Resume Tips

What is a resume?

A resume (also known as a curriculum vitae) is a marketing tool to promote yourself as the right person for the job. It is a summary of who you are and what you have achieved and contains the information you need to give potential employers so that they will consider you for a position. You can also use your resume when you are applying for courses, and for networking purposes.

A resume is *not your life story* but a summary of key information about you. It is a dynamic document that should be updated whenever you start or finish a course or job, or whenever you learn a new skill. It should also be tailored to suit each job or course you apply for.

Two versions of your resume

Everybody, regardless of the stage of their career, needs a current resume, to allow them to quickly respond if an opportunity arises. Your resume is a vital part of your job search toolbox. You don't need to have had work experience to be able to write a resume.

Master copy

Your master resume (the one you keep) is where you put ALL your information. You use this information to create a targeted resume to suit a particular audience.

Targeted resume

Your targeted resume is the one you send out with information selected to suit the audience (ie for the job, course etc. for which you are applying).

Resume content

Your resume may be an employer's first contact with you. A resume should answer the employer's question: 'How will I benefit from employing this person?'

Often employers are looking at hundreds of resumes and only briefly review each one to decide whether to look more closely. The appearance is the first thing they notice, that is, is it neat and well set out and does it meet their requirements. There are many styles of resume. As long as it is neat and well set out, use a style that best suits your audience and yourself. Even though the layout can vary, ensure you are consistent with format and style of writing within your resume. Use easy-to-read fonts such as Arial, and have the font size between 10 and 14.

- **On average there will be 150 resumes sent for every job advertised.**
- **In the first instance a prospective employer will spend approximately 36 seconds reading your resume. In those 36 seconds they will decide to put you in either the "maybe" pile or the "reject" pile.**
- **Most resumes are so similar to all the others in their appearance that it becomes hard to distinguish one resume from another.**
- **Most resumes are boring.**

10 Steps to preparing a professional resume

1. Tailor It
Change your resume for each role to address requirements. This should include the opening statement, key skills and past experience.

2. Sell Yourself
Outline capabilities through achievements that articulate professional strengths. Recruiters understand tasks but they don't understand what made you successful at that task.

3. Make a Statement
Include an initial marketing statement that can align past experience with the target role by using relevant information for your industry.

4. Use Key Words
Include key words relevant to the role and industry that can assist when a key word search is performed on a candidate database. It may be specific capabilities, qualifications, software applications or technical skills.

5. Put the Best Stuff First
Include the most important information on the first page. The first look at a resume is believed to last just 15-30 seconds.
By including the most relevant information on the first page it will be easier to confirm your suitability rather than missing the required information completely.

6. Explain Gaps
Unexplained gaps in employment can leave a recruiter confused and wondering if there is something to be concerned about.

7. Tell the Truth
Lying on your resume can result in criminal or civil charges leading to a criminal record. Exaggerating can also be deemed to be lying. Even if you lose only your job for fraudulent behaviour or misrepresentation, it will do nothing for your prospects or reputation.

8. Avoid Graphics
Graphics can cause problems when read by e-recruitment applications. Templates that convert your resume content into graphical documents also may not work

9. Simple Format
Do not place critical information in headers and footers. Information, such as contact details may not be viewable if the application is processed electronically

10. Use Word
Some e-recruitment tools can only read documents in Word format.