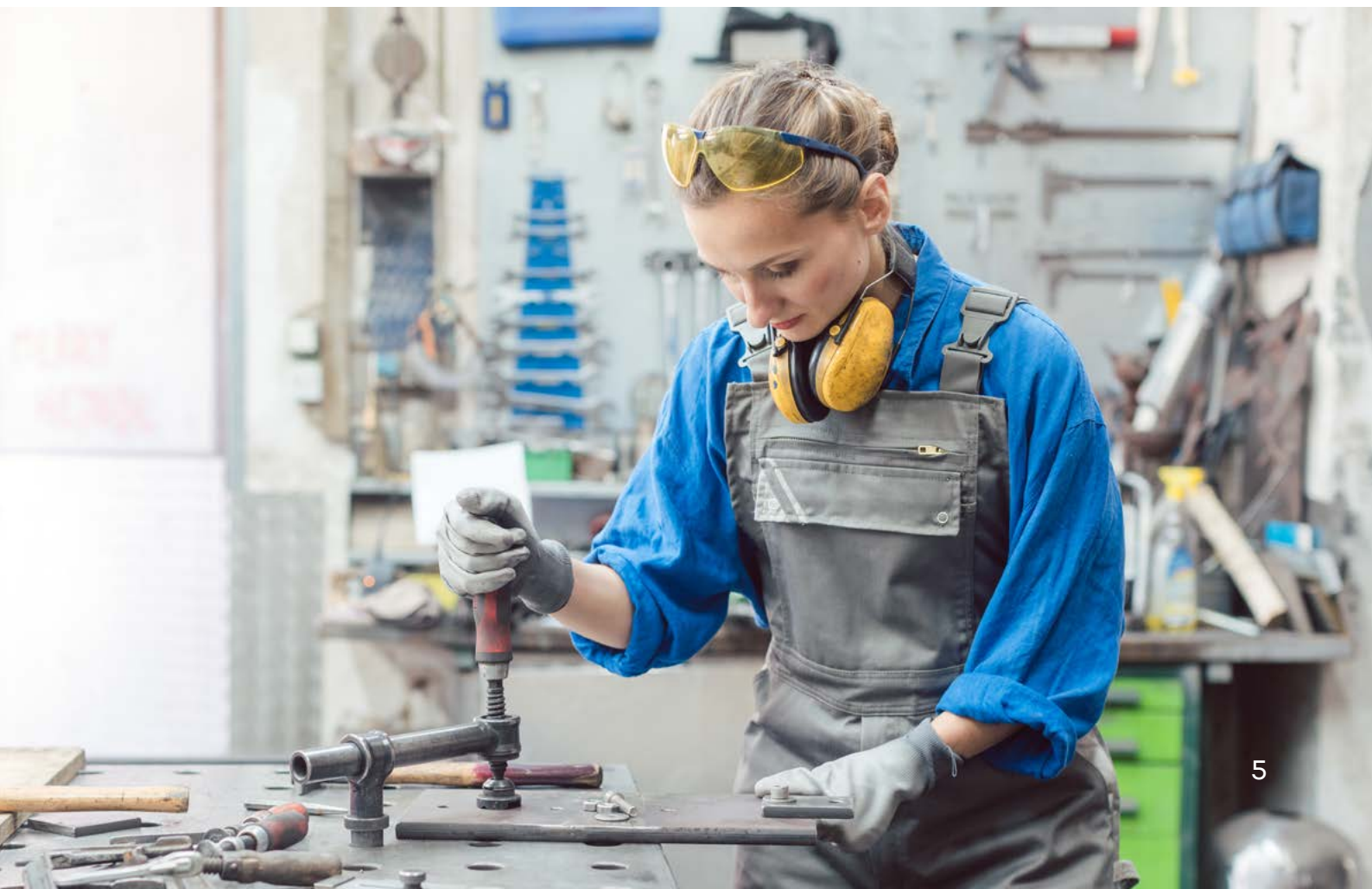
The first place to start is to sit down and write out your job experience since you left school. Even if the job isn't relevant to your future work as a vehicle mechanic, it may help to show a different dimension to your experience; for example, working in customer service roles can demonstrate that you're good with people, or having your own business can show that you're used to managing lots of different areas of work. You may not want to add every single role to your CV, but you'll need to be able to explain any sizeable gaps – more on this later.

