

# The Insider's Guide to Building a PERFECT Résumé

---

## Introduction, Résumé Appearance and Formatting Tips

A résumé is a one or two page document that outlines your educational and employment background. **It should highlight your accomplishments and match the job requirements presented by the potential employer. The purpose of a résumé is to attract a potential employer's attention and make the hiring manager want to contact you.**

The appearance of your résumé says a lot about you. If your résumé is sloppy, the hiring manager will think that you, and the way you work, are sloppy as well. **Make sure your résumé is neat, well presented, organized, on the right kind of paper, has the right font size and layout, and contains no grammatical errors or typos.** Here are some general tips to help you format your résumé correctly:

- Line up the body of your résumé on the left side of the page
- Space the paragraphs consistently and maintain the same format throughout the document
- For a font, choose Arial, Verdana or Times New Roman
- Use size 11 or 12 font for the body of your résumé
- Use size 14 or 16 **BOLD** font for your name and headings
- Keep it to two pages at most. If it is 2 pages long, fill at least half of the second page
- Write "Continued" or "Page 1 of 2" at the bottom of page one, and write "Page 2 of 2" at the top
- **SPELL CHECK and PROOF READ to make sure there are no grammatical errors or typos!**

## Résumé Types

<b>Chronological Résumés:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Highlight where and when you worked and your job titles in the "Professional Experience" section</li><li>• List accomplishments below each job listed</li><li>• List most recent experience at the top in reverse chronological order</li></ul>	<b>Choose a Chronological Résumé if:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You want to get similar work to what you now have or had in the past</li><li>• You have had an increase in responsibilities in your current job and want to move "higher up" or "sideways"</li><li>• You have not been unemployed for long periods of time</li></ul>
<b>Functional Résumés:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Feature <i>transferrable skills</i>* and achievements in the "Summary of Skills" or "Skills Section" that are relevant to the job posting</li><li>• List the special skills and achievements from the most relevant and important to the least as they pertain to the job requirements</li><li>• In the "Employment History" section, list only company names and the dates worked there</li></ul>	<b>Choose a Functional Résumé if:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You are entering the workforce for the first time or have little work experience</li><li>• You are changing careers or fields</li><li>• You have been unemployed for a significant period of time</li><li>• You have had a lot of different experiences as opposed to steady progress in one particular career path</li><li>• Your experience isn't related to the job, career or field you are seeking</li></ul>
<b>Combination Résumés:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Combine Chronological and Functional Résumé formats</li><li>• Provide the chronological work history that some employers prefer</li><li>• Highlight skills you have that pertain to the job you are applying for in the "Summary of Skills" or "Skills Profile" section</li></ul>	<b>Choose a Combination Résumé if:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You want to highlight <i>transferrable skills</i>* because your work history is not particularly extensive</li><li>• You want to advance in the area of work you are now in</li><li>• Your job titles do not describe the level of responsibility you held</li><li>• You want to fill gaps in employment with valuable experience that relates to your job objective</li></ul>

*\*Transferrable skills are skills you have acquired during any activity in your life, like in jobs, classes, projects, parenting, hobbies or sports. They are skills you can transfer and use on the job you are applying for.*

## Key Words

**Key words are like "buzzwords".** They're used by industry insiders to describe themselves and others in their profession. **They are the words a hiring manager would look for while searching through applicant résumés to find the right "fit" for the job posting.**

**Use the same language found in the job posting in your résumé to make sure it gets the employer's attention.** Companies often use scanning technology when selecting résumés, so **using keywords is an absolute must.**

**Try to use at least 10 key words in your résumé.**

## Building Blocks of an Effective Résumé

### Block 1: Your Contact Information

<b>Name:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Make it stand out by using bold, enlarged type</li><li>• Use the name you commonly go by</li></ul>	<b>Address:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Make sure you have your full address</li><li>• If you are in Toronto, write "Toronto" instead of "North York" or "Etobicoke", etc.</li></ul>
<b>Telephone Number:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use the number that you are most reachable at, have control over, and where someone can leave a message for you</li></ul>	<b>E-mail Address:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Make sure it is professional sounding (not like bunny1@wondermail.com)</li></ul>

