

Resumes and Cover Letters for Marketing, HR and Business Management fields

Employers in these fields have given us specific feedback to share with you. More general instruction also follows.

A targeted and concise resume is recommended (see Template A). It is important to understand the employer to whom you are applying.

Some employers like objective statements (as long as they are specific and targeted) and others do not.

Good Objective Statement:

To contribute my teaching skills and passion for helping children in a position as a special needs instructor at a summer camp.

Bad Objective Statement:

To find a summer camp job where I can gain skills in instruction and leadership.

Some employers like summary profiles (as long as they are specific and targeted to the job description and prove their validity). If you have limited experience in the field you would like to pursue, the summary profile gives you the opportunity to prove your skills related to the job you want.

Good Summary Profile for a customer service and sales position:

- Strong interpersonal skills developed through... *list general example*
- Creative salesperson and marketer demonstrated through ... *list general example*
- Proven problem solving skills evidenced by... *list general example*

Bad Summary Profile:

- Strong interpersonal skills
- Creative marketer
- Quick thinker

If you have industry experience and other experience, consider creating two employment headings (Career Related Experience and Other Work Experience).

All employers agree that spelling and grammatical errors are not acceptable. Neither are mistakes in employer contact details, untargeted cover letters or letters longer than one page.

The Secret to Writing a Winning Resume

At first glance a resume is a summary of your personal history, but more importantly it must highlight your skills and accomplishments. This is marketing at the most personal level. The resume is a vital self-promotion tool.

An employer has a job to get done or a problem to solve. You have proven skills and abilities gained through formal education, on-the-job experience, volunteer work and extra curricular activities. How is the employer to know that you can get the job done or solve the problem? Why should they spend their valuable time in an interview with you? It is up to you to tell them why! On paper you must show the prospective employer that you can do the job.

An effective resume will define your skills and abilities, showing how well you perform when operating at or near the peak of your abilities. It should stress your accomplishments rather than describe duties and responsibilities (many people take on responsibilities but do not fulfill their commitments). Did you cut costs, solve a computer problem, get an award for most outstanding student or volunteer? Say so... giving numbers, statistics, or whatever is required to give your statement credibility.

Targeted

Your resume should be targeted towards the employer and the position for which you are applying.

Focused

A winning resume is focused on your skills and abilities, and how you can help the employer meet his/her needs by providing a match between the skills required and the skills that you have.

Concise

Make sure the resume is clear and concise. Include only relevant information. Be brief: busy employers do not have time to read lengthy resumes. The longer your resume is, the less likely it is that anyone will read it through to the end. Two pages is the acceptable maximum length. Use white space to make it more organized, easy to read and visually attractive.

Action Oriented

Use POWER verbs to show the range of your skills.

Positive

Modesty will not earn you any points. Be proud of your achievements but remember to be brief, you want to capture the employer's interest so that they are compelled to find out more at interview.

Action Statements

Descriptions of your experiences are key to a winning resume. Employers are looking for individuals with certain skills, you have developed skills in many activities and your resume is a tool to provide proof to the reader that you have acquired the skills. You can provide this proof through the development of action statements.

Action statements have three components:

1. Action verb which defines what you did.
2. Noun which defines who or what was acted upon
3. Results/conditions that specify details of what happened or under what conditions you conducted the work.

Examples:

- regularly scheduled five employees for weekly shifts to ensure optimum staffing requirements were met
- developed exemplary teamwork skills by successfully completing assigned tasks and maintaining focus of total project completion
- collaborated with a team of 12 student members of the Environmental Society to create a recycling program, resulting in a 50% waste reduction on campus
- organized group of 20 volunteers to deliver a fundraising event, which successfully raised over \$5,000 for a local charity

Questions to help you identify your results

1. Did you save your employer money?
2. Did you institute a new system or procedure in your society? Did you improve an existing system or procedure?
3. Did you identify a problem in your school that had been overlooked?
4. Did you train anyone?
5. Did you help increase sales?
6. Did you ever do anything simply to make your own job easier?

