

Handout

Possible Résumé Headings and Content:

Personal Identification: (Must be included!) The first information that employers see is your name, address, and phone number. Make your name stand out by putting it in bold or capital letters. It should be the largest heading on the page. You want the employer to remember your name. Make sure that your telephone number is correct. (It doesn't matter how great your résumé is if the employer can't contact you for an interview.) Only use your e-mail address if you check your e-mail regularly.

Career Objective; Objective: The objective is a short statement at the beginning of your résumé that should tie you to the position you're applying for. Try to make the objective as specific as possible and avoid the use of "fluffy" sounding objectives. For example, rather than "To become a member of a progressive company that appreciates excellent effort," try "To obtain a supervisory position where I can use my 10 years of experience in management."

Skills; Profile; Summary of Qualifications; Highlights: When building your functional or combination résumé you should complete this section carefully, indicating all of your relevant skills and achievements. Introducing your skills to employers can make a positive impression. Employers want to know what you can and will do for them. The skills that can be included in your résumé: job-related skills, transferable skills, and personal attributes. Keep the skills section fairly short, to the point and targeted toward the position you're applying for.

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Education; Education and Training: Combining your formal education with other additional training or certification is an option. Additional training refers to night, day, or weekend courses; seminars; correspondence courses; or other short-term programs. Employers want people who are life-long learners and continue to update their skills. Include names of the institutions, diplomas, or certificates obtained and any honours received. (Brief course descriptions can be included as well.) Dates should be included unless the training or education is very dated.

Work History; Work Experience; Experience; Employment: Employers want to know where you have proven yourself in the past and acquired the experience and skills necessary to do the job. Provide positions held, company names, addresses (mailing addresses are not necessary) and dates (optional). Use action words and demonstration statements to describe your responsibilities and accomplishments. You can include paid or volunteer, full-time or part-time, summer or seasonal work

Volunteer Work: If you have no experience doing the kind of work you would like to do, volunteering can be a great way to get much needed experience and make important contacts in that field. You can use the Volunteer Work section of your résumé to demonstrate skills and attributes you've gained that relate to the position you're applying for. Volunteer work of any kind can impress employers, as it shows your contribution to the community and the ability to work as part of a team (in most cases).

Relevant Experience; Relevant Skills: This heading can be used when preparing a functional résumé and includes information from your work/volunteer history, education, and life experiences. The purpose of this section is to highlight the most relevant experience and skills you have to offer in relation to the position you're applying for. You can divide your relevant experience into categories, such as Customer Service Experience, Administrative Experience, etc.

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Note: When including dates in any section, such as work experience or education, there are several different formats you can use. For example: January 1988 – December 1991 or 1992 – 1998. The most important issue is to maintain consistency throughout your résumé by using the same format each time.

Languages: Indicate languages you speak and/or write fluently if you feel this would be an asset to the position you're applying for.

Membership in Professional Associations/Affiliations: You may want to include information on any professional or community organizations you are affiliated with, particularly if they are related to the field in which you are seeking employment.

Interests; Activities; Hobbies: This section can give the potential employer additional information about your character. Also, your interests and hobbies may be directly related to the position you're applying for.

Licence(s)/Certificates: Including any special licences or certificates you have can serve to further highlight the skills/achievements you have (different classes of driver's licences, trade certification, WHMIS, First Aid/CPR, etc.). These can be presented under their own heading or be included in the skills/achievements section or with your training section.

References: Before handing out your résumé, be sure to have identified at least three people who will act as positive references for you. You can include these at the end of your résumé or on a separate sheet of paper. If you have them on a separate sheet to make available if requested, you should end your résumé with References Available On Request. Carefully choose people who can attest to your skills and abilities as they relate to the type of position you are applying for. Appropriate references include supervisors, managers,

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co-workers, volunteer associates, customers, teachers, and instructors. Always ask permission before giving out someone's name as a reference and make sure their contact information is correct. It's a good idea to tell your references what type of work you are seeking; the better prepared they are, the better recommendation they can provide.

Note: It's not appropriate or necessary to include the following in your résumé:

- the word "Résumé" at the top of your page
- personal information such as your social insurance number, marital status, age, or photos of yourself
- supervisors' names and phone numbers (unless you're using them for a reference)
- reasons for leaving past jobs (be prepared to answer this question in an interview if asked)

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Chronological

Ellen Brooks

PO Box 15
Bridgewood, NS
B0R 2W0
902-555-6868

Objective: To obtain an Administrative position where I can use my seven years of office experience and excellent organization skills in a small business environment.

