

Shaping Your Futures



Applying For Jobs

Make It Happen Toolkit



Contents

In an increasingly competitive market, this workbook looks at how to make sure your job application gets you to the next stage in a recruitment process:

- Putting together an excellent resume.
- Identifying and summarising your strengths.
- Highlighting your experience and achievements.
- Crafting an impressive cover letter.
- Answering the application requirements.
- Meeting a government selection criteria.

Your resumé

Writing a stand-out resume ensures that you become a shortlisted candidate – it provides you with the unique opportunity to sell your experience, achievements and value.

Employers get so many resúmes that they only spend a short time scanning each one. You could also think about whether you can enhance your resumé digitally, such as using video resúmes and online portfolios, which are excellent options for jobs in advertising or other creative industries.

10 tips to writing a winning resumé

1. Provide all of your details

Include your name, address, mobile number, email address, LinkedIn and other relevant URLs.

2. Include a summary statement

An at-a-glance summary of your qualifications and experience at the top of your resumé helps employers see what you've got to offer in seconds.

3. Tailor your resumé for every role

Show how you're qualified for every single role by matching your qualifications, skills and abilities with the job requirements.

4. Outline your education

Include your degrees, qualifications, training seminars and courses.



5. Detail your work history and experience

List job titles, responsibilities and achievements for all of your key roles up until now, with your most recent experience at the top.

6. Highlight relevant personal and professional achievements

You can show your achievements in the 'Interests, Activities or Awards' section.

7. Say that 'references are available upon request'

Have your referees' contact details ready (and give your referees the heads-up) so you can hand them over at your interview or on request.

8. Check what you have done is correct

Make sure your grammar and spelling is perfect. Using a professional-looking design, bolding, subsections and dot points will help information stand out.

9. Quality not quantity

Keep your resume no longer than 3 - 4 pages.

10. Get a second opinion

Have someone you trust to proofread your resumé, then give feedback on the style and content.

What makes

A good resumé?

A resumé is usually divided into six or so sections that cover different parts of your experience and background. Here's what to include in each:

1. Your personal information

This goes at the top of your resumé.

Include:

- Your full name at the top of your resumé in bold.
- Your current residential or postal address.
- Your main email address (check it regularly).
- Your contact number (make sure you have a professional-sounding voicemail message).
- The URL of your linkedin profile.

Don't include:

- Your age, date of birth, marital status or religion.
- A photo.

Activity to practise Personal information

Use the space below or grab a piece of paper
and write down your up-to-date contact details:

An example

John Stevens

34 King Street
Brisbane, QLD, 1567

Mobile: 0455 599 222
Email: jstevens@gmail.com
LinkedIn: www.au.linkedin.com/in/johndtevens

What makes

A good resumé?

2. Your career statement

There are two ways to start your resumé, depending on your goal and the role you're going for:

- **career statement:** a paragraph summary of your career expertise and experiences.
- **career objective:** a brief summary of your career and the direction you want to go in, especially if you're looking to change careers.

What to include:

- your professional title/role (or the one you're seeking).
- your relevant skills or competencies.
- your previous work experience.
- use the template below to get started on your own career statement.
- a (your professional title) with (your key skills and strengths), experienced in_____

Use key words from the description of the role to show why you're a good fit e.g.:

- track record of_____
- demonstrated ability in_____
- recognised as an expert in_____

Activity

Career statement

You can practice writing a career statement by finding a role you're interested in. Try to tailor your career statement by including some key words from the job advertisement. Write down the main skills and strengths you'd like a potential employer to know about.

An example

To obtain a position within an organisation where I can utilise my technical and operational skills, with the opportunity for performance-based advancement.

I am keen to utilise my expertise in Human Resource Management to further develop my analytical and leadership skills and contribute to organisational growth and objectives in HRM. The organisation I am seeking will provide opportunities for learning and extending one's range of knowledge and skills.

Experienced Sales Representative looking for a position as sales manager in a multinational company where I can maximise my communication and organisational skills. I'm able to work at all levels and also very committed and work on own initiative.

What makes

A good resumé?

3. Your competency statements

Your professional skills come under the heading 'skills and strengths.' A good starting point is to look at the job ad and ask 'what type of company is it?', 'what's the main purpose of the role?' and 'what types of skills do they want?' Your resumé should reflect the most relevant skills and strengths, while highlighting anything that could set you apart.

