

Planning your next career move...

MODULE 1: Building a resume that will get you noticed

MODULE 1: BUILDING A RESUME THAT WILL GET YOU NOTICED

It is essential to understand the relative importance of the resume in your total job seeking campaign.

Think of your resume as a key marketing tool with the purpose of helping you to get a job interview. It is an advertisement about you, listing your strengths. The resume should create enough interest that an employer will want to speak to you in person. Whether you send your resume, give it to a contact or agency, or attach it to an application, a well prepared resume will help introduce you in the most positive fashion.

RESUME CONTENT - ALWAYS...

- Present yourself accurately and positively.
- Include only enough information to encourage the employer to find out more.
- List your most recent (10 years) positions or areas of expertise first and work backwards. In short, work from strengths. This makes it easier for the reader to see your current work experience.
- Include a brief description, when appropriate, of the companies where you worked - size, sales, volume, products, services etc. For example: "A \$300 million international company with 15,000 employees specialising in recreational products."
- Stress accomplishments. Include, where appropriate, examples and figures to substantiate claims. For example: "Implemented new business processes that reduced costs by 30%."

RESUME CONTENT - NEVER...

- Include salary requirements. This may limit your potential. You don't want to over or under price before the job is yours. However, do have an acceptable range in mind to discuss during the interview.

RESUME FORMAT - MAKING IT EASY TO READ...

- Don't use fancy resume designs as the graphics they contain are often blocked by firewalls at the receiver's end.
- Although resumes come in several designs, two general formats are most common:

1. The Chronological Resume lists your various positions in reverse order, latest first. Other aspects of your experience may also be included. The advantage of the chronological resume is that it presents your background in a clear-cut, straightforward manner and therefore enables the reader to quickly size up your background.
2. The Functional Resume avoids or plays down the employment record. It emphasises your experience and accomplishments in each functional or technical area, particularly the one in which you seek a job. Thus you can de-emphasise work areas you do not wish to highlight.

Either format may be bolstered by listing accomplishments in each given job or functional area. We generally recommend the **Chronological Resume** unless your employment history is erratic or the career change you seek requires departing radically from past history or experience.

- Attempt to convey your accomplishments in a personalised letter format.
- We have created a **Resume Template** for you to download - a step-by-step instruction guide on how to create and build a professional resume quickly. This template helps us in gathering the information we need to best assist you. To show the level of detail required, we have also

created an example of a completed resume template as a guideline. Refer to www.ocg.co.nz and download the OCG Resume Template.

WRITING YOUR OBJECTIVE STATEMENT:

- Since resumes are usually screened by busy people who peruse many of them, your challenge is to get your key message across quickly, easily and at the very beginning of the document.
- The first thing most resume readers want to know is: "What are you seeking?" One way to respond to this question is to start your resume with an objective.

For example:

- A Sales Management role in a medium sized FMCG Company.
- An Assistant Accountant in a progressive organisation who is ATO registered accredited
- A Quality Control Assistant in a pharmaceutical organisation.
- A Personnel Administrator for a medium size company.
- A Customer Services Representative in a dynamic call centre environment.
- A Manager of cost accounting.

SUMMARY STATEMENTS:

- Another question the resume reader may ask is: "What type of candidate is this?" You can answer this question by providing a brief descriptive summary of yourself. Here are a few examples:

"Over 21 years experience in manufacturing of precision mechanical and electronic instruments; a broad and highly successful record in the introduction of new products and cost control programs; a strong background in organisation and human development in a fast growing company."

"An experienced HR Generalist with specialist skills in Recruitment, Learning and Development and Change Management, gained whilst working in large corporate organisations."

"Successful at all levels of retail marketing for an 80-store chain. Also a proven record in wholesale marketing for an 80-store chain."

"Ten years experience in the retail industry; major strengths are in staff merchandising and marketing operations in departments; outstanding record at developing merchandising/promotion programs resulting in number one position; substantial experience in store operations, accomplishing sales and profit goals."

- The Objective Statement and the Summary Statement are the result of your personal assessment thinking through what you are and where you want to go.
- Remember, there is no one correct resume format and even these two sections are optional. Putting an objective on a resume may narrow or restrict other alternative opportunities in the reader's thinking.
- It is quite possible to have multiple objectives. If your alternative career objectives are radically different, you may want to tailor separate resumes to fit each objective or you may prefer to leave the objective out and feature it in your introductory letter.

ACCOMPLISHMENT/ACHIEVEMENT STATEMENTS:

- Accomplishments are positive experiences or activities that give you a sense of satisfaction.
- When writing your accomplishment statements, use the PAR (Problem, Action, Result) and CAR (Challenge, Action, Result) formulas.
- Use specific terms such as dollars, percentages, time taken, number of people affected.
- Be prepared to do one or more 'rewrites' before you are satisfied with the statements.

- The following list of action verbs may be useful when writing your accomplishment statements:

SUMMARY:

- To introduce yourself to a prospective employer you will need a good resume, one that pinpoints your particular talents and accomplishments. The resume has two purposes:
 - The practice you get writing about yourself prepares you to speak about yourself in the interview.
 - It confirms your skills, abilities and experience for a prospective employer.
- A resume should be concise, accurate, logical, brief and pertinent. In short, it tells what you have done and how well you did it.
- Write down all the activities, responsibilities and achievements you have performed.
- Read them through and now start editing and re-writing it. Using the resume format template we have provided, or Google for other formats, incorporate this information in a concise, logical form.
- Try to keep your resume concise. Depending on your work experience, 4-5 pages excluding your cover page, should be ample to provide a prospective employer with enough information to create interest in your application.
- Check for spelling mistakes!
- After you have completed the editing process, arrange your achievements in the order of importance to the position you are seeking. Do not be repetitious or too wordy.
- Now review your document.
- Does it highlight your areas of strength?
- Is it a true representation of who you are, what you have done and how well you performed?
- Does it sound like someone you would hire if you were looking for a replacement?
- Get someone whose judgment you respect to read it over and comment.

YOUR COVERING LETTER:

- Your covering letter is a brief document which introduces your job application, and expresses genuine interest in the position. It serves as an introduction for your application. It serves to encourage the recipient to read the attached resume or other documentation. It may also serve to reinforce that part of the application and resume that convinces the reader you fit the opportunity.
- The covering letter should be no more than one page long. It should indicate the position you are applying for, and where it was advertised.
- You may wish to give a brief summary of your particular interest in, abilities, and experience you would bring to the position, but don't repeat your resume!
- Close the letter by thanking the potential employer for considering your application, and state your willingness to attend an interview and provide more information if that is required.
- It should be clean, clear (lots of white space on the page) and checked for spelling or grammar mistakes.