## **Making a statement**

You should begin your CV with a brief summary of your experience, so potential employers can get a snapshot of your suitability before reading the finer details of your qualifications and job experience. Consider this a 'personal statement', a chance to outline your best attributes and the highlights of your career to date. One or two short paragraphs is enough.

If you've served in the military you should definitely mention this and make reference to any operational duty you have had that may be relevant to the role you're applying for – for example, if the job you're applying for is based in Afghanistan and you have served there on an operational tour, this will certainly help with your application. You should also ensure that you include in your statement the specific types of machinery you are skilled on which are relevant to the job you are applying for; for example, if you're applying to work with Challenger tanks, ensure that you mention this as early as possible in your personal statement.

You can also use this statement to highlight any of your personal attributes, such as if you're particularly skilled with a certain type of machinery, or if you pride yourself on your attention to detail or punctuality. Save any personal interests such as hobbies for the end, when you can briefly summarise the things you enjoy outside of work; though this isn't essential, recruiters and clients like to get a well-rounded idea of a person before an interview.



## **Adding your experience and qualifications**

Next, you need to add any qualifications you have, beginning with your earliest such as GCSEs or O Levels followed by any A-Levels or further education. It's essential to put down any relevant qualifications that you have earned that directly help your career path, such as any City & Guilds qualifications like Mechanical Manufacturing, Welding Skills or Engineering Construction.

Many military qualifications can be converted to civilian credentials – if you're about to leave the army, find out what you can do during your resettlement period if you need to take any additional examinations to 'top-up' your existing qualifications. Also, don't forget the key skills from your service record as some employers will recognise these even without an equivalent civilian qualification.

After your qualifications, you'll need to outline your career history, starting with your most recent experience and leading back to your first role. You'll need to note the name of each employer, the dates you worked there and the role you held. It's also worth writing a couple of sentences about your main responsibilities and any particular highlights of your time there.