Your skills and strengths can be used as a bold subheading in this section. It helps to list them in order of importance for the role. For each skill, include a short paragraph (a maximum of three sentences) demonstrating these qualities in action.

Identifying your competencies

Try to come up with four to six job-related skills or abilities that you have, providing specific examples from previous jobs. The STAR method can help:

Situation

Describe the specific event or situation you were in...

Task

Or the task you needed to achieve (this can be from a previous job, volunteer experience or something else).

Action you took

Describe the action you took.

Results you achieved

- What did you achieve?
- How did you contribute to the company?
- What did you learn?
- Try to provide a measurable result.

What makes

A good resumé?

4. Your education and training

This section includes when and where you went to school, college or uni, your degrees and your major area of study.

It should also include other relevant training. You may also list relevant courses or training you have undertaken, such as 'First Aid' or 'Occupational Health and Safety' courses.

What to include:

- The full name of your uni, college or trade school and the dates you were there.
- The name of your secondary school and the level you attained.
- Your highest qualification first.
- Your educational qualifications and training, starting with the most recent first.

An example

Tertiary

2001 - 2005	Bachelor of Information Technology University of Sydney, Sydney
2000 - 2001	Certificate in Information Technology South Sydney, TOEFLE
2000	Sydney Catholic High school Subjects: Mathematics, Chemistry, Business Studies

Short courses (optional)

2009	Microsoft Certified Technology Specialist MTSD, Sydney
2004	Training 'How to succeed' United Business, Sydney



Activity

Education and training.

List past education and training below:

Start to end date Degree Diploma Certificate Qualification

What makes

A good resumé?

5. Your employment history

Your employment summary is the biggest part of your resumé, listing your most recent roles on top.

What to include

- Dates (in years) of employment.
- Position or title.
- Employer's name, location and country (if not australia).
- Your responsibilities.
- Your achievements.

Responsibilities

List your responsibilities for each job and then choose which are the most impressive and relevant for the role.

Achievements

Your achievements can come from your work, education or life and include examples of how your efforts stood out. They should follow the responsibilities for each job. The FAB approach below can be used as a guide.

Feature

What did you do? Try to start your achievement statements with an action word.

Analysis

What was the outcome of your achievement? Try to provide evidence such as dollar amounts, numbers, time saved, percentages or before and after comparisons.

Benefit

What value did you add? How did your company benefit?

Activity to practise

Employment history

Practice writing responsibility and achievement statements for one of your previous roles below.

Start to end date Organisation name Responsibilities Position title Achievements

What makes

A good resumé?

6. Your referees

At the end of your resumé, you should include a section that says 'Referees available upon request' (unless you're specifically asked to give referee details with your application).

You'll need at least two referees (be sure to brief them on the role you're going for). Things they might be asked about your previous job are:

- Your overall performance.
- Your culture/team fit.
- Your strengths and weaknesses.
- How you work under pressure.
- Your integrity, punctuality and reliability.
- Why you left.

Pick referees who understand your value at your previous job, preferably managers you've worked with (you should only use workmates if you don't have more senior referees).

7. Optional section

You can create another section to cover things like memberships, awards, licences and computer skills, if relevant.



Activity to practise

Referees

Add the details of three key referees below:

Dos and don'ts

Writing your resumé

Do

- Be short (three to four pages), with enough detail to get you the interview but not so it's over the top.
- Use black font and larger typefaces (10-14 point).
- Use dot points so important things can be seen easily.
- Use active language that shows what you've achieved, such as 'I increased inventory turns by...'
- Use past tense for your previous experiences.
- Show current business, technical and professional groups including leadership positions.
- If relevant, include some brief personal information, such as your interests or community activities.

Don't

- Overlook spelling, grammar or formatting.
- Use the same resumé for every job.
- Leave unexplained gaps in your work history.
- Use abbreviations or jargon — change technical/specialised terms into general business language.
- Mention salary.
- Bind your resumé, as covers are often torn off.
- Use illustrations, borders, underlining or different fonts.

Resumé

Frequently asked questions

How do I handle gaps in my work?

Make sure you explain any gaps, such as having children, caring for a family member or continuing education. If you were unemployed, fill in the time with other relevant activities such as volunteer or community work, special projects or consulting. You can list the dates of being out of work in the employment section with the reason beside it (instead of the company name).

Do I need more than one resumé?

