Resume Guide

KINEXUS

A step-by-step guide to writing
a resume that gets you hired

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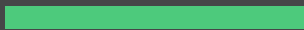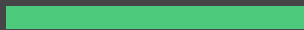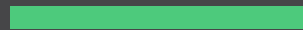
Your resume

Your resume is a snapshot of your career and achievements.

It is where you show an employer how your specific mix of experience, skills and qualities are a great fit for the position advertised. A strong resume keeps the specific needs of the employer in focus and builds a strong case for selection with clear evidence from your experience.

There are no quick fixes in creating a five-star resume, but there are some strategies you can apply to vastly improve your chances of getting your resume noticed by recruiters and securing that next interview.

This guide will help you understand the basic structure of a resume, as well as what employers and recruiters are looking for in each section of your resume.

The basic components that make up your resume are:

- **Contact details**
- **Summary or objective**
- **Qualifications & certifications**
- **Work experience**
- **Responsibilities**
- **Achievements**
- **Skills**
- **Hobbies**

Tailoring your resume

When looking for work, most people will cobble together their resume and send the same resume off to every single job they think they might like, regardless of whether or not their resume fits the position advertised. What jobseekers don't realise is that recruiters and employers see hundreds of resumes, from the wacky and wonderful to the generic and totally irrelevant! If your resume doesn't immediately demonstrate how your skills and experience suit the position advertised, it will not get a second look.

As we said before, your resume is a snapshot of the experiences that are most relevant for the role. Do not attempt to include every piece of work you've completed throughout your entire career.

By failing to tailor your resume, all the targeted information that will be of most interest to an employer is lost in the noise.

Use the method outlined in the Kinexus Cover Letter Guide to drawing out the most desirable skills and qualities for the role you're applying for. Plan to highlight the experience, responsibilities and achievements in your career that addresses any key selection criteria.

If you're looking to make a major career shift, you will need to apply extra effort to demonstrate how your existing skills and experience are transferrable and beneficial to the role.

Contact details

Your contact details should be included in the main body of your resume, not in the document header. Many companies and recruiters use database software that scans the body text of resumes to automatically collect and store candidate contacts on file.

Details to include:

Address	The minimum to include is your City, State & Postcode.
Contact Numbers	Mobile is best.
Email address	Personal email address only.
LinkedIn	Hyperlink to your LinkedIn profile (if you have one).

Summary

The summary section is a brief overview of your career and achievements to date. Most recruiters and prospective employers will skip this section if faced with a chunky block of text. **Keep it punchy and use bullet points that highlight what is most relevant to the role you're applying for.**

Remember, "Show, don't tell." Don't list descriptors that tell the employer why you're the right person for the job, instead "show" what you've achieved in your career, highlighting qualities, skills and experience that fits the selection criteria for the role.

Even if you are a go-getter with a can-do attitude, do not put these generic words into your summary. These words don't say anything unique about you because thousands of other candidates use these exact same words in their resumes too.

Instead of wasting space with generic descriptors, choose to highlight the specific things that you executed and achieved in your previous roles.

Use specific examples of your experience and use positive action words (verbs), for example:

- **15 years + in technical project management**

- **Managed projects up to $50 million**

DON'T WRITE

A high-achieving and ambitious engineering professional who is hard-working and strives for excellence in every project.

DO WRITE

An ambitious software engineer with five years of development experience, blending solutions design capabilities with strong interpersonal skills.

Objectives

An objective section is a short, targeted statement that outlines your career direction and positions you as someone who fits what the employer is looking. Your objective should be tailored to fit the role you're applying for and can be included in place of a summary.

Don't make the mistake of thinking this section is all about you!

Writing a resume objective is particularly useful when you're looking to make a career change or take the next step in your career.

This section is about showing an employer why you're interested in the specific role they have advertised and what kind of career you want to build. A generic objective statement will make no impact.

DON'T WRITE

To build a career in my chosen field that will challenge me and allow me to use my specialised skills to grow my employer's business.

DO WRITE

To apply my eight years of military leadership experience and defence industry knowledge to establish and grow business relationships.

We recommend adding your security clearance to your summary section, or at least stating that you have one.

Qualifications & certifications

This is a straightforward section. **Start with your most recent qualification**, list the others in reverse chronological order. If you have a qualification that seems quite broad, you may want to include a little detail about your specialisation or majors to provide context.

The most acceptable format for this section is:

[Qualification], [School], [Dates].

You don't need to include your grades or results, but if you've achieved any significant awards or honours you can include this information here.

Work experience

Your work experience section should also be in reverse chronological order, starting with your most recent job.

If you have an extensive work history or a number of roles, you don't have to include everything. **A general rule of thumb is to go back about ten years.** If you've not been in the workforce that long, it's worth including all of your previous roles that are relevant to the position that you're applying for.

You should lay out your job history as below, including the month and year in the date section.