Work Experience

1999–2004 **Secretary**—Eastside Contractors, Bridgewood, NS

- provided clerical and administrative support for an office staff of eight
- scheduled appointments, made travel arrangements and organized training
- performed office reception duties in person and by telephone
- answered customer inquires and concerns while maintaining a high level of customer service and confidentiality
- prepared documents and created promotional materials using a variety of software applications including Microsoft Office
- managed extensive filing systems and produced reports
- created several databases that enhanced staff productivity

1996-1999 **Receptionist**—Wynn's Optical, Bridgewood, NS

- greeted customers and scheduled appointments
- received payments, processed invoices, and generated receipts
- created an inventory system resulting in greater efficiency
- provided quality customer service in a fast-paced environment
- organized and participated in staff team-building activities

Education

2003 Microsoft Office Specialist Certification — Ace Business Centre
1999 Providing Quality Customer Service training — People Skills Inc.
1995 Office Information Technology program — NSCC—Lunenburg
1978 NS High School Diploma — Horton High School

Hobbies and Interests

Gardening, reading, volunteering at the Family Support Centre and local schools

References

Available On Request

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Functional

Angela Jones

16 Westend Dr., Halifax, NS B3J 1M2
902-555-1002 / 902-444-7889

Highlights

- Enthusiastic with a passion for gardening
- Dedicated, honest, and reliable
- Excellent organizational and time management skills
- Ability to communicate well with others
- Take pride in a job well done; attentive to detail
- Physically fit, flexible, and punctual

Relevant Skills and Experience

Creativity and Gardening:

- Created a variety of gardens including perennial, herb, and native woodland
- Extensive knowledge of a wide variety of plants, shrubs, and trees
- Practise organic and nature-friendly pest and weed control
- Familiar with gardening resource materials on-line and at the local library
- Set up plant and shrub displays for fundraising sales in the community
- Experience with successful transplanting and pruning procedures
- Designed a personal garden that was featured in a local newspaper

Customer Service:

- Experience working with the public as a cashier, salesperson, and volunteer
- Handled cash and credit transactions with accuracy
- Answer telephone inquiries and took orders in a friendly and professional manner
- Provided personal care and companionship for an elderly lady
- Worked with the public at school functions to raise money for student class trips
- Received inventory and set up store displays to provide easy selection for customers

Work History

Care Giver — Mrs. Beatrice Zwicker

Sales Representative — Regal Greetings and Gifts

Cashier — Hanson's Quick Mart

Volunteering

- **Elwood Garden Society:** help maintain community gardens; assist with fundraising
- **West End Elementary School:** assist with fundraising and social activities

Education

Grade 12

West End High School

References Available On Request

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Combination

Matthew Gilbert

RR# 3
Oakville, NS B0R 3J4
902-555-8172
mgilbert@canada.com

Skills and Strengths

- Over 15 years experience working in physically demanding jobs and various weather conditions
- Forklift Operator's and Class 3 Licences
- Reliable, punctual, and hard-working
- Customer service experience
- Available to work flexible hours

Work Experience

Campbell Mill

Labourer

Campbell River, NS
May 2003–October 2004

- Lifted, piled, and prepared boards for shipping
- Assisted in grading boards and ensuring quality
- Operated vertical saw, sander, and other equipment
- Responsible for yard and equipment maintenance

Accent Atlantic

Finisher/Assembler

Edgewood, NS
August 1987–November 2002

- Worked on a production line preparing parts for assembly
- Prepared plaster for lay-up fabrication and demolding
- Performed finishing work on parts, including filling and sanding
- Assembled pre-fabricated parts and packaged parts for shipping
- Maintained quality control and company safety standards
- Worked as part of a team to meet production quotas
- Trained and supervised new employees

Lester Brooks Forest Products

Labourer

Chester, NS
1976–1987

- Operated forklift and loaded wood chipper
- Separated and piled lumber
- Performed routine maintenance on machinery
- Delivered lumber orders to customers
- Received payments from customers and prepared receipts

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The Island Cafe

Mahone Bay, NS

Waiter

1974–1975

- Waited on customers, took orders, and served meals
- Received payments and handled transactions with accuracy
- Prepared a variety of foods, including deserts and salads
- Organized and cleaned dining and kitchen areas

Seafront Farms

New Ross, NS

Labourer

1966–1974

- Performed a variety of farm-related tasks
- Operated farm equipment and machinery

Training

- Forklift Operator Training
- St. John's Ambulance First Aid and CPR
- WHMIS (Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System)
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Quality Control Course
- Ground Fire Suppression Training