Action Verbs

acted	conserved	enlisted
adapted	considered	erected
addressed	consolidated	established
adjusted	constructed	estimated
administered	consulted	evaluated
advertised	contracted	examined
advised	controlled	executed
advocated	converted	expedited
allocated	conveyed	experimented
analyzed	convinced	explained
answered	cooked	explored
anticipated	cooperated	expressed
applied	coordinated	extracted
appointed	corrected	
appraised	corresponded	fabricated
approved	counselled	facilitated
arbitrated	created	familiarized
arranged	critiqued	fashioned
articulated	cultivated	fastened
assembled		filed
assessed	debugged	filled
assigned	debated	forecast
attained	decided	formulated
audited	decorated	fortified
authored	defined	founded
authorized	delegated	furnished
	delivered	
balanced	demonstrated	gathered
budgeted	described	generated
built	designed	guided
	detected	
calculated	determined	handled
cared for	developed	headed
carved	devised	hired
catalogued	diagnosed	hosted
chaired	directed	
changed	discussed	identified
checked	dissected	illustrated
clarified	dispatched	implemented
classified	drafted	improved
cleaned	drilled	incorporated
coached	drove	increased
collaborated	dug	individualized
collected		influenced
communicated	edited	informed
compared	educated	initiated
compiled	elicited	inspected
composed	eliminated	installed
computed	emphasized	instilled
conceptualized	enable	instituted
condensed	encouraged	instructed
conducted	enforced	integrated
conferred	engineered	interacted
connected	enhanced	interpreted

intervened
interviewed
introduced
invented
invested
investigated
involved

joined
judged

landscaped
led
lectured
licensed
listened
located

maintained
managed
marketed
measured
mediated
merged
mixed
moderated
monitored
motivated

named
negotiated
nursed

observed
operated
organized
originated
outlined
overhauled
oversaw

parented
performed
persuaded
planned
prepared
presented
presided
prevented
printed
prioritized
processed
produced
programmed
projected
promoted
proposed

provided
publicized
purchased

rebuilt
received
recited
recommended
reconciled
recorded
recruited
rectified
reduced
referred
regulated
rehabilitated
reinforced
remodeled
removed
renovated
reorganized
repaired
replaced
reported
represented
researched
responded
restored
retrieved
reviewed
revitalized

scheduled
screened
searched
selected
sent
served
set goals
severed
sewed
shaped
showed
simulated
sold
solicited
solved
sorted
specialized
specified
spoke
sprayed
spread
standardized
stimulated
streamlined
strengthened

studied
suggested
summarized
supervised
surveyed
systematized

tabulated
taught
terminated
tested
trained
translated
transmitted
tutored
typed

unloaded
upgraded
utilized

validated
wrote

Example of Resume Format for Marketing/Business Management - Template A

YOUR NAME
Address
Phone Number
E-mail

PROFILE/ACHIEVEMENTS

- Be specific and link to the job description and/or company
- Prove your statements with examples
- List at least three statements; preferably four
- Include accomplishments

EDUCATION

YEAR-Present

Dalhousie University

Halifax, NS

List program and major

You can list academic achievements here

YEAR

High School

Location, XX

Grade XII

You can list academic achievements here

CAREER RELATED WORK

Mth/Year – Mth/Yea

Name of organization

Location, XX

Title of Job

- List your accomplishments using bullets
- Use action statements to describe your responsibilities and accomplishments
- Use past tense if you are no longer working for the employer and present tense if you are currently doing the job
- Be specific and concise
- Do not use periods

OTHER WORK EXPERIENCE

Mth/Year – Mth/Yea

Name of organization

Location, XX

Title of Job

- List your accomplishments using bullets
- Use action statements to describe your responsibilities and accomplishments
- Use past tense if you are no longer working for the employer and present tense if you are currently doing the job
- Be specific and concise
- Do not use periods

VOLUNTEER WORK

Mth/Year

Name of organization

Location, XX

Title (if applicable)

- You can set up your volunteer work in the same format as your “work” section or
- List duties performed, organization name (date)
- Use either of these two formats or some variation – just be consistent within the category

AWARDS

- List the reason you received the award – preferably highlighting the skill for which you were awarded, name of the award (date)
- Continue the list starting with the most recent

INTERESTS AND ACTIVITIES

- List these – if possible, group them in categories
- Be specific – for example, make note if you have been on a team or played in a band

COMPUTER SKILLS

- List the programs you can use or
- List the program type (include specific program in brackets)
- Word processing (Word and WordPerfect)

REFERENCES**Available upon request**

Resume Checklist

Before you submit a resume for review, use this checklist to make sure you are on the right track. It will also help you to refer to this each time you apply for a job.