Yes. You should tailor every resumé so your skills and abilities are relevant to the job. Certain sections may also be more relevant to some roles than others, such as previous employment history.

How do I show different jobs with the same company?

It's best to list each position separately as if it were a separate job, even though you'll repeat the employer name and location. This adds consistency and shows your job progression clearly, including rapid promotions.

What if I don't have relevant work experience?

Remember that work experience can include unpaid roles, such as volunteer work or internships. Even if past jobs were in a different area, focus on the general skills you used. For example, if you'd like to work in Marketing but have only been an Office Administrator, highlight your organisational, writing or social media management skills.

Hitting 'send' on your resumé

Most resúmes are sent by email, or by uploading them to a company website or job board such as Seek or LinkedIn.

Recruiters often prefer a Word document so they can edit it before sending it to employers. Otherwise, a PDF is best when sending your resumé to employers, as this prevents changes being made.

Choose a professional-looking file name such as 'First name, Last name, Resumé', (e.g. 'Rebecca Stevens Resumé.doc').

Preparing your resumé for scanning

Many employers now use applicant-scanning technology to select candidates based on their qualifications. This means your resumé might be read by a computer, not a person! If you're applying through a recruiter, you should check whether your resumé is likely to be scanned electronically so you can include the right keywords from the job description.

Resumé

Checklist

1. General

- Your resumé is targeted to the specific job.
- It sells your skills, highlighting what you can do for the employer.
- You use examples to back up your strengths and achievements.

2. Format

- Your resumé is well laid out with plenty of white space.
- It can be skimmed easily.
- It is no more than three to four pages with enough detail to get you an interview.
- You use headings and subheads.
- The font type and size is consistent.

3. Language

- You've used active verbs.
- You use dot points, as well as full sentences.
- You use as few words as possible to make your point.
- You haven't used technical jargon or abbreviations.
- You've double-checked spelling, grammar and style.

4. Contact details

- Your name is at the top of your resumé.
- You've provided your mailing address, email and mobile number.

Resumé

Checklist

5. Career statement

- Your career statement is clear and brief.
- You've highlighted your relevant skills and strengths.

6. Competency statements/skills and abilities

- You've ordered your skills in terms of their relevance.
- You've used action verbs.

7. Education and training

- Your education and training is listed with most recent first.
- You've included dates, name of courses and institutions.

8. Employment history

- You've listed your jobs with most recent first.
- You've outlined responsibilities for each role and used action verbs.
- Achievements are quantified and include a benefit.

9. Referees

- You've stated 'Referees available upon request'.

Sample Resumé

PETER PERSON

12 Resume Road
Jobsville
NSW 2000

02 9123 4567
0412 234 678
peter@gmail.com

ADMINISTRATION MANAGER

STRONG WORK ETHIC / ORGANISED / LEADERSHIP

Dedicated and technically skilled business professional with a versatile administrative skill set developed through experience as an administration manager, administration assistant and receptionist. Excel in resolving challenges with innovative solutions, systems and process improvements proven to increase efficiency.

SKILLS & ABILITIES

- Strong Work Ethic: hardworking with a commitment to uphold company policy and procedures.
- Organised: ability to prioritise effectively and consistently meet deadlines.
- Team Player: ability to work as part of a team and assist in training of new employees and implementing new procedures.
- Leadership: experience providing knowledge, motivation, support and advice to colleagues and subordinates.
- Communication: strong verbal and written communication skills and ability to communicate effectively and confidently with colleagues at all levels of the organisation.

Resumé

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

2009 - Current

Admin Company ABC
Administration Manager

Admin Company ABS is a publicly listed company that provides investors with exposure to a portfolio of assets that are intended to show consistent positive returns.

Responsibilities

- Manage office operations to ensure efficiency and productivity including providing administrative support to colleagues as required.
- Approve invoices to be paid submitted by the administration assistant.
- Manage petty cash by collecting receipts from colleagues who wish to be reimbursed for work related expenses.
- Prepare quarterly Business Activity Statements and present them to C-suite executives.
- Manage relationships with clients, suppliers and contractors including addressing any issues or concerns escalated by the administration assistant, renewing or extending contracts and ensuring invoices are paid.
- Approve orders for office supplies once submitted by the administration assistant.
- Manage the induction of new employees including issuing of contracts, training and monitoring performance during the probation period.
- Design company forms including payroll advice and personal leave forms.
- Assist with the production of marketing materials.
- Assist with recruitment responsibilities including reading resumes and interviewing candidates.