### Block 2: Your Career or Job Objective Statement

Your Career or Job Objective Statement belongs at the top of your résumé, under your contact information. It is the first section a hiring manager will read and should give them a sense of **what you are offering and exactly what you are looking for**. **Make it clear and concise, and use key words from the job description.**

Always try to be specific by listing your area of expertise or specialization. Think of the "Objective Statement" as a sales pitch, and the rest of your résumé as supporting material: it should summarize the key credentials you are offering the employer. Here is an example: ***"Highly organized and independent individual with 2+ years experience handling reception, administration and customer service duties in a clinical office, is looking to obtain an Office Administration position."***

If you cannot be specific about the job you're after, then simply state the field or career (e.g. "A Sales Position" or "A Position in Accounting"). Or you can also use a headline that simply states your job title: **Administrative Assistant**, as in ***"To secure a position as a \_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_ (Company name)."***

### Block 3: Skills/Attributes Statements

Accomplishment statements belong in the "Summary of Qualifications" section in a Chronological or Functional Résumé, and in the "Relevant Experience" ("Work History") section in a Combination Résumé. **The closer your skills or attributes match the job posting, the better your odds are of being called for an interview. Some hiring managers only look at this section!**

The following are examples of skills and attributes employers might deem beneficial with their employees. Start with an action word (use your own or choose from the list on page 10), and do not use any personal pronouns such as "I", "my", "we", "our" or "they". Remember, a résumé is written in past tense, so the action words should end with "ed".

- *Performed reception duties including answering phones and greeting customers*
- *Identified service issues and recommended solutions to management*
- *Organized and maintained client files and database*
- *Scheduled and coordinated work for the project management team*
- *Monitored supply inventories and re-ordered equipment and items as needed*
- *Handled accounts receivable and provided word processing support*
- *Filed weekly reports on sales results and planned upcoming store promotions*
- *Processed incoming and outgoing mail for sorting and distribution*

Typically, skills and attributes belong in the "Summary of Qualifications" or "Relevant Experience" ("Work History") section of the résumé. For added effectiveness, insert key words into the skills/attributes statements.

## Creating a List of Skills and Attributes

To create your own list of Skills and Attributes, follow these next two steps:

**Step 1:** Pick six skills you have that most apply to the type of job you are looking for

**Step 2:** Write them down on the worksheet provided below using the appropriate **Action Words** found on page 10

### The Skills and Attributes Worksheet

1. (Action word)	(skill/attribute)
2. (Action word)	(skill/attribute)
3. (Action word)	(skill/attribute)
4. (Action word)	(skill/attribute)
5. (Action word)	(skill/attribute)
6. (Action word)	(skill/attribute)

## Block 4: Work History or Relevant Experience

Start with your latest job. List all previous work experience that is relevant to the job you are applying for **in reverse chronological order (most recent job to previous jobs)**. Remember to include your **Accomplishment Statements** (see page 6). Here are some helpful tips:

- If it is a large company with several locations, list the location where you worked
- List the job duties you performed - most important first, least important last - **as they relate to the job you're applying for**
- Set limits on what you include in this section. Your résumé should not exceed two pages
- Do not list more than the 5 most recent jobs you have held, or the equivalent of 10 -15 years of employment: **make sure those jobs have relevant experience and/or skills to the job you are applying for**
- Use numbers whenever possible. For example: **"Completed critical assignment 1 month ahead of schedule."** or **"Supervised 20 employees in manager's absence."**

Fill out the following Work History or Relevant Experience worksheet:

### The Work History or Relevant Experience Worksheet

<p>Employer's Full Address: _____</p> <p>From: _____ To: _____</p> <p>Previous position and at least 3 responsibilities:</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p>
<p>Employer's Full Address: _____</p> <p>From: _____ To: _____</p> <p>Previous position and at least 3 responsibilities:</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p>
<p>Employer's Full Address: _____</p> <p>From: _____ To: _____</p> <p>Previous position and at least 3 responsibilities:</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Create more spaces if necessary</p>

## Block 5: Accomplishment Statements

A well-written Accomplishment Statement will establish your value to the company in the eyes of the hiring manager. An Accomplishment Statement **should contain specific details that you feel will get the employer to call you in for an interview**. Whenever possible, **use specific quantities like percentages, dollar amounts, increases or decreases**. **Tip: Be careful not to embellish facts as they might be checked for accuracy.**

