RESUMES 101

Your resume is your marketing document; the professional *you* on paper. It provides employers with a summary of the skills, experiences, accomplishments and education that you have to offer. It can often determine whether or not you get called in for an interview. When your resume is one of *many* that employers are reviewing, it's critical that visually your resume stands out as professional yet unique, and then also keeps the reader engaged through strong content of relevant skills and accomplishments.

DESIGN

Branding: A key area in which you can make your resume yours and create your brand is through your letterhead. Your letterhead consists of your name and contact information and it should be consistent across all of your documents – resume, cover letters and reference list. Consider the size, font style, borders, positioning and, for some industries, colour.

Font: Font size should be kept between 10-12 point, depending on the font style. Your name and headings may be larger. Choose a font style that is neat, professional and easy to scan. Examples include Arial, Tahoma, Century Gothic, and Verdana.

White Space: Maintaining a good balance of black text to white space allows for readers to scan through your document with relative ease. Too much white space can give off the impression that you're underqualified and too little white space can make the document difficult to scan through.

Consistency: Consistency in formatting is key to providing a solid first impression and guiding the reader through your document. Whether you use bold, CAPS, coloured font or underlining for your headings, ensure you do the same for ALL headings. If the dates are on the right for one section, keep them on the right for all sections.

1-2 Pages: Your resume should be between 1-2 pages to provide a concise overview of your skills and experiences.

Bullet Points: Utilizing bullet points and point form language, as opposed to full sentences, makes your resume easier to scan through by an employer. On average employers spend 20-30 readings through your resume, therefore bullets help to ensure key information is read.

CONTENT

Prioritize: Order your sections from most important to least important. Ensure that the most important information is in the top half of the first page of your resume.

Reverse Chronological Order: Ensure that within each section which includes dates, your experiences are listed from most recent to least recent.

Tailored: Keep information in your resume relevant to the industry and position that you are applying to. Incorporate key words (industry jargon, technical terms/programs) which are used in the job posting and/or your industry. Consider using tailored headings for your work experience. For example, rather than Work Experience, categorizing your experience into Human Resource Experience and Customer Service Experience. This way, you can also prioritize experience that is more relevant even if it may not be as recent.

Accomplishment Focused Impact Statements: For the bullet points describing your work/volunteer experience, focus on accomplishments and skills that demonstrate your strengths. Describe your accomplishments that relate to the job you are applying to by starting with an action verb to describe *What* you did, and then build on that by concisely stating *How/Why* you did it and what the *Result* was.
What + How/Why + Result = Powerful Impact Statement

No Spelling/ Grammatical Errors: A simple typo or grammatical error can sometimes be the difference between your resume being in the Yes or No pile. Double, triple check your resume for any spelling or grammatical errors. Even drop in to the Career Centre to have a fresh set of eyes review your documents.

COMMON SECTIONS OF A RESUME

Profile/ Highlights
A Profile or Highlights section is used as an overview of your resume, to provide a quick snapshot of your overall qualifications and characteristics that make you well-suited for the job. This section summarizes years of experience in the field, major accomplishments, skills sets and personal characteristics in a few short lines. There are many different titles for this section including Profile, Highlights of Qualifications, and Summary of Qualifications.

Skills
The Skills section can be used to summarize your technical and soft skills. Consider using sub-headings to categorize your skills and make the most relevant skill sets stand out.

Experience (Work/ Volunteer)
Summarize your relevant work and volunteer experiences by including current/previous positions, companies, dates and a few impact statements (see above) to describe your accomplishments and the skills utilized within the positions.

Education
Include any relevant education in this section, including certificates, diplomas, and degrees.

Professional Development
Include any workshops, conferences, seminars, or professional development training.