Interests and Hobbies

- Team sports: softball, hockey
- Playing guitar
- Car racing
- Fishing
- Woodworking
- Volunteer with the local fire department

References

Todd Meisner, Owner – Campbell Mill
Campbell River, NS
902-XXX-XXXX

Glenn Richards, Finisher – Accent Atlantic
Oakville, NS
902-XXX-XXXX

Ashley Gulliver, Supervisor – Accent Atlantic
Edgewood, NS
902-XXX-XXXX

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Résumé Guidelines and Tips

When researching résumé writing—and there are lots of resources out there—you will come across many rules, lists of do's and don'ts, and opinions. Much of this will be conflicting and confusing. Just remember that your résumé is a reflection of you—the style you use, how you format it, and what you include is a personal preference. Be creative and comfortable with it. That said, there are some general guidelines you should follow:

- Be sure that your document is free of spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors. **Proofread!** It's a good idea to have someone else proofread it, too. You shouldn't rely on computer spellcheckers.
- You should **target** your résumé towards each position you are applying for.
- You should always include a cover letter.
- Your résumé should project a positive tone and concentrate on your strengths.
- Be consistent with your style and formatting. Use the same heading styles and font sizes.
- Your résumé should be appealing to the eye and easy to read:
 - use crisp, quality print
 - allow lots of white space
 - use a “bullet” format where appropriate
 - information should be clear and concise
 - fancy graphics and font styles are distracting
- Paper: white is the preferred colour of most employers; quality is important.

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- Length: one to two pages is the preference. The length may depend on:
 - the position you're applying for references: you may want to put them on a separate page
 - the overall appearance of your résumé
 - if your résumé is too long or confusing to read, there may not be much interest in reading it
- References: it's up to you to include them or not.
- You shouldn't exaggerate or misrepresent yourself.
- Whether or not you should include transcripts, certificates, and letters of reference depends on the job you're applying for, but it is usually not necessary. Take these documents with you to an interview and offer them to the potential employer for review.
- Be careful when using abbreviations (for example: CSR for Customer Service Representative). If they are industry or employer specific, the reader may not know what they mean.
- Use a computer, if possible, to prepare your résumé. Making changes and updates will be much easier. Save it to a disk and keep a hard copy.
- You shouldn't make handwritten changes on your résumé.
- Follow proper procedures when e-mailing or posting your résumé on-line.
- Hand deliver your résumé if possible, or mail it in an 8 1/2" X 11" envelope. Faxing or folding your résumé can diminish its presentation ("eye-appeal"). Delivering your résumé in person gives you the opportunity to make a positive, personal impression!

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Cover Letters

A cover letter is an important part of your selling process. The cover letter is the first thing a potential employer will read and provides an introduction to you.

- You should always include a targeted cover letter with your résumé.
- Again, you don't have to start from scratch. You can take parts from other cover letters, then rearrange, reword, and tailor them to meet this job target.
- To be most effective, your letter should do the following:
 - grab the reader's attention and encourage them to review your résumé
 - appeal to the employer's interests and needs
 - highlight your skills, experiences, and accomplishments
 - provide information that is relevant to the particular job you are applying for
- Be sure that your letter is error-free and appealing to the eye.
- Make your letter brief and to the point; it should be only one page long.
- Your cover letter is a good opportunity to show potential employers your writing skills.
- There are several styles of business letters—it's your choice what style to use.

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- Sections of a cover letter:

Your Contact Information

- Make it as easy to reach you as possible.
- Be sure to use the same information that's on your résumé to avoid confusion.

Date

Employer's Name and Address

- You should include the name and title of the person reviewing the applications if possible.
- Make sure that names are spelled properly and the address is correct.

Salutation

- You should specify the reader's name in a formal fashion.
- If you are unable to identify the person, "Dear Sir or Madam," "To Whom it May Concern," and "Attention Human Resources" are acceptable.

Opening Paragraph

- Explain why you're writing. This should include the position you're applying for, how you found out about it, and a brief statement about why you would fit the position. If someone with whom the employer is familiar has referred you to this position, it can be valuable to include this information. (Only include their name if the person has agreed for you to disclose this to employer.)

Additional Paragraphs (1-3)

- These are about your qualifications and skills. Show the employer what you have to offer. (Refer to the requirements mentioned in the advertisement, or that you have determined are necessary for the position.)
- They can also be about the organization. Demonstrate that you have some knowledge about this company/organization; state why you want to work for them. Be



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sincere and specific. (Making a flattering comment is a good idea.) Tell the employer why you want to work for them. (This information could be included in the opening or closing paragraphs.)

