

Resume Writing Toolkit

Our Centres in North Sydney, Baddeck and Ingonish are dedicated to assisting clients with their employment needs.

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EMPLOYMENT SERVICES CENTRE

What is a Resume?

A resume is a job search tool that shows potential employers who you are and summarizes your knowledge, skills and abilities. A good resume leads to a job interview. How your resume looks affects the impression you will make on an employer. Ensure your resume is organized, to the point, and easy to read.

Why Write a Resume?

Most employers require applicants to submit a resume. A well-written resume will show employers how your skills, experiences and qualifications can contribute to the workplace and meet their needs. They look for a specific set of skills that match the skills necessary to perform a particular job. A well-prepared resume shows employers you are serious about finding a job and should get them interested in calling for a job interview. Employers receive many resumes and are usually in a hurry. They don't spend time on resumes that are hard to read, sloppy or incomplete. The average amount of time an employer spends skimming a resume is 10-15 seconds, so make sure you design a resume that looks great and grabs your reader's attention. Creating a winning resume can make the difference between ending up in an employer's "to be interviewed" pile or the "not interested" pile.

What types of Resumes Are There?

Selecting your resume format is a major strategic decision. No universally "right" format is appropriate for all people. You must review your own circumstances e.g. skills, background and work you are seeking, and select the best format for you. In order to select the style that brings the most attention to your qualifications, you must be aware of the merits and drawbacks associated with each one.

Resume Types:

| Resume Type | Overview | Advantages | Disadvantages |
|------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Chronological – Most Common Format | Focus in on work history starting with the most recent. It includes duties performed while in each position. | Employers can see track record of pertinent and increasingly responsible positions. Useful when work experience relates to the position applied for. | Dates are required so it can highlight gaps in work history or job hopping. Employers must go looking for skills and accomplishments. |
| Functional | Focus in on skills and abilities not work history. | Skills are not limited to paid employment. It can widen the scope of informal experience. Does not highlight gaps or lack of solid work experience. | Employers assume that this format may hide important background information which could be essential to a candidate's credibility. |
| Combination | Blends the best of the chronological and the Functional style. Employers can clearly see the relevant skills for the position and link them to related work history. | Highlights skills and accomplishments while emphasizing a consistent and progressive career path. | Dates are still considered important and this may make it less suitable for candidates with gaps in their work history, recent graduates or people making a career change. |



TIPS FOR RESUME WRITING

- Do not include every job you have ever had. Going back the last 3 jobs or 10 years is recommended.
- Try not to be repetitive – a long resume is not always the best.
- Ideally, a resume is 1-2 pages depending on your experience.
- Have a separate page for references, unless it states in the ad to include references with your resume. Former employers (supervisors, co-workers, etc.) are the best references.
- Avoid using fancy fonts that is difficult to read. We recommend Garamond, Arial, Times New Roman, Calibri, for example.
- Never include your date of birth, marital status, personal characteristics such as height or weight or a picture of yourself.
- Always SPELL CHECK!
- **TARGET** your resume! This is key to getting you noticed and to stand out above the rest of the candidates in that initial scan. How to do that?
 - 1) Make the top 1/3 of your resume count– they may never turn to the second page
 - 2) Include relevant work history
 - 3) Make appropriate skills, experience and certifications jump out by including them in the top 1/3 of first page
 - 4) Use appropriate terminology from employer’s job description – circle key words and qualifications in the job description and make sure those same skills/qualifications are highlighted in your resume or cover letter.
 - 5) Write in brief, concise, phrase, not long sentences or paragraphs
 - 6) Draft a Master Resume and revise/edit/target this resume for every position you apply for based on the qualifications and skills they are looking for.

Bottom Line: Always consider the process from the employer’s point of view! What is the employer looking for?

CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME SAMPLE

Martha Smith

123 Anywhere Street Sackville, NS B4C 1S3
e-mail: msmith@hotmail.com
(902) 864-0000

Career Profile:

Highly skilled Administrative Assistant with a strong background in office support, customer care, and financial duties; proficient computer skills; reputation for honesty and professionalism; conscientious and tactful; well-developed interpersonal, organizational and communication skills

Employment History:

Administrative Support 2008-2014
XYZ Company Ltd., Sackville, NS

- Responsible for completing all office duties; support management in customer care
- Answered phones; assisted customers; maintained accurate financial and sales records using WP8, MS Word, Access, Excel, AccPac, Internet, E-mail, Windows
- Prepared professional looking documents; sales brochures and forms
- Opened and closed facility; updated current sales listings daily

Mortgage Specialist 2005-2007
The Mortgage Centre, Toronto, ON

- Over fifteen years of experience dealing with consumer credit and mortgages
- Well-developed skills in evaluating financial status and assessing clients' needs
- Investigated all applications and references to determine the ability to repay; analysed financial statements for commercial applications and renewal products
- Effective follow-up of documentation to ensure successful completion of transactions

