



Australian Government
Department of Employment



Writing effective résumés

In the same way a brochure explains the benefits of a particular product to potential customers, your résumé is a marketing document selling what you have to offer to potential employers.

Important things to keep in mind when preparing a résumé include:

- Only include accurate information. When you attend a job interview, employers will ask questions to test the claims you've made in your résumé.
- Tailor your résumé to every job ad to show you meet their needs. The changes you need to make to tailor your résumé might be significant or just small tweaks.
- Identify your accomplishments and quantify them if you can. Accomplishments should be unique to you. Ensure you identify the benefits to the business.
- It's vital you proofread your documents to ensure there are no spelling mistakes and typos. Ask someone else to proofread your documents too.



Direct and indirect information

Your résumé provides employers with valuable information about you – both directly and indirectly.

Direct information:

- Skills you have gained through paid employment, volunteer roles and through work experience placements.
- Knowledge you have gained through study and training both at work and through community and sporting activities.
- The personality traits you possess that help you at work.

Indirect message you could be sending an employer:

- Humorous email address e.g. evilpixie@bigpond.com – “she is not serious about our job”
- Spelling errors – “careless about his/her work”
- Unexplained gaps in your work history – “hiding something”
- Error free résumé featuring relevant key words – “shortlist this person”

Use commonly recognised job titles to make it easier for an employer to understand your job history. Being creative can sometimes lead to you missing out. “Receptionist” is much clearer than “Director of First Impressions”.

Exercise 1

What are three direct messages an employer could receive from your résumé?

1.
2.
3.

What are three indirect messages an employer could draw from your résumé?

1.
2.
3.



Know the difference

Know the difference between skills and experience, personal attributes and qualifications. Note that a skill could also be an area of experience for you. For example, customer service is a valuable skill but also an area of experience.

Exercise 2

Place the words below in the correct columns. Note that one of the terms listed below can be placed in more than one column (hint – the term comprises two words).

- | | | |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| - TL141309 Certificate IV | - Punctual | - Writing and editing |
| - Time management | - Certificate III in Aged Care | - Hard working |
| - Well presented | - Reliable | - Australian Red Cross First Aid certificate |
| - Fast and accurate typist | - Keen to learn | - Customer service |
| - Driver's licence | - Software tester | - Microsoft Office Specialist (Excel) |
| - Supervising others | - Responsible Service of Alcohol/
Responsible Service of Gambling | - Enthusiastic |

Personal attributes	Skills/Experience	Courses/Qualifications



Exercise 2 Answers

(Time management could be a personal attribute and a skill)

Personal attributes	Skills/Experience	Courses/Qualifications
Reliable	Writing and editing	Certificate III in Aged Care
Punctual	Time management	TL141309 Certificate IV
Well presented	Software tester	Australian Red Cross First Aid certificate
Hard working	Fast and accurate typist	Microsoft Office Specialist (Excel)
Enthusiastic	Customer service	Driver's licence
Keen to learn	Supervising others	Responsible Service of Alcohol/ Responsible Service of Gambling



Analysing job ads

Exercise 3

Choose two job ads of interest to you. Analyse the two jobs and make a list of the key words.

Job 1 – Title

Personal attributes required	Skills and experience required	Training/qualifications required
.....
.....
.....

Job 2 – Title

Personal attributes required	Skills and experience required	Training/qualifications required
.....
.....
.....

Exercise 4

Using the same two job ads, think about your work, training and other experiences and list your examples:

Job 1 – Title

Personal attributes required	Skills and experience required	Training/qualifications required
.....
.....
.....

Job 2 – Title

Personal attributes required	Skills and experience required	Training/qualifications required
.....
.....
.....



Referee Management

You will need at least two relevant referees. You can include their names and contact details as the last item on your résumé. Or, if you want to know when your referees will be contacted, you can write, “Referees available upon request”. Some recruitment and labour hire agencies want to check your referees at the beginning of the job selection process to ensure you are ready to take a casual or temporary job when it arises. However, many employers – particularly small ones – will only reference check people to whom they want to offer a job.

Exercise 5

Reviewing the job ads you have selected, list two relevant referees. Choose people who supervised you. If you have lost touch with former managers, use the Internet to find contact details paying particular attention to professional social media sites such as LinkedIn. People who have supervised you could be from a time of paid employment, a work experience placement or a volunteer role. If you have worked for a family business, it is a good idea to find a manager who is not related to you to act as your referee. If you only worked with family, you may need to find additional referees from other areas of your work history.

Character Reference

If you have never been employed, you could ask a school teacher, sports coach, neighbour, someone from your religious or community group for a character reference. Before asking for the reference, make sure you let them know it’s for a job so they include information about your character, values and the type of person you are in general. Ensure the reference is brief and doesn’t expose too much about your personal life.

Referee 1

Name:

Current title:

Business they work for:

Contact details: (Direct line, email and main company phone number)

.....
.....
.....

Name of the business where you worked together, if this is different from the referee’s current employer:

.....
.....

Dates you worked together.....

Work relationship: (e.g. Your manager or another senior manager)

.....



Referee 2

Name:

Current title:

Business they work for:

Contact details: (Direct line, email and main company phone number)

.....
.....
.....

Name of the business where you worked together, if this is different from the referee's current employer:

.....
.....

Dates you worked together.....

Work relationship: (e.g. Your manager or another senior manager)

.....

Résumé Check List

Use the checklist below to ensure your work is error free. When you write a document it is often hard to see any mistakes so hand a copy of your résumé and this checklist to a friend to carry out a review for you.

Task	You	Friend
Only use professional sounding email addresses such as your name. Does your email fit the bill?		
Are your name and phone/email contacts correct and on each page? An employer may receive your application by email but then print out a hard copy and the pages could get separated.		
Do you have a list of key skills on your résumé? Do these match the key words used in the job ad that describe what the employer is looking for?		
Are there any unexplained gaps in your work history timeline?		
Is all the information 100% genuine? Can you answer questions at a job interview about everything you have included in your résumé?		
Are there any typos or spelling mistakes?		
If you have included hobbies or interests, do these strengthen your application for the job?		
Have you included two relevant referees? Are the contact details current?		

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