[Job Title], [Company], [Dates]
[Summary]
[Responsibilities]
[Achievements]

Under each role include a brief summary of your key responsibilities and most impressive achievements in this. Keep the layout simple and the summaries brief.

Responsibilities

This is where you can really "sell" yourself.

The responsibilities section of your work experience is where you showcase your most relevant and impressive experience from your previous roles. Highlight the responsibilities that will show your competency and your abilities. This is where you can really "sell" yourself.

You can't list every single aspect of the work you've done to date so you'll need to tailor this section to the job you are applying for. Depending on how many previous roles you're including in your resume, **choose three to five of the most recent and most important responsibilities.**

Make these specific by using positive verbs such as:

- **I managed...**
- **I initiated...**
- **I organised...**
- **I supported...**

If you're applying for a career change, be sure to include your transferrable skills and explicitly link these to the selection criteria you are targeting. Show how you are the right fit for the job by clearly demonstrating how your current skills and experience meet the selection criteria or job description. Only list the responsibilities that are most relevant for the role you are applying for.

Achievements

Your achievements should link back to the responsibilities that you highlighted. This is your chance to prove how effective you were in carrying out your responsibilities.

Achievements should not be vague or general. For example: "I successfully completely all tasks given to me" doesn't say anything about the work you've completed and how that work contributed to the business.

Make your achievements specific and demonstrate measurable outcomes. If you raised revenue, be specific about how much. If you increased efficiency, describe how you achieved this. If you were involved in a successful project, be explicit about your contribution.

This is your chance to prove how effective you were in carrying out your responsibilities.

For example: "I introduced a customer service feedback process, which helped our team improve customer satisfaction by 30%."

Listing two or three achievements for each role shows employers that you are able to achieve measurable results and demonstrate effectiveness in your roles.

Skills

This section is most commonly in the form of dot points, making it essential to highlight keywords specific to your industry and the advertised position.

The more relevant keywords you have here, the better.

Many recruiters run database searches for particular hard skills specific to the position that they are trying to fill. The more relevant keywords you have here, the better. For example, if SAP experience is required for the position, make sure that SAP is listed in your resume. Though of course, only list skills you actually have and are competent in.

Nobody wants to see lists of every system or product you've ever worked with, so once again tailor your list of skills to position description. If you know a company requires you to have commissioned niche products, sold into specific channels or programmed complex systems, **this is your chance to include those buzzwords** in your resume.

Hobbies

Adding a hobbies section is at your discretion. You might want to add one if you feel that your work experience may be a little too vanilla in nature. However, hobbies should only be included in your resume if they are good conversation starters or if they are seriously awesome!

Any hobbies that show perseverance, skill, talent, dedication, leadership or a lot of personality are great additions to your resume. If you are training

Only include in your resume if they are good conversation starters or if they are seriously awesome!

for an ultramarathon, dominate in local competitions, upcycle custom furniture or coordinate a meetup group include these in your hobbies section. Hobbies like bush walking, Xbox marathons or reading biographies may not be as relevant for your resume. These may be enjoyable activities, but they add little value to your resume.