Real Estate Sales Associate 2003-2005
Royal LePage Realty, Toronto, ON

- Provided quality sales assistance to residential purchasers and sellers
- Developed a clientele through referrals and cold calling

Education & Training:

Computerized Business Diploma, Q.U.E.S.T. Education Centre, Sackville, NS 2008
Microsoft Word, Access, Excel, Simply Accounting, Bookkeeping

Mortgage Specialist, Trust Company Institute, Toronto ON 2005

Real Estate Representative, Ontario Real Estate Board, Toronto, ON 2003
Property Management, Appraisals, Mortgage Financing

FUNCTIONAL RESUME SAMPLE

Martha Smith

123 Anywhere Street, Sackville, NS B4C 1S3

e-mail: msmith@hotmail.com

(902) 864-0000

JOB OBJECTIVE

Administrative Support

PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Administrative

- Provided administrative support in non-profit organizations, retail, and sales office settings
- Handled telephone and in person inquiries, appointments, and related office duties
- Maintained accurate financial records; prepared professional looking forms
- Proficient computer skills: WordPerfect 8, MS Word, Access, Excel, Simply Accounting, Internet, e-mail, Windows & Keyboarding skills 60+ wpm, search Internet sites for materials
- Organized, flexible, adaptable, resourceful and open to change

Financial

- Over fifteen years' experience in consumer credit and financial support
- Well-developed skills in evaluating financial status and assessing clients' needs
- Investigated applications and references; analysed financial statements
- Conscientious and tactful dealing with delinquent or irreconcilable accounts
- Accurate, pay attention to detail, work well under pressure; meet all deadlines

Customer Service

- Performed detailed real estate evaluations and reviewed property appraisals
- Received clients; completed client registration information; completed telephone call-backs
- Recipient of awards for outstanding customer service and cross-selling
- Well-developed interpersonal/communication skills; adept at learning new skills quickly
- Responsible handling confidential and sensitive information
- Equally efficient and competent working independently or in a team environment

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

| | | |
|--|---------------|-----------|
| Administrative Support, XYZ Company Limited | Sackville, NS | 2008-2014 |
| Mortgage Underwriter, Canada Trust | Toronto, ON | 2005-2007 |
| Real Estate Sales Representative, Royal LePage | Toronto, ON | 2003-2005 |

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

| | | |
|--|-------------|------|
| Computerized Business Diploma, NSCC | Truro, NS | 2008 |
| Mortgage Specialist, Trust Company Institute | Toronto, ON | 2005 |
| Real Estate Representative | Toronto, ON | 2003 |

COMBINATION RESUME SAMPLE

Martha Smith

123 Anywhere Street
Sackville, NS B4C 1S3
(902) 864-2234 / mssmith@hotmail.com

Job Objective:

A position in administrative office support where my extensive organizational and time management skills will be effectively utilized in a fast paced office environment.

Summary of Skills & Qualifications:

Administrative

- Responsible handling confidential and sensitive information including client files and reports
- Over 10 years' experience in office administration and financial support environments; reorganized administrative procedures resulting in shortening file processing time by 30%
- Adept at maintaining accurate financial and sales records and creating monthly reports
- Strong organizational skills with proven ability to multi-task in a busy office setting

Communication

- Experience answering multi-line telephone systems and distributing incoming regular and electronic mail
- Adept at co-ordinating the flow of information internally and with other departments and outside organizations
- Recipient of awards for developing excellent customer relations and providing professional client service
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills

Computer/Technical

- Strong computer skills: WordPerfect 8, MS Word Suite, Access, Excel, Quick Books, GroupWise, Internet, E-mail, Windows; accurate keyboarding skills 60+ w.p.m.
- Experience in website development, database management and automated filing systems

Employment History:

Administrative Assistant, IMP Group, Sackville, NS 2008 - 2013

- Acted as information source to outside contractors and affiliated organizations
- Established and maintained highly confidential company files
- Prepared reports and managed client files

Mortgage Underwriter, Canada Trust, Toronto, ON 2005 - 2007

- Followed-up and proofread documentation for accuracy and consistency
- Ensured successful completion of financial transactions
- Well-developed skills in evaluating financial status and assessing clients' need

Real Estate Sales Rep, Royal LePage, Toronto, ON 2003 - 2005

- Property Management, Appraisals; Mortgages and Financing

Education and Training:

Business

Diploma

2008

Nova Scotia Community College

Mortgage Specialist

Trust Company Institute, Toronto, ON

2005

Real Estate Representative

Ontario Real Estate Board, Toronto, ON

2003

Volunteer Work:

Bookkeeper, Halifax SPCA

2013

Member, Board of Directors, Halifax Aquatic Club

2011

References Available Upon Request

SAMPLE REFERENCE SHEET

Krista Smith, P. ENG.