*Answer the following questions (if applicable). They will help you define your qualifications and strengths, and help you create your Accomplishment Statements:*

Did you receive any awards or recognition at any jobs? <b>Answer:</b>
How did you make a difference at some of the jobs you worked? <b>Answer:</b>
How did you save your employer money or time? <b>Answer:</b>
How did you increase profit or efficiency? <b>Answer:</b>
How did you improve performance? <b>Answer:</b>
Did you expand the customer base? <b>Answer:</b>
Did you reduce waste? By how much? <b>Answer:</b>
Did you solve any problems? <b>Answer:</b>
Did you reduce costs? By how much? <b>Answer:</b>

Typically, Accomplishment Statements belong in the "Relevant Experience" ("Work History") section of your résumé. **For added effectiveness, insert key words into the Accomplishment Statements.**

## Creating Accomplishment Statements

Here are some examples of Accomplishment Statements:

- *Saved time (20 minutes per day) by re-engineering work flow for the department*
- *Expanded the customer base by 25% by implementing advanced marketing strategies*
- *Reduced waste by 60% through the introduction of waste control measures*
- *Improved reliability of printed circuit boards by changing soldering materials and techniques*
- *Increased department efficiency by 90% through file automation and CRM technology*
- *Lowered escalated customer complaints through intensive employee product training*
- *Reduced costs by \$150,000 by re-negotiating contracts with suppliers and vendors*

**To create your own list of your own Accomplishment Statements, do the following three steps:**

**Step #1:** Chose the appropriate action verb from the list on page 11

**Step #2:** Describe what you did

**Step #3:** Describe the end result

**Use the Accomplishment Statement Worksheet below to fill your answers in on.** Repeat the above three steps until you have created at least six strong accomplishment statements. You will find three examples of Accomplishment Statements at the top of the worksheet to help you get started.

### The Accomplishment Statement Worksheet

<b>VERB</b> Choose an action word	<b>DESCRIPTION</b> Describe what you did	<b>BENEFIT</b> Describe the end result
<b>Example 1:</b> Developed...	a policy manual...	that reduced waste by 20%
<b>Example 2:</b> Entered...	information on a computer system...	that increased efficiency by 30%
<b>Example 3:</b> Performed...	timely business transactions...	resulting in improved reliability
#1		
#2		
#3		
#4		
#5		
#6		

## Block 5: Education or Professional Development History

When describing your educational background, do so **in reverse chronological order**, starting with your most recent achievement, but only if it is relevant to the requirements of the job you are applying for. Include:

- The name of programmes completed and your area of specialization (dates are optional)
- Any degrees, diplomas or certificates attained (dates are optional)
- The name of the educational institution (location is optional)
- Any awards or scholarships received that are relevant to the job you are applying for

**Note:** List what degree, diploma or certificate you received before the name of the educational institution you attended

*Now, complete the following worksheet:*

### The Education or Professional Development History Worksheet

<b>1. Name of programme completed:</b>
<b>Area of specialization:</b>
<b>Degree, diploma or certificate attained:</b>
<b>Name and location of educational institution:</b>
<b>Awards or scholarships:</b>
<b>2. Date and name of programme completed:</b>
<b>Area of specialization:</b>
<b>Degree, diploma or certificate attained:</b>
<b>Name and location of educational institution:</b>
<b>Awards or scholarships:</b>
<b>3. Date and name of programme completed:</b>
<b>Area of specialization:</b>
<b>Degree, diploma or certificate attained:</b>
<b>Name and location of educational institution:</b>
<b>Awards or scholarships:</b>

Create more spaces if necessary



## Community Involvement/Volunteering and Honours/Awards

If you have not already included your Community Involvement/Volunteering in the skills/experience section of your résumé, add an additional heading: **Community Involvement/Volunteering**. Likewise with **Honours/Awards**.

## References

Write: "References Available on Request" at the bottom of your résumé.

## Résumé Completion

Now it is time to print off a copy of the résumé template that is appropriate for you. You will find the templates in the Learning Library alongside this guidebook.

When you are done, go through the checklist below to make sure your résumé is **PERFECT**.