Match your online profile

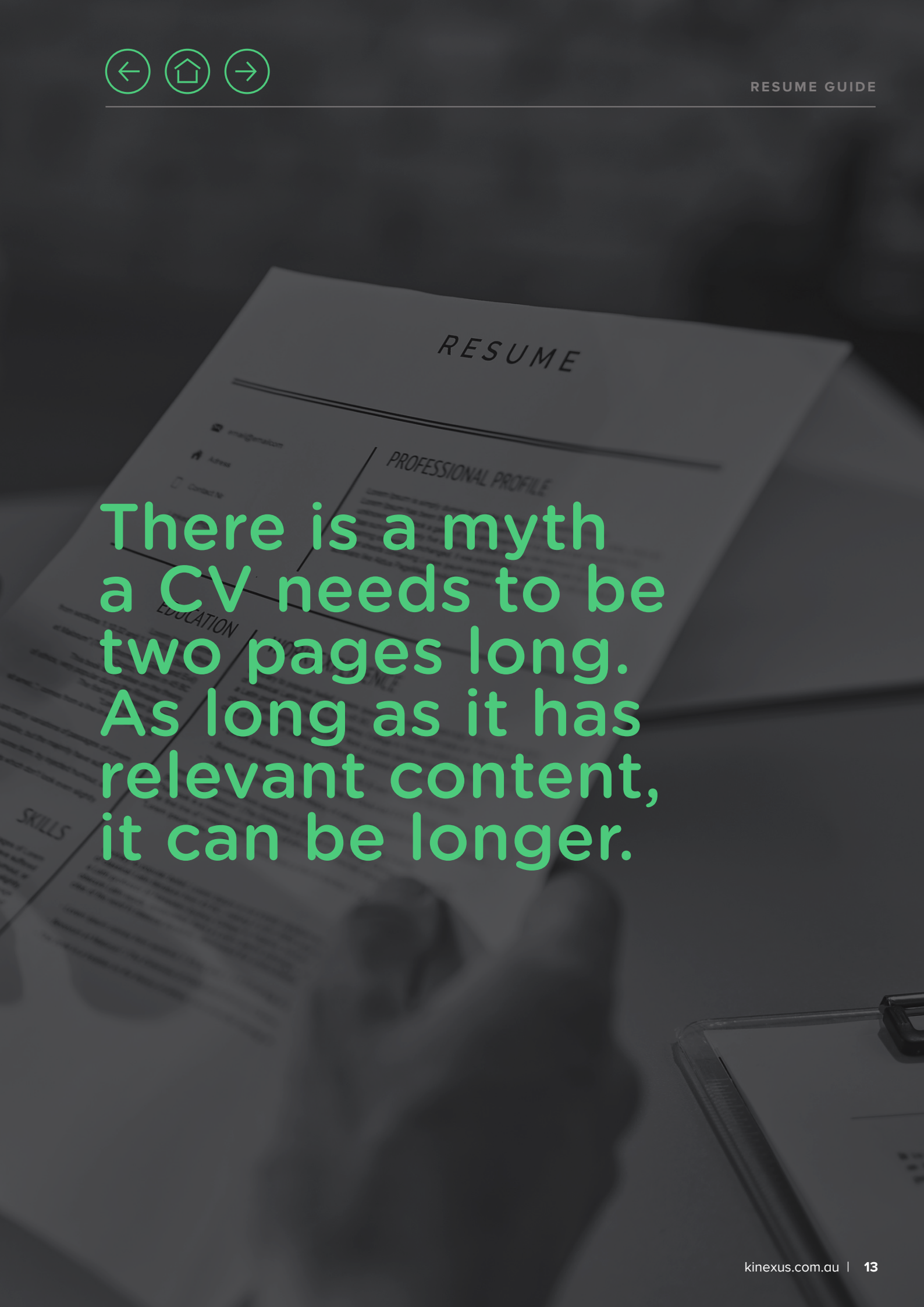It's worth taking the time to update your LinkedIn profile

It's safe to assume that recruiters will do a LinkedIn search for your name if they're seriously considering your application. Even if your LinkedIn profile is set to private, most recruiters and employers have upgraded profiles on LinkedIn which allow them to see your work experience.

Do a quick Google search on your own name to check what comes up.

It's worth taking the time to **update your LinkedIn profile so that your experience, key responsibilities and accomplishments are all consistent with the resumes you're submitting.**

While you're at it, do a quick Google search on your own name to check what comes up. No need to get paranoid about this, but if there are any social media accounts that you would prefer to be for friends and family's eyes only, **now is a great time to switch your settings to private.**

There is a myth a CV needs to be two pages long. As long as it has relevant content, it can be longer.

What to leave out

References

Although it might seem like a good idea to put your references on your resume in the first instance, it won't work out for the best in the long term. If an employer is interested in you, they will definitely ask for references later down the track. When they do, you then have the time to contact each of them yourself to prepare them for the call and get them thinking about amazing things to say about you, ideally things that are tailored for the job you are going for.

Your age, marital status or religion

Employers are not allowed to discriminate based on these factors, so they won't ask about them.

Fancy formatting

Don't try to stand out with flashy design. Focus on standing out for the substance in your resume.

Industry jargon

It's important to show how your experience and skills suit the position description by using industry-specific language, but don't go overboard with the jargon. It's better to be concise and clear in your writing rather than squeeze in too many buzzwords or abbreviations.

Clichés

Again, recruiters and employers read A LOT of resumes! You wouldn't believe how many results-driven team players there are out there. Instead of using clichés, demonstrate your qualities using specific examples from your experience.

Profile photos

Unless your application is going to a model agency, heads are irrelevant and a little out of place.

Every single detail of your career

Focus on the details that are most relevant to the position you are applying for.

Checklist

Now that you've put your resume together, here's a checklist for before you hit submit:

✓ Formatting inviting to read, including clear section headings and lots of white space

✓ Easy to quickly scan through to pick up key information such as relevant skills, experience and qualifications. For example, including bullet points rather than heavy blocks of text

✓ Objective or summary concise and tailored

✓ Targeted to a specific career objective rather than a one-size-fits-all approach

✓ Fonts and font sizes consistent throughout

✓ Sections clearly labelled

✓ Work experience listed in reverse chronological order (most recent job first)

✓ Information relevant to the employer's needs

✓ Achievements quantified by using numbers, percentages, dollar amounts or other concrete measures of success

✓ Achievements begin with strong action words/ verbs

✓ Overall length appropriate given the career level of the position. No more than two or three pages in most cases

✓ Keyword-rich, with appropriate industry language targeted to the advertised position

✓ Content flow logical and easy to understand

✓ Proofed for typos, spelling, grammar or syntax errors

✓ Saved in the file type requested in the job ad

For more content on brushing up your resume, check out our blogs here

kinexus.com.au/blog/tag/resume

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