Resume 101

Your resume is often your first introduction to prospective employers and it has to impress them enough to want to meet with you in person and invite you to an interview. A resume is both a marketing tool and a summary of your qualifications including your education, skills, and experience. You need to supply enough information to convince the employer that you have the knowledge, skills and abilities to do the job. Your resume needs to **make a connection** between your skills and experience and the requirements of the job. The employer needs to be able to find the essential information in a short period of time. Often resumes are read or scanned in only 30-60 seconds.

For you, the resume is a marketing tool and you are the product. It is your opportunity to promote yourself and your skills; it is important that your resume creates a strong first impression. A good resume will summarize your education, skills, work and achievements and provide discussion points during an interview.

For the employer, the resume highlights your education, related work experience, and your skill set as they apply to the specific job. A well-planned resume will:

- Provide an example of your ability to organize and present ideas clearly
- Demonstrate your attention to detail by being free of grammar and spelling errors
- Provide details of relevant experience and education credentials

RESUME FORMATS

There are different formats of resumes and the one you choose needs to best highlight your "fit" for the job. Some resume styles are more appropriate for specific occupations or fields of work. If you are unsure which format to use, try each and have people in the field you are targeting offer feedback and input to you. See which resume style they feel best connects what you have with what the job requires.

** The Employment Support Centre recommends a Skills-based resume for students and new graduates.

Skills Based (also known as Combination or Hybrid):

This format is recommended for students and new graduates; it combines the skills and experience section from a functional format with the details of a work experience section found in a chronological format. The combination format allows students and new graduates to highlight skills gained through their education as well as any practical experience from field placements, co-op, applied research and team projects.

Chronological:

This resume format focuses on work experience and education and places less emphasis on the skills section of the resume. Experience is featured on the first page of the resume, listed it in reverse chronological order (most recent first). This format is best used by job seekers who have significant work experience and education related to the job the candidate is applying for. It lets the reader see career stability, career advancement and/or details about each job held.

Functional:

The format recommended to those with minimal experience, career-changers who are transitioning from one area of expertise to another and people with gaps in their work history is the **functional format.** This format focuses on skills and less on experience. Employers may find it difficult to see where the experience has been gained.

TOP RESUME TIPS
- Proofread your resume (on screen and a print version); do not rely solely on spellcheck. Some words can be spelled correctly, but are out of context.
- Have a second person proofread your resume; a second set of eyes may see what you have missed.
- Use an 11 or 12 point and web-friendly font: Arial or Times New Roman.
- A two page resume is the standard once you are a post-secondary student, graduate or experienced worker. It becomes difficult to include your education, skills and experience on one page.
- Avoid using resume templates; they make your resume look like too many others.
- Use white space between sections and headings to ensure that your resume is clear and easy to read.
- Keep the format simple and professional. Avoid using graphics, multiple styles of bullets or dark bars to highlight information.
- Ensure that your formatting is consistent.
- Bullets should be aligned in all sections.
- Dates should be aligned and use a consistent format: full name of month or abbreviation. For example, November or Nov., either one works, just be consistent in your choice for the entire resume.
- Use action verbs and keywords to describe your skills and accomplishments.
- Include your GPA if it is strong: e.g. above 3.0 / 4.0.
- Avoid using acronyms that the employer may not be familiar with. If you wish to use an acronym for an association / designation / certification, use the full name followed by the acronym in parenthesis. e.g. Registered Massage Therapist (RMT) or Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA). The acronym can be used alone for subsequent mentions.

WHAT TO INCLUDE ON A RESUME
- Contact Information: Name, address (optional), email and telephone number
- Links to your LinkedIn profile, website or online portfolio, when applicable
- Qualifications / Skills
- Education
- Experience
- Volunteer / Community Involvement
- Awards / Certifications / Extracurricular Activities / Interests

WHAT NOT TO INCLUDE ON A RESUME
- Personal information such as; age, date of birth, marital status, ethnicity, religion.
- Photographs
- Information that is out-of-date or that is not relevant to the position. For example, you do not need to include high school if you have completed a post-secondary diploma or degree.
- Certifications that are not relevant to the job that you are applying to. For example, you do not need to include Smart Serve if you are applying to a position in accounting.
- Names and contact information for your references. Have your references listed on a separate page and take this information to the interview.

Please see below for resume for a Skills Based (also known as Combination or Hybrid) resume format example.

Name
Home Address
Contact Information (Phone, Email)

PROFILE

A brief summary of qualifications and experience related to the job posting. Can be point form or a paragraph. Highlight number of years in certain occupation if applicable. Include personal skills requested in the job posting (e.g. adaptable, innovative, quick learner, positive etc.)

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Highlight related professional skills and experiences that you have gained through studies, work, volunteer activities
- Include Interpersonal, Communication, Organizational, Problem Solving, Leadership and Teamwork skills and/or other soft skills
- Include required or asset certifications: First Aid, WHMIS, Health and Safety, etc.
- Review course outlines/descriptions to identify your professional skills gained during studies
- Tailor skills for each position and organize them so that they reflect the job posting (order of importance from employer's viewpoint or occupation's perspective)
- Use keywords from the job posting and the occupation specific language/terminology
- List your Computer Skills and other Technical skills relevant to your field
- DO NOT list skills/knowledge that cannot be supported by examples

EDUCATION (list most recent first)

Full name of Diplomas/Degrees/Certificates/Candidate　　　　　Year acquired or
Name of School, City, Province or Country (if outside of Canada)　　Year – Present
- Include post-secondary, high school (if applicable)
- Include GPA achieved for each if strong (e.g. 3.0/4.0 and above)

RELATED EXPERIENCE

Job Title or **Name of Academic Project/Lab/Work Placement**　　　Start – End Date
Employer or Name of Program, City, Province or Country (if outside of Canada)
- Describe your job responsibilities and accomplishments
- Start with the responsibilities/accomplishments most relevant to the duties of the job you're applying for
- Can include volunteer or unpaid internship placements in this section

OTHER WORK EXPERIENCE

Job Title　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Start – End Date
Employer, City, Province or Country
- Describe your job responsibilities and accomplishments
- Start with the responsibilities/accomplishments most relevant to the duties of the job you're applying for

AC | Employment Support Centre　　　AC | Student Support Services

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Position Title   Start – End Date
Organization, City, Province or Country
- List volunteer responsibilities that may be relevant to the job posting
- List accomplishments that may be relevant to the job posting

OTHER POSSIBLE RESUME SECTIONS

CERTIFICATIONS
- List relevant certifications and the year that it was achieved

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OR TRAINING
- Include special training courses, conferences/seminars attended, etc.

AWARDS
- List the award and the year that it was received
- Highlight awards that are significant to the job posting

MEMBERSHIPS
- Include professional associations of which you are affiliated

ACTIVITIES
- Demonstrate work-life balance through hobbies, interests, and activities – preference is for including the activities that can be substantiated – team sports, clubs