

Résumé Tips

1. Determine your job goal

Résumés that are targeted to specific types of jobs are more effective than résumés that are more general in nature. If you are interested in applying to different types of jobs then it is advised that you create more than one résumé.

2. There are different styles of résumés. Use the one that best suits your situation

There are two main types of résumés - chronological and functional style résumés. The type of résumé that you use depends upon your past experience and your current job goal.

Chronological style or Classic style résumés are the most common résumé style. In this type of résumé work experience is listed with the most recent job first and then in descending order based on employment dates. Skills and accomplishments describing your experience are listed in bulleted format under each job.

Functional style résumés focus more on the skills that you have that are related to your current job goal. These skills are usually listed in an additional section on the résumé called "relevant skills" or "professional skills". This format of résumé may be useful if you have:

- Little or no related paid work experience, but you do have relevant volunteer experience or education related to the job you are applying to
- Little or no Canadian work experience
- A current job goal that is completely different than the previous jobs you have had
- Relevant work experience, but these positions would be lost among the other jobs in a chronological style résumé
- Many previous jobs with the same job titles and job duties, which would require repeating the same points under several job listings

3. Ensure that the information listed in your résumé is relevant to the job you are applying for

Stick to what's relevant and marketable that speaks to the qualifications required for the job you are applying to.

Applicants whose cover letters and résumés best demonstrate how they meet the qualifications to do the job, will be invited to continue in the hiring process. It is recommended that you provide details about your skills and qualifications that are directly linked to the qualifications in the job advertisement, and that you provide information to show how you have demonstrated or applied these skills. If you are wondering if something on your résumé is relevant, ask yourself the following questions:

- Is the experience or skill recent - within the last 15 years or so?
- Is the training or course related to the job you are currently applying to?
- Is the volunteer experience longer than a few months in duration and relevant to the job you are currently applying to?

4. Focus on your skills and achievements

Written statements of your results, achievements and successes are an important component of your application. Your accomplishments are made up of activities that you did well and had a positive impact on your organization, employer, colleagues or team. Providing accomplishments in your résumé tells the employer that you have added value to your organization. This adds quality to your résumé and lets employers know what you are capable of.

5. Make sure the words you use in your résumé are action oriented

Using words that are impactful will help you market yourself as both professional and confident to potential employers. Action words can help you to write about your previous experience and current skills in a concise and achievement oriented manner.

6. Do not include

There are very few professions where it is appropriate to include a photo of yourself on your résumé, so unless you are applying to a job as an actor or model, don't put your photo on your résumé. It is also not necessary to include personal information such as your age, marital status or SIN number on your résumé. It is standard to include a statement at the end of the résumé which indicates that you have references to provide if requested, however it is not necessary to include the personal contact information for your references on your résumé. Lastly avoid using personal pronouns such as 'my' or 'I' on your résumé.

7. Format

As an employment related document, your résumé should look professional in terms of the style of font, the size of the margins and the language that you use to describe your experience - avoid using slang terms, short forms or acronyms for instance. To view samples of professionally formatted résumés, check out the Employment Resource Centre Résumé Help Handbook.

8. Proof read, Proof read, Proof read!

Similar to formatting your résumé so that it looks professional, proofreading your résumé thoroughly to ensure that it is free of spelling, grammatical and punctuation errors is equally important. Don't rely on your computer's spellchecking software to catch all of the mistakes. Have a friend or family member also read your résumé to make sure that it is communicating exactly what you intend.