

CAREER SUCCESS GUIDE

CAREER CENTRE FOR STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

Humber Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning

So you've just finished surfing the net, pounding the pavement and cruising through the classifieds and finally, you've found a posting for the job of your dreams. To get in on this spectacular offer you must submit a résumé. Aaaaaah! The dreaded word! Well, first things first. Unfortunately, an entrepreneur has not yet come up with "The Résumé Stop," where you can just zip in and grab one up for a 2-bucks. You must create this document on your own. Never fear. By picking up this excellent disk you have already made this whole affair a lot easier. This disk will hold your hand, offer advice and help you create a smashing résumé to land that dream job. So sit back, strap on your thinking cap and get ready to toot your horn and strut your stuff!

Let's first think about what an employer is hoping to see when he or she glances at your résumé. Employers are looking for résumés that are:

Easy to read

Employers look at many résumés every day and on average each résumé gets only a 30 second glance. Ensure your résumé is well organized and effectively uses white space. Choose a font that is easy to read. Arial and Times New Roman are good bets. Bolding, bulleting, underlining, italicizing and capital letters are very effective when used to draw attention to areas of strength.

Perfect Spelling and Grammar

Before sending your résumé to potential employers be sure to run it through a spellchecker, proofread it yourself and have someone else look over it too.

Targeted and Focused

Be sure your résumé is targeted towards the position you are applying for and the employer. (Yes, that means that you may need to add, remove, and rearrange sections and some of the contents of your résumé each time you apply for a different position.) Your résumé also needs to be focused on your skills and abilities and what you can bring to the employer and the new position.

Results Oriented

Avoid having your résumé read like a job description. Use lots of action verbs indicating change and improvement for the employer. Fill your résumé with results statements telling how you made a difference while doing that job. In order to back up each of your results statements include numbers, dollar amounts, percentages, and statistics when possible. Below are some examples of great results statements. For additional examples see the "Show What You Know!" handout.

- streamlined over 200 customer orders and returns monthly
- instructed more than 200 juniors during 2001 golf clinics
- initiated correspondence, tables, charts and spreadsheets utilizing Word and Excel

One or two pages?

More than two pages are far too much for an employer to read. Remember the thirty-second glance we mentioned earlier? There is no need to include everything that you have ever done. Keep it relevant to the position and the employer. Here's a good rule of thumb to consider when determining the length of your résumé:

- One pagers are generally used for part-time positions and people with minimal work experience.
- Two pagers are generally used by graduates and people with extensive work experience.

Now you know what employers are looking for in your résumé next you need to choose your résumé format. There are three different formats used.

Functional résumés emphasize skills and abilities, downplaying dates and limited work experience.

Chronological résumés arrange information by date in reverse chronological order. This format highlights a steady work history.

Combination résumés are the best of both worlds. Skills and previous jobs are emphasized giving a clear picture of what you have done and what you can do.

Format chosen? One more thing. You need to know what components make up a smashing résumé and how to best organize your information.

Personal Information

Indicate your full name, address and telephone number. If you also have an email account, cell phone or pager, include this information too. Wherever the employer is most likely to be able to contact you this is the information you want to give.

At the top or bottom of the second page indicate your full name and telephone number again. This alleviates problems if the pages become separated during faxing or in the employer's hiring folder.

Profile or Personal Summary

This information is optional, but highly recommended. Keep in mind though that a profile or personal summary helps to bring focus to your résumé. A profile or summary is usually about two to three points or sentences long, highlighting some of your achievements and qualifications. As your résumé is most likely going to be in heavy competition, the profile or summary is a great way to grab attention and encourage the reader to check out the rest of your résumé.

Skills and Achievements

This is where you get to strut your stuff. Put some thought into your personal inventory of unique skills and abilities. Think of skills that you have gained through work, school, volunteer, hobbies, and leisure activities. Below are some tips to help you develop this section.

- Describe your accomplishments and successes creatively and confidently
- Avoid listing your duties, as a job description would read
- Work numbers, statistics and percentages into your statements where possible
- Keep your statements brief and to the point
- Avoid using "I". Write in abbreviated third person. Rather than writing, "I washed, rinsed and waxed automobiles," try "Washed, rinsed and waxed automobiles."
- Start each statement off with an action verb

Now, most students face the same dragon that roars, "I won't hire you because you don't have any work experience!" Never fear. This is a common problem, experienced by many and thankfully recognized by our résumé gurus. Setting their brains on high, our wacky but wonderful gurus devised the "Academic Highlights" section. Chock this section full of projects, assignments, achievements and hands-on stuff completed throughout your academic endeavors.

Education

Start with your most recent education first. List university, college, and business or technical schools. High school is optional, but do not include elementary school.

Work Experience

List each of your positions in reverse chronological order, indicating position, company name and dates. With the chronological and combination résumé indicate responsibilities in point form using bullets and action verbs.

Volunteer Experience

This section can be almost as important as the work experience section. Although these positions were not paid you still learned a lot and gained valuable transferable skills. The set up is the same as the work experience section.

References

State here, that, "References are available upon request". Do not put your references on your résumé. Be ready at the interview to supply the employer with a separate sheet of paper listing each of your references. See example below of what to indicate for each reference.

Rose Budd, Human Services Supervisor
ABC Corporation
123 Rambling Road
Toronto, ON M9X 1Y7
Phone: (416) 675-1234 ext. 123, FAX: (416) 675-4321
Email: rose@abcco.com

Additional sections you may wish to include in your résumé are:

Activities and Interests

Professional Development (career related courses, workshops, and conferences that weren't part of your formal education)

Whew! Now your résumé is complete. It's organized, easy to read, spell checked and beaming out at you from your computer monitor. Consider this before you print it.

- Choose a good quality résumé paper. Brilliant white, gray and slate blue are good options... fluorescent sky blue, pink with purple polka dot are not.
- Print your résumé using an ink jet or laser printer that produces sharp, crisp copies.
- Use black or dark colored ink, other colors are difficult to read.

So there you go. Now you have a superb résumé that looks professional and was done by YOU! Go out there and shock the socks off that employer who has your dream job. If you are a little apprehensive that you haven't gotten it quite right drop by the Career Centre H107 at North and A120 at Lakeshore to book a free half hour consultation with one of our Résumé Tutors. Passing your résumé by some of your teachers and professionals in the field are also a great idea. The more feedback you get the better you can make your résumé.
Good luck!