- It's also a good place for you to list additional skills you have that fit with the position or work environment. Show the employer that you have other skills and abilities appropriate for the job (optional).

Concluding Paragraph

- Request or refer to an interview.
- Specify a time frame as to when you will follow up. (Make sure you do follow up, if you've mentioned it.)
- Include times you may be reached and at what phone numbers.
- Confirm your interest in the organization and the position.

Closing

- Commonly used closings are "Yours Truly" or "Sincerely".
 - Leave enough space to sign your name.
 - Type your first and last name.
 - Indicate with "Attachment" or "Enclosure" that a résumé accompanies your cover letter.
- Keep the paragraphs fairly short and to the point.
 - It's very important to impress the reader with your letter and show them how you can benefit their company/organization.
 - Refer to your résumé somewhere in the body of your letter. (For example: "As you will see from my résumé..." or "I've enclosed my résumé for your review.")
 - Show enthusiasm and give yourself credit! You're trying to sell yourself, so don't be modest.

You cover letter may very well determine whether or not the employer even looks at your résumé!

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Matthew Gilbert

RR#3
Oakville, NS B0R 3J4
902-555-8172

April 4, 2004

John Wood, Manager
ABC Building Supplies
122 Main Street
Any Town, NS

Dear Mr. Wood,

Having seen your advertisement in the local newspaper, I would like to apply for the **Lumberyard Worker/Salesperson** position you have available at your building supplies store. I have always found your products to be top quality and your service is always great. Working for your business would be a good fit for me because I enjoy doing physical work and working with people.

When you review my résumé, you will see that I have many years of experience working in physically demanding jobs. I am physically fit and enjoy a hard day's work in the outdoors. I have had two previous jobs working in lumber mills, so I know the grades and how to sort and handle lumber of different types. My experience working on production lines included quality control and operating machinery.

I have experience dealing with customers and the general public. Delivering products and receiving payments was part of my job at one of the lumber mills. I also worked as a waiter for a local restaurant where I served customers and worked as a cashier. Being a volunteer firefighter, I'm responsible for promoting good relations with the community.

I am very interested in this position and look forward to talking with you in person. I can be reached at the above phone number during most days or you can leave a message at 902-555-1212.

Sincerely,

Matthew Gilbert

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Ellen Brooks

PO Box 15
Bridgewood, NS B0R 2W0
902-555-6868

March 18, 2004

Seashell Distributors
14 Ocean Lane
Bridgewood, NS B0R 2W3

Dear Ms. MacKay,

In response to the advertisement on your website, please accept the attached résumé as application for the **Administrative Assistant** position you have available with your business. I am very interested in this opportunity because I have always admired your products and the contributions you make to our community. As you will see from my résumé, I have the skills and experience you are looking for.

During the past 10 years I have worked for two local businesses in the areas of reception and administration. My experience includes many office duties such as creating documents, information management, scheduling appointments, processing invoices, and receiving payments. I have created several databases and filing systems that have increased productivity and ensured client confidentiality. Providing exceptional customer service has been an important part of my role with both of the small businesses I've worked for. Having provided reception duties in person and by telephone, I've had the opportunity to assist customers and ensure repeat business. In addition to my past work experience, I have been involved with the community for many years, most recently volunteering at the Family Support Centre.

Working for a small business requires flexibility and the ability to multi-task, both attributes that I possess. I think you will value the experience I would bring to this position and in addition, I feel my personality would make me a great asset to your team. I look forward to discussing my background with you at a personal meeting. I can be contacted at 555-6868 to arrange an interview. I will be contacting you early next week to follow up on the status of this position.

Sincerely,
Ellen Brooks
Attachment: Résumé

Worksheet

Résumé and Cover Letter Check Sheet

- Are the résumé and cover letter free of spelling, punctuation, and grammar errors?
- Are the résumé and cover letter targeted towards the position I'm applying for?
- Does the résumé use action words and demonstration statements?
- Is the tone of the résumé and cover letter positive?
- Is my contact information correct (check the phone number!)?
- Is the contact information for the employer correct?
- Have I mentioned all of the skills and experience I have that this employer is looking for?
- Are those requirements highlighted and easy to notice?
- Is the résumé appealing to the eye and easy to read?
- Is the style and formatting consistent?
- Are the cover letter and résumé concise and to the point?
- Is there minimal use of abbreviations and acronyms?
- Is any important information missing?
- Have I made any overstatements?
- Do I have references available for this position?
- Have I contacted my references to inform them of the position I'm applying for?