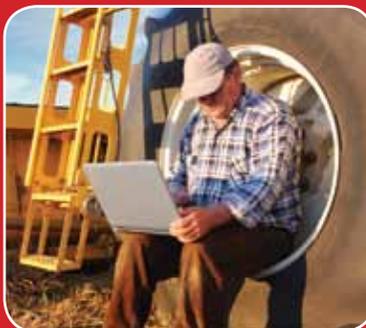


career
development manitoba



A PRACTITIONER'S
GUIDE TO
**WRITING
RESUMES**

YOUR FUTURE **YOUR** WAY

Manitoba 

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Introduction

Writing an effective resume is a key skill for job seekers. The client resource, **A Guide to Writing Resumes**, contains information and worksheets to support clients to effectively write a resume. The detailed information found within the client resource is not repeated here. Instead the focus of this guide will be to provide facilitators with additional information, tips, and strategies for conducting a resume writing workshop or working with individual clients.

The information in this guide covers the core concepts related to resume writing. Practitioners are encouraged to adapt materials to their personal style and needs of their clients.

Guiding Framework

Many skills can be developed through writing resumes. In the following sections, relevant skills/competencies are identified from three frameworks: Blueprint for Life/Work Designs, Essential Skills, and Employability Skills 2000+.

Blueprint for Life/Work Designs

Writing a resume helps to develop the following Blueprint competencies:

- Competency 5 – locate and effectively use life/work information
 - Level 2 – locate, understand and use life/work information
- Competency 7 – secure/create and maintain work
 - Level 2 – develop abilities to seek and obtain/create work

Essential Skills

Writing a resume will enhance the following Essential Skills:

- reading text
- document use
- writing
- continuous learning
- thinking skills
- computer use (if clients produce their own resume)
- working with others (if in a workshop)

Employability Skills 2000+

Writing a resume will develop:

- Fundamental Skills
 - communicate
 - manage information
 - think and solve problems
- Personal Management Skills
 - demonstrate positive attitudes and behaviours
 - be responsible
 - be adaptable
 - learn continuously
- Teamwork Skills (in workshops)

Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners

Supporting individuals to write resumes is an important role for career development practitioners. To do this well, practitioners would need all of the core competencies outlined in the Standards and Guidelines: Professional/Ethical Behaviour, Interpersonal Competence, Career Development Knowledge, and Needs Assessment and Referral Expertise.

In addition, supporting individuals to write an effective resume overlaps with three of the Areas of Specialization in the Standards and Guidelines, including:

- Facilitated and Individual Group Learning
- Information and Resource Management
- Work Development

Preparing for Your Workshop or Individual Session

You'll need to review and gather the following items as you prepare to deliver the workshop or work individually with a client. Some practitioners like to use photocopied handouts of the charts and activities in the guide; this leaves the client guide fresh and clean for individual use after the session. Others prefer to have clients write directly on the guide, ensuring that all of the topical information stays in one place. Feel free to tailor your workshop to your personal style and participants' needs. Your personal preference will impact the resources you need to gather as you prepare for your workshop or individual session.

Required:

- **A Guide to Writing Resumes** (one copy per participant)
- pens, pencils
- for workshops:
 - computer, LCD projector, and screen
 - flip chart paper and markers

Optional:

- PowerPoint slides, printed three or six slides per page; one set per client
- Handouts from the client guide
 - Job Ad and Resume for Jennifer Meyer (Appendix A)
- One per client or one per group
 - Skill Statements
 - Action Verb List
 - Resume Tracking (worksheet)
- Computer lab – one computer per client/participant
 - Allows participants to build their resume on the computer, rather than on paper.
- Use the Resume and Cover Letter Builder found on the Manitoba Career Development Gateway - www.manitoba.ca/careerdevelopment.

PowerPoint Slides

The following presentation contains 26 slides. Reviewing the slide content, engaging in discussions with participants, and completing the activities should result in a 3.5 hour workshop (times listed are estimates and may depend on factors including number of participants). Discussions and activities can be expanded or contracted depending on the time you have available to conduct the workshop. Where applicable, the facilitator notes will mention how to make adjustments for time constraints. Note: the content within the following slides may be challenging to read due to size; see the PowerPoint document to review the complete content.



Welcome participants to workshop
Introductions

- Have participants introduce themselves.
- An icebreaker activity can be incorporated; see Icebreakers/Energizers section for more information.

Time:

- Expect introductions to take three-to-five minutes per participant. Icebreakers may take longer. Workshop time will need to be adjusted accordingly.



Briefly review agenda to provide participants with an overview of the workshop.

Time:

- three-to-five minutes



This is a transitional slide. Discuss meaning of quote.

Time:

- two-to-three minutes

Why Have a Resume?

- Showcases knowledge, skills, experience
 - Outlines link between you and job – if it's targeted!
- Assists employers in identifying candidates
 - With the right qualifications
 - Who are committed to their job search
- Required by some employers
 - Without a resume, you don't get considered

If time permits, engage participants in a relevant discussion, examples are below:

1. How many of you have a current resume?
2. When was the last time you updated your resume?
3. With a partner, discuss what types of jobs may not require a resume.