Make sure you have included:

- Header:
 - Current contact details including your name, address, phone number and e-mail

- Education section:
 - Name of institution, program, location
 - Relevant dates
 - Academic achievements

- Computer Skills section:
 - List of software and hardware (you can categorize)

- Work section:
 - Work dates
 - Bulleted list of power statements describing your accomplishments
 - All relevant employment experience (transferable skills)

- Volunteer Work, Interest and Activities and/or Extra Curricular section (an appropriate heading to best suit the content):
 - Bulleted list of accomplishments
 - Relevant dates

- Awards section, if applicable:
 - The name of the award
 - The reason you received the award
 - Relevant dates

- References section
 - For work term advertised jobs, just the statement "available upon request"

- General:
 - No title, "Resume"
 - Create the document from a blank page; do not use a resume template
 - Use white paper when printing your resume
 - No personal information such as age, weight, height, political affiliation
 - Consistency throughout your resume

- Proper use of tense (for example, if no longer working for this employer, use past tense)
- Information is chronological (most recent information first)
- Bullets are lined up
- No periods
- No "I" statements
- Proper use of capitalization
- No abbreviations, contractions, or "etc."
- Fits on one page or two pages (*write your resume first and adjust formatting later)
- No bolding, underlining or italics within the bullet points (only use on titles and headings)
- Number the second page (name and page 2/2)
- Proofread for grammar and spelling (use Canadian spelling)

References

References are people who can comment on your abilities. They can describe your performance at school or at work, your accomplishments, your characteristics, or even your interpersonal skills. Make sure you choose references who will speak favourably about you, and who know you well enough to make meaningful comments. In her workbook *Finding Employment – The Critical Path*, Susan Braley makes the following suggestions for choosing and using references:

- Choose a variety of references – for example, one from previous (*or current*) employment, one from your academic experiences, and one from your personal life (*a character reference*).
- Ask each reference for permission to use his/her name before you give it to a prospective employer.
- Avoid using religious leaders as references unless you work closely with them on church projects.
- Avoid using relatives – employers assume they are biased.
- If possible, brief your references on what type of jobs you are applying to and what you think they will be asked. Remind them of your accomplishments.
- Here are some sample questions that the reference is likely to be asked:
 - No one is perfect – please describe the applicant's weaknesses.
 - Let me read the description of their job with you. Is this accurate?
 - Was absenteeism a problem? Was lateness a problem?
 - How does this person react under pressure?
 - What three adjectives would you use to describe this person?
- Bring a copy of your references with your name clearly visible at the top of the page to every interview.

High Calibre Cover Letters

Like the resume, the cover letter should be clear, concise and highlight your particular skills. The cover letter is one of the tools employers use to identify your communication skills.

There are many different kinds of cover letters that you may be required to write to potential employers. A rule of thumb when preparing letters is dare to be unique, but always maintain your professionalism. While a well-drafted letter may yield results that leave the reader wanting to know more, a poorly drafted one will leave them cold.

Before writing the cover letter you should:

- read the job description
- research the position and the company
- create a checklist of skills and abilities
- rank the skills and abilities in order of importance

Response to an Advertised Job

A cover letter is required for every position posted by SBCS. The competition for positions is fierce. Recruiters will screen out 85% to 90% of applicants, often within tight time constraints. This means most cover letters are scanned, by recruiters or computers, in 30 to 60 seconds. Based on that brief review, correspondence will be filed in the A, B or C pile, 'A' meaning an interview. By following these guidelines, you'll increase your chances of making it to the 'A' pile.