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Halifax, NS B3R 6R4

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Department Head – Current Supervisor

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Former Supervisor

Pat Cooper, Manager
ALLSTATE ENGINEERING INC.
3725 Kempt Road
Halifax, NS B3Y 4B6
(902) 455-6767
Former Manager

Matthew McCormick, P.Eng.
HUMIRA ENGINEERING CONSULTING INC
Suite 30, Plaza Centre
Halifax, NS B4A 1E8
(902) 477-2345
Co-worker

JOB EXPERIENCES – ACTION VERBS

| | | | | |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| A | D | I | N | reorganized |
| accomplished | decreased | identified | negotiated | repaired |
| achieved | delegated | illustrated | | researched |
| acted | delivered | implemented | O | resolved |
| adapted | demonstrated | improved | obtained | restored |
| administered | designed | increased | operated | retrieved |
| advised | developed | influenced | ordered | revamped |
| aided | devised | informed | organized | reversed |
| analyzed | diagnosed | initiated | originated | revised |
| anticipated | directed | inspected | | revitalized |
| applied | discovered | inspired | P | |
| appointed | | installed | packaged | S |
| approved | E | instituted | perfected | saved |
| arbitrated | earned | instructed | performed | scheduled |
| arranged | edited | integrated | persuaded | secured |
| assembled | effected | interpreted | pioneered | served |
| assigned | eliminated | interviewed | planned | simplified |
| assisted | engineered | introduced | prepared | sold |
| audited | enhanced | invented | presented | solved |
| | enlarged | investigated | presided | standardized |
| B | ensured | | preserved | stimulated |
| budgeted | established | J | prevented | streamlined |
| built | estimated | joined | procured | strengthened |
| | evaluated | | produced | summarized |
| C | exceeded | L | programmed | supervised |
| calculated | executed | launched | projected | supported |
| certified | expanded | led | promoted | surveyed |
| changed | expedited | located | protected | |
| coached | | | provided | T |
| combined | F | M | published | taught |
| communicated | forecast | managed | purchased | trained |
| compiled | founded | manufactured | | translated |
| conceived | | marketed | R | |
| conducted | G | maximized | received | U |
| consolidated | generated | mediated | recommended | upgraded |
| constructed | guided | merged | recognized | |
| consulted | | minimized | recovered | V |
| controlled | H | modernized | recruited | verified |
| convinced | headed | monitored | reduced | |
| corrected | hired | motivated | remedied | W |
| counselled | | | re-negotiated | wrote |
| created | | | | |

Employability Skills

Employability skills (otherwise known as transferable skills) may be used in many occupations, regardless of the type of work. They are a “soft skill” that you can transfer from one type of work to another without much training from the employer. Just pick the skills that apply from the list below. (Be aware of one thing - you may be asked when you have used a particular skill, so don't pick one that you can't back up or support with an example.)

Look at the following list of transferable skills and choose those that apply to you.

| | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| act/perform | copy information | gather information |
| adapt to situations | correspond w/others | gather materials |
| advise people | create | generate |
| analyze data | delegate | guide/lead |
| anticipate problems | deliver | handle complaints |
| appraise service | demonstrate | handle equipment |
| arrange functions | design | handle money |
| assess situations | detect | illustrate |
| audit records | determine | imagine solutions |
| bargain/barter | develop | implement |
| be cost conscious | direct others | improve |
| be responsible for | dispense information | improvise |
| budget money | distribute | inform people |
| build | do precision work | initiate actions |
| buy products/services | do public relations work | inspect products |
| calculate numbers | draft | install |
| chart information | drive | instruct |
| check for accuracy | edit | interpret data |
| classify information | encourage | interview people |
| collect money | endure long hours | invent |
| communicate | enforce | inventory |
| compute data | estimate | learn |
| conceptualize | evaluate | learn quickly |
| conduct | examine | liaise |
| construct buildings | exhibit | lift (moderate) |

| | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| consult w/others | expand | listen |
| contact others | expedite | locate information |
| contact w/others | explain | log information |
| control costs | explore | make/create |
| control people | file records | make decisions |
| control situations | find information | make policy |
| converse w/others | fix/repair | manage a business |
| coordinate activities | follow directions | manage people |
| cope w/deadlines | follow through | measure boundaries |
| mediate problems | recruit people | supply |
| meet the public | rectify | support |
| memorize information | reduce costs | survey |
| mentor others | refer people | synthesize |
| monitor progress | rehabilitate people | tabulate |
| motivate others | remember information | take instructions |
| move materials | remove | tend equipment |
| negotiate | repair | test |
| nurse | replace | think ahead |
| nurture | report information | think logically |
| observe | research | tolerate interruptions |
| obtain | resolve problems | track |
| operate equipment | restore | train/teach |
| order goods/supplies | retrieve information | transcribe |
| organize data | review | transfer |
| organize people | run meetings | translate |
| organize tasks | schedule | travel |
| own/operate business | seek out | treat |
| paint | select | troubleshoot |
| perceive needs | sell | tutor |
| perform routine work | separate | type |

| | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| persuade others | sequence | understand |
| plan | service customers | unite people |
| plant | service equipment | update information |
| prepare materials | set goals/objectives | hand/eye coordination |
| print | set up equipment | use words correctly |
| process information | set up systems | verify |
| process materials | sew | visit |
| produce | shape | visualize |
| program | signal | volunteer |
| promote | size up situations | weigh |
| protect property | sketch | work quickly |
| provide maintenance | socialize | write procedures |
| question others | solve problems | write promo material |
| raise money | sort | write proposals |
| read reference books | speak in public | write reports |
| recommend | study | write technical work |
| record data | supervise | |

SELF-MANAGEMENT SKILLS

These are also soft skills. They tell the employer whether or not your personality fits the personality of the company, the bosses, and the co-workers. Many employers would rather hire an inexperienced worker with good self-management skills than an experienced worker who might cause problems. Just pick the skills that apply from the list below. (Be aware of one thing - you may be asked when you have used a particular skill, so don't pick one that you can't back up with an example.)

| | | |
|------------|--------------|--------------|
| academic | active | accurate |
| adaptable | adventurous | affectionate |
| aggressive | alert | ambitious |
| artistic | assertive | attractive |
| bold | broad-minded | businesslike |

| | | |
|----------------|--------------------|----------------|
| calm | careful | cautious |
| charming | cheerful | clear-thinking |
| clever | competent | competitive |
| confident | conscientious | conservative |
| considerate | cool | cooperative |
| courageous | creative | curious |
| daring | deliberate | democratic |
| dependable | determined | dignified |
| discreet | dominant | eager |
| easygoing | efficient | emotional |
| energetic | enterprising | enthusiastic |
| fair-minded | farsighted | firm |
| flexible | forceful | formal |
| frank | friendly | generous |
| gentle | good-natured | healthy |
| helpful | honest | humorous |
| idealistic | imaginative | independent |
| ingenious | industrious | informal |
| inventive | intellectual | intelligent |
| lighthearted | kind | leisurely |
| loyal | likable | logical |
| meticulous | mature | methodical |
| modest | mild | moderate |
| open-minded | natural | obliging |
| organized | opportunistic | optimistic |
| painstaking | original | outgoing |
| persevering | patient | poised |
| polite | practical | precise |
| progressive | pressure resistant | punctual |
| productive | rational | realistic |
| reliable | resourceful | responsible |
| self-confident | sensible | sensitive |

| | | |
|---------------|---------------|-------------|
| serious | sharp-witted | sincere |
| sociable | spontaneous | spunky |
| stable | steady | strong |
| strong-minded | sympathetic | tactful |
| teachable | tenacious | thorough |
| thoughtful | tolerant | tough |
| trusting | trustworthy | unaffected |
| unassuming | understanding | unexcitable |
| uninhibited | verbal | versatile |
| warm | wholesome | wise |
| witty | zany | |

WORK SPECIFIC SKILLS

When identifying your work specific skills, special emphasis must be given on how you handled data, people, things, and ideas.

Data: This includes any type of factual information. Numbers of any sort (percentages, volume, area, frequency, measurements, lengths of time, monetary value, etc.). Data also includes: specifications, codes, surveys, drawing interpretations or any other type of research or data based information.

People: There are two questions to ask yourself when evaluating your people skills.

- With what type of people were you involved (supervisors, customers, vendors, etc.)
- What do you do with, for, or to each of them?

Things: Every occupation uses some type of tool, machine, or piece of equipment. No tool or piece of equipment should go overlooked. Remember, people are paid to answer the phone, drive nails and dig up dirt with shovels.

Ideas: This is the most overlooked part of peoples' evaluation of their own work and educational experience. It's also one that might be the most valuable. Ask yourself if you've ever come up with a good idea to make the job easier, more profitable, safer, etc.

Now take a few minutes and make a list of the work specific skills that you have used in your various jobs. The following list contains some examples of these skills but you will need to add others that apply to you.

| | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| carpentry | nursing | training new staff |
| welding | facilitating | editing written materials |
| diagnostic analysis | fundraising | technical support |
| purchasing | bookkeeping | reconciling financial statements |
| teaching | auditing | ordering materials/supplies |
| interviewing | computer programming | painting |
| laboratory work | dancing | operating machinery |
| equipment repair | forklift operation | counseling |
| graphic designing | developing budgets | selling products/services |
| web design | maintaining inventory | coaching teams |
| architectural drafting | coding data | screen printing |