## Résumé Checklist

Use this checklist to assess the effectiveness of your résumé before you send it out. **It is a good idea to seek the opinion of at least one person whose opinion you value before sending out your résumé.**

- My résumé has correct grammar, spelling, sentence structure and punctuation
- My résumé is written in the third person and does not contain any "I" or "me" statements
- My résumé is packed with industry specific language and crucial keywords
- My résumé emphasizes and quantifies my achievements to show not only what I have done, but also how well I have done it
- My résumé uses varied action verbs in the past tense
- I have viewed the job posting I am applying for and adjusted my résumé to emphasize how I will benefit this employer and meet their precise needs
- My résumé engages the reader from the outset and maintains interest throughout
- My résumé clearly communicates my job target and the key strengths I bring to the table within the first third of the first page
- My résumé looks eye-catching with enough white space not to appear cramped
- My résumé communicates and targets key transferable skills
- My résumé utilizes accomplishment statements in a compelling way

**From all of us at The Career Foundation, thank you for the opportunity to assist you in developing your human potential!**

## Action Words

achieved  
acted  
activated  
adapted  
addressed  
adjusted  
administered  
advised  
aided  
allocated  
altered  
analyzed  
anticipated  
applied  
appraised  
approved  
arbitrated  
arranged  
ascertained  
assembled  
assessed  
assigned  
assisted  
attained  
audited  
authored  
balanced  
brought  
budgeted  
built  
calculated  
catalogued  
chaired  
charted  
checked  
clarified  
classified  
coached  
collected  
communicated  
compared  
compiled  
completed  
composed  
computed  
conceived  
conceptualized  
conducted  
conserved  
consolidated  
constructed  
contracted  
controlled  
coordinated  
corresponded

counseled  
created  
critiqued  
dealt  
decided  
defined  
delegated  
delivered  
demonstrated  
described  
designed  
detailed  
detected  
determined  
developed  
devised  
diagnosed  
directed  
discovered  
dispatched  
dispensed  
displayed  
disproved  
dissected  
distributed  
diverted  
drafted  
dramatized  
drew  
drove  
edited  
educated  
eliminated  
empathized  
enabled  
encouraged  
enforced  
engineered  
enlisted  
established  
estimated  
evaluated  
examined  
executed  
expanded  
expedited  
experimented  
explained  
expressed  
extracted  
fabricated  
facilitated  
familiarized  
fashioned  
filed  
financed  
fixed  
followed

forecast  
forecasted  
formed  
formulated  
founded  
gathered  
generated  
guided  
handled  
headed  
hypothesized  
identified  
illustrated  
imagined  
implemented  
improved  
improvised  
incorporated  
increased  
influenced  
informed  
initiated  
innovated  
inspected  
inspired  
installed  
instituted  
instructed  
integrated  
interpreted  
interviewed  
introduced  
invented  
inventorized  
investigated  
judged  
kept  
launched  
learned  
lectured  
led  
lifted  
listened  
loaded  
logged  
maintained  
managed  
marketed  
mediated  
memorized  
modeled  
moderated  
modified  
molded  
monitored  
motivated  
navigated  
negotiated

observed  
obtained  
offered  
operated  
operated  
ordered  
organized  
originated  
outlined  
overhauled  
oversaw  
painted  
perceived  
performed  
photographed  
piloted  
planned  
predicted  
prepared  
prescribed  
presented  
printed  
prioritized  
processed  
produced  
programmed  
projected  
promoted  
proofread  
protected  
provided  
publicized  
published  
purchased  
questioned  
raised  
realized  
reasoned  
recommended  
reconciled  
recorded  
recruited  
reduced  
re-evaluated  
referred  
refined  
rehabilitated  
related  
remodeled  
rendered  
renegotiated  
repaired  
reported  
represented  
researched  
resolved  
responded  
restored

retrieved  
reunited  
reviewed  
rewrote  
risked  
scheduled  
screened  
searched  
selected  
sensed  
separated  
served  
set goals  
sewed  
shaped  
shared  
showed  
sketched  
sold  
solved  
sorted  
specified  
spoke  
stimulated  
streamlined  
strengthened  
studied  
summarized  
supervised  
supplied  
supported  
surveyed  
symbolized  
synergized  
systemized  
talked  
taught  
tended  
tested  
trained  
transcribed  
translated  
traveled  
treated  
troubleshoot  
tutored  
typed  
unified  
united  
updated  
upgraded  
upheld  
used  
utilized  
verbalized  
weighed  
wired