Step 1: Study the ad

Avoid the temptation of scanning the ad, deciding to apply, and dashing off a standard letter. They are a dime a dozen – the employer will read the first tired line and skip to the resume. You have just lost a golden sales opportunity. Instead, study the ad, underline or highlight key words and phrases relating to qualifications, corporate culture and company information. List the qualifications and skills required for this job. (See Diagram A)

Step 2: Research the position and the company

First, think about your network. Do you know anyone in the company or in a similar position? Do you know anyone who might have a contact in that company or industry? If so, visit or phone that individual to learn more. Carefully review the company's website, if one is available. If unable to locate a website, begin some paper research. Use public libraries to gather current, accurate information about the company and industry.

Step 3: Identify related skills and achievements

Now that you understand what the employer needs, review your skills and qualifications. Make a list of those that best fit the requirement of the position and would be of particular interest to this prospective employer. (See Diagram B)

Step 4: Write the letter

Catch the attention of your reader in the first line of your letter and continue that momentum through to the end! To pull all the data together effectively, remember that every letter has four basic segments: salutation, introduction, body and closing.

Diagram A

What the employer wants...

1. Good organization skills and ability to prioritize quickly
2. Close attention to detail
3. Ability to create spreadsheets for purpose of budgeting and general statistics
4. Assistance with event logistics and co-ordination of conference
5. Ability to implement changes to company website

Diagram B

What experience I can bring to the job

1. Multi-tasks to handle school/part-time job/sports and social commitments.
2. Summer job for government doing data input
3. Knowledge gained from COMM1501 (Grade – A)
4. High school prom committee
5. Developed personal web pages



Cover Letter Template

Address

Date

Contact Name

Position Title, Department

Company Name

Company Address

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name:

First Paragraph

Indicate that you are applying for the job

State your program (and selected major or area of concentration if related to the job you are applying for)

Hook Line: tie yourself to the job/company/industry

Second Paragraph

Note that you have the specific skills mentioned in the job description

Provide an example of a time you used/developed the skill – provide a specific example

Continue until you have covered all or the most important skills from the job description

Third Paragraph

If you have not addressed all skills listed in the job description, continue with the same format as the second paragraph

If you have addressed all skills write about other skills you possess

Provide an example of a time you used/developed the skill – provide a specific example

Fourth Paragraph

Write a summary of yourself

Add a line about the employer

Thank the employer for considering your resume.

Sign off

Sincerely,

Sign

Type your first and last name

Cover Letter Checklist

Before you submit a cover letter for review, use this checklist to make sure you are on the right track. It will help you to refer to this each time you write a new cover letter for each application.

- Prior to writing the letter:
 - Read and understand the job description
 - Categorize and prioritize the job description duties
 - Research the company
 - Consider your skills and abilities as they relate to the job

- Opening:
 - Your address at the top of the letter
 - Date
 - Employer's correct contact details (including name and title – check spelling!)
 - Proper salutation (Dear Mr./Ms.)
 - Proper spacing (one line separating the date from contact details, two spaces before salutation)

- First paragraph:
 - Statement of your interest in the job
 - Hook line

- Second and third paragraph:
 - Identified your skills in relation to the job description
 - Provided detailed and specific examples to demonstrate these skills
 - Linked your experience and skills to the job description, company and/or industry

- Fourth paragraph:
 - Personal statement about yourself, your skills and experiences
 - Connect yourself to the job
 - Closing statement

- Closing:
 - Proper closing (Sincerely,)
 - Your name typed

- General
 - Be careful in how you define a company (firm vs. organization vs. company vs. department); find out first how they define themselves and use that terminology
 - Avoid terms that are gender specific; for example, “salesman”
 - Start each cover letter fresh; be original
 - Do not begin the first paragraph by writing “My name is...”
 - Focus on what you can do for them not what they can do for you
 - Think in terms of skills – transferable skills
 - Do not contradict yourself (“I am a Finance major looking for marketing experience”)
 - Avoid bold sentences with no follow through
 - Avoid bold statements about your knowledge of business/industry – prove your knowledge by backing up statements with examples
 - Avoid “I believe” or “I feel” (“I am confident” is much more professional)
 - Never use abbreviations, contractions, or “etc...”
 - Make sure you proofread for grammar and spelling errors (use Canadian spelling)