Time:

- five-to-seven minutes, more if incorporating discussion.

Resumes? Over Here...



There was a time when any one advertised position would get hundreds of resumes.

If a resume didn't catch the employer's attention in the first 15 - 30 seconds it didn't get considered.

While today's employers may not be inundated with resumes (though that could depend on the employer and the unemployment situation) the need to catch an employer's attention in the first 15 - 30 seconds remains important.

Time:

- three-to-five minutes

Types of Resumes

- Chronological
 - ✓ Shows a strong, consistent work history
 - ✗ Highlights gaps/job-hopping/irrelevant experience



Briefly review the types of resumes (this slide and the next three following).

Introduce participants to the notion of targeted resumes (chronological, functional, and combination resumes will often be targeted to a specific position).

Master resumes will be discussed later.

CV's won't be elaborated on during this workshop.

Choosing Your Resume Type

- Case Example: Jennifer Meyer
 - 21 years old
 - Recent graduate - Computer Systems Technology diploma
 - Assiniboine Community College
 - Previous work experience - restaurant server
 - Applying as a Jr. Assistant Network Administrator
- What resume type would be the best fit? Why?

Activity (can be in addition to above or the sole activity for this section):

- Consider the case presented and the job opportunity.
- Consider why the different resume types might work.
- Depending on your audience you can use different cases – see the resume client guide for more examples.

Upon completion of the activity, ask participants to consider what resume type might be best for them.

Share resume samples emphasizing the different types.

Time:

- 10 – 15 minutes

Taking Stock

- Not ready to create a targeted resume?
 - If you're not sure what job or field of employment you're targeting then a good place to start is to create an experience inventory
- Create your experience inventory
 - Consider all previous work (paid/unpaid)
 - List everything
 - Provide as much detail as possible
 - Include any equipment you operated or software you used
 - Think about transferable skills
 - Record accomplishments

This slide refers to the "Your Experience Inventory" within the client guide.

With a group of participants at multiple stages of readiness or who aren't ready to write their resumes, facilitators may wish to focus on this activity within the guide.

Time:

- 15 – 20 minutes, depending on level of readiness within the group.

Master Resume

- Do not worry about format or length
 - Do watch for spelling and grammar
- Capture
 - Details about each position
 - Job title, company name, dates
 - Major achievements, duties, tasks
 - Contact information for references
 - All education and training
 - Qualification highlights and skill statements

Present the notion of a master resume; useful for individuals with several targeted resumes.

Emphasize that a master resume cannot be used "as is." Its purpose is to be a "catch all" for every position and all skills/experience. Keeping a master resume up to date will ensure resumes can be targeted quickly and efficiently.

Time:

- three-to-five minutes

Targeting Your Resume

- Customize your resume with a specific job in mind
 - Highlight your fit for the job
- Ensure all information is relevant
 - For each item, ask yourself “Will the reader want to know this?”
- Organize additional information in priority order
 - Put most relevant information near top

Review the notion of targeting resumes and the importance of taking the time to write a resume that “speaks” to employers.

Time:

- three-to-five minutes

Targeted Resume...Success or Not?

- Jennifer Meyer is applying for a position at Charge University
- She targeted her resume based on the job ad
- Review the ad and her targeted resume
- Find
 - Two examples linking her **qualifications** to the ad
 - One example linking her **responsibilities** to the ad

Handout required:

- Copies of sample job ad and Jennifer Meyer’s resumes – available in appendix of client guide.

Instructions for this activity are on the slide; be prepared to help clients. The “answers” are within the Targeting Resumes section of the client guide.

Time:

- 15 minutes

Writing Tips: Resume Headings

- Career Goal/Employment Objective
- Highlights of Qualifications
- Skills
- Employment History
- Education
- Volunteer Activities/ Community Involvement

Review slide; explain to participants that they’ll need to pick one of the headings (ex. either Profile or Career Highlights).

Time:

- three-to-five minutes

Skill Statements

- Strong skill statements
 - Demonstrate your accomplishments
 - Create effective descriptions to add to your resume
 - Start with an action verb
- Consider your work experiences
 - What was the issue?
 - What you did about it?
 - What was the outcome?

Skill statements are an important part of any resume. They highlight your accomplishments for employers. Best if they are quantifiable (ex. increased sales by 15 per cent) or follow the format listed on the slide.

Time:

- three-to-five minutes

Sample Skill Statements

- *What was the issue?*
 - The company was experiencing a high number of workplace accidents.
- *What did you do about it?*
 - Joined the safety committee and helped develop new safety policies.
- *What was the outcome?*
 - Reduced number of accidents by 20% over the first year policies were in place.

Content on this slide is a sample skill statement for Darel McDonald (one of the sample clients).

After reviewing the questions and responses, work through an example, preferably from the group. This will help “bring it to life” beyond the sample on the slide.

Potential handouts:

- “Skill and Action Verb List”
- “Sample Skill Statements”

Time:

- 10 minutes

Getting Started Activity

- Form groups of 3 or 4
- Work through the activities in the **Writing My Resume Section**
 - Begin to create your resume
 - Support group members to develop skill statements

Depending on several factors, including number of participants, the following activities can be expanded or contracted.