## **Increase your employability as a heavy vehicle mechanic**

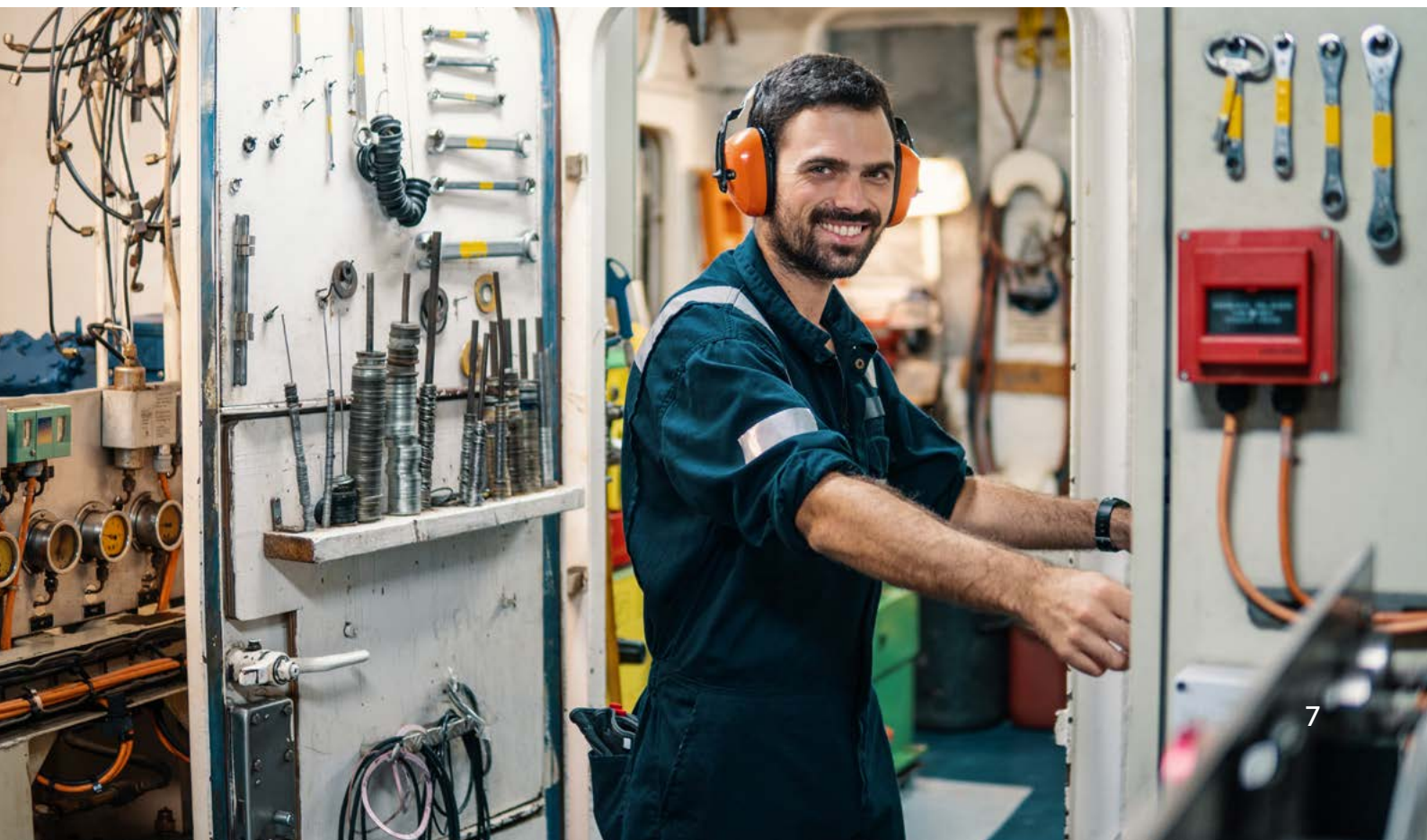
If you want to increase your chances of getting an exciting role, or if you feel that your CV is lacking, you can take additional courses to boost your experience to make yourself more attractive to potential employers. These can be taken as part of your Graduated Resettlement Time from the army, or if you're not serving in the forces you can take additional City & Guilds qualifications from a local higher education facility.

Alternatively, if you're just starting out in your career you could consider an apprenticeship with a large employer, which can help to give you a wealth of experience and qualifications while you earn.

## How to explain your career gap after the military

Finding new employment after leaving the military can be stressful enough, without having to explain a gap in your career following your time in the army – for whatever reason. While a career gap is unlikely to put off a potential employer, the ‘unknown’ is something which can stand against you, unless you can easily and succinctly explain it on your CV. By explaining any career gaps openly and honestly, employers will place you in a position of greater trust. It’s also possible to put a positive spin on a career gap, for example, if you took time out to spend with your family after many years of deployments or used the time to gain more qualifications.

In the case of family commitments or difficulties, most employers are aware of the importance of family to military personnel, so if you’ve taken time out to spend with your family, this can be easily explained – especially if you note that you’re now ready and willing to begin your search for a new and exciting role. The same is true if you’ve taken some time out to focus on your own wellbeing, for example going travelling.



## Keeping your CV up to date

It's important to keep your CV up to date, especially when working in a contract role when you might change jobs more frequently to meet the demands of the market. This also helps potential employers to see that your experience is right for a role and that you're motivated to do all you can in the search for employment.

If you gain a new qualification, or more experience working on different or more technologically advanced equipment, for example, it's a good idea to update your CV as soon as possible. When a great job is oversubscribed, showing that you have the most up-to-date experience is what will give you the edge.

## Get professional help

If you're considering a role with M&E Global you're in the perfect position for updating your CV, as our experienced and friendly team will be on hand to help you. We can help you put together a template which will highlight your qualifications and experience, give you tips on how to format and proofread your finished CV.

We will guide you through the whole recruitment process, so you can be sure that you'll have someone to provide assistance every step of the way.

**To get an idea of the kind of jobs you could apply for, browse our job board.**

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