Have participants work through the client guide and fill out the “Writing My Resume” worksheet. This section could take quite some time to complete so could break this out into chunks focusing, for example, just on skill statements as suggested or working through a complete resume writing activity.

An alternative would be to allow participants to use their existing resumes to get (1) feedback and (2) make changes.

Time:

- 20 - 30 minutes

Getting Creative

- Your name and section headings
 - Use different fonts, colours, sizes, small caps, bold text
- Formatting
 - Use columns to list information
 - Use right justification for dates to help balance the look
- Paper
 - Use quality white or cream
- Do not go overboard
 - Less creativity is better

Discuss (or share a story) of a time when resume creativity went too far (ex: flowers or graphic images; printed on coloured paper). Also, discuss where it might be appropriate to be a bit more creative (ex: graphic artists, actors/models).

Time:

- five-to-ten minutes

Resume Tips

- Highlight special/unique skills
- Highlight relevant experience
- Proofread your resume
- Use strong, action-oriented language
- Remove items that are outdated
- Use past tense for work done in the past (e.g. organized) and present tense for work currently being done (e.g. organize)
- Use high quality paper (white or cream)

Resume Tips (Cont.)

- Use 8 ½ x 11 envelope to avoid folding resume
- Fill gaps/time off with volunteer work
- Use clear fonts (Arial, Times New Roman)
- Use font size between 10-12 points
- Be clear and concise
- Use white space

Common Resume Challenges

- Gaps in work history
- Minimal skills and experience
- Incomplete or no diploma, degree, or certificate
- Job-relevant experience from many years ago
- International education and experience
 - e.g. Immigrant workers

Remind participants they have 20 seconds to “impress” an employer or grab his/her attention.

Time

- five-to-seven minutes

Break participants into groups and assign them one of the challenges. As a group have them brainstorm the solutions. Debrief with the large group.

If time is a concern, review the content and direct participants to the potential solutions located in the client resource. Within the workshop be prepared.

Be prepared to discuss handling employment gaps due to incarceration (ex: use of functional resume, highlight skills developed in programming/work experiences).

- Talk about what to do if overqualified for position applying for (ex: how to minimize level of experience if required; highlighting future assets).
- Spend time (if appropriate to group) discussing ways to address lack of Canadian work experience.
- Discuss who should have a job objective and who shouldn't.

Time:

- five-to-twenty minutes

Resume Checklist

- Correct spelling/grammar/punctuation
- Attractive format/no redundancy
- Complete name/contact info
 - Remember to put name on page 2
- Accurate/complete
- Clearly targeted
- Specific achievements/level of proficiency
 - e.g. languages/computers

Prior to sending out their resumes, participants must do a double check or get someone else to double check, to ensure they've given thought to the points on the slide.

Time:

- three-to-five minutes

Remember...

Proofread, proofread, proofread!
Spelling mistakes are *NOT* acceptable!
Spell check will *NOT* find incorrect words

There is nothing worse than finding a mistake on your resume, after it has been sent out.

Here are some proofreading tips:

- Have someone else review – others will often spot errors we miss.
- Read resume out loud – reading it out loud forces our brain to slow down and truly read the words.
- Read resume backwards – this forces us to read each word, a good check for spelling, but may not help if reviewing for flow.

Time:

- five-to-seven minutes

Submitting Your Resume

- Find out employer's preferred submission format
 - In-person, email, online
- Try to find out who is in charge of hiring
- Dress appropriately if applying in-person
- If sending by email, follow good email etiquette
- If submitting online, ensure formatting isn't lost
- Track the resume version you sent to each employer

Remind participants that they never get a second chance to make a first impression.

Emphasize the need to track resume distribution – don't want to blanket the world with your resume and then get a call months later, forgetting that they'd even applied on a job. The Guide to Conducting an Effective Job Search has a Resume Tracking Resource which could be provided as an optional handout.

Time:

- five-to-seven minutes



Thank participants for their time. Advise them where they can go to get further assistance.

If desired, have participants complete a workshop evaluation form (see appendix A).

Time:

- two-to-three minutes; more if an evaluation is being completed.

Additional Tips and Strategies

- Pay attention to new trends in resume writing
 - Some regions consider “references available upon request” to be unnecessary, even “dating” the resume
 - If appropriate, discuss the evolving standards or expectations around resume writing and how different employers/industries may have different expectations
- Introduce (depending on the client group and the level of the workshop) the notion of using social media sites (including the pitfalls of online social networking)
 - Create “online resumes” or experience profiles through tools such as:
- VisualCV
 - www.visualcv.com/
- LinkedIn
 - www.linkedin.com/

For More Information on Writing Resumes

Resume and CV Resources for Job Seekers

www.quintcareers.com/resres.html

Quintessential Careers is promoted as the ultimate career, job, and college site, offering comprehensive free expert career and job-hunting advice. This section provides extensive information on resumes and cover letters.

Best Canadian Resumes, 2nd Edition

www.clsr.ca

Available from Career/Life Skills Resources, this book offers a wide range of sample resumes relevant to the Canadian job seeker.