Achievements

- Introduced new training methodologies for new employees which led to easier facilitation and faster uptake rates.
- Decreased office expenditures by implementing controls on supplies and standardising ordering procedures.
- Saved \$3000 per month in marketing fees by bringing formerly outsourced mass-mailing function in-house.

2003 - 2009 Admin Company ABC
Administration Assistant

Responsibilities

- Answer phone queries, take messages and pass them onto the relevant recipient.
- Print, copy, scan and bind materials and resources as required.
- Submit invoices to be approved, processed and paid.
- Liaise with and address client, supplier and contractor requests.
- Coordinate office events, book venues, activities, and order catering.
- Organise and set up workstations, hardware and other requirements for new employees.
- Order office supplies including stationary, toner and ink when stock is low.
- Assist with mail outs and promotions.

Achievements

- Provided support to managers and co-workers which increased overall operating efficiency.
- Introduced a user friendly electronic filing system which reduced file retrieval time by 30 seconds per file.
- Successfully coordinated numerous corporate events in a timely and economical manner.

2000 - 2003 Five Star Corporation
Receptionist

Five Star Corporation is an agency that provides business registry services in relation to corporate entities, personal property and capital market securities.

Responsibilities

- Greet visitors upon arrival to the office and address their needs and requests.
- Schedule visitor bookings and guide them to available meeting rooms.
- Disperse incoming mail to correct recipients throughout the office.
- Collect identification, make copies, send emails and regulate outgoing correspondences.
- Support the coordination of office events including ordering supplies and catering.
- Maintain and tidy the reception area.

Achievements

- Redesigned the scheduling system for the office thereby ensuring accuracy in appointments.
- Reduced the office's front desk expenses within one year by 25% through identifying cost-effective methods.
- Remained under budget when ordering office supplies and catering for events which decreased operating costs by 30%.

Resumé

EDUCATION & TRAINING

- 2012 First Aid Certificate
 Medilife, NSW
- 2003 Bachelor of Business Administration
 Macquarie University, NSW
- 2000 Certificate II, Office Administration
 TAFE, NSW

AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

- Employee of the Month, May 2014
- Received appreciate letter for coordinating annual conference, August 2013

COMPUTER SKILLS

- MS Office Suite: Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Publisher
- Outlook
- Adobe Acrobat

REFEREES

Available upon request.

Cover letter

Writing an outstanding cover letter

Because it's the first thing potential employers see, an impressive cover letter can help you move to the next stage of the recruitment process.

Your cover letter shows the employer that you've read the job advertisement carefully, understand what's required and are perfect for the role.

What goes into a great cover letter?

1. Include your name and address in the top right-hand corner. Add the date the letter will be sent, then write the name and address of the hiring manager on the left (always try to address your letter to a person rather than 'Dear Sir/Madam').
2. Provide a reason for your cover letter and the job you're applying for, as well as where and when you saw it advertised.
3. Explain why the employer should choose you and why you're perfect for the role. Get ideas from your resumé (especially your career statement) and your elevator pitch.
4. State that you've attached your resumé and you're available for an interview when it suits them. If you're applying for a job that hasn't been advertised, you should word your final paragraph carefully (e.g. 'It would be valuable for me to discuss current opportunities in your company. I will call in a few days to arrange a convenient time for a short introductory meeting').
5. Thank the reader for their time. Sign 'Yours sincerely' or 'Kind regards' and include your full name.

Cover letter tips

- Try and avoid replicating your resumé.
- Limit it to one A4 page.
- Tailor your tone to the organisation, while being positive and confident.
- Try to address the cover letter to the relevant person rather than 'Dear Sir/Madam'.
- Include an introductory paragraph with your name and the job you're interested in.
- Match your skills, experience and personal qualities to the job requirements.
- Thank them for taking the time to read your application and include a call-to-action – ask for a contact or an interview for when it suits them.

Sample Cover letter

1st January 2017

Lauren Smith
Email: laurensmith@gmail.com
Mobile: 0401 111 111

Mr Alan Jones
John Smith and Associates
Phone: 02 999 9999

RE: Application for Trainee Administrative Assistant position

Dear Mr. Jones,

As a young and motivated individual I am extremely interested in submitting an application for the advertised Trainee Administrative Assistant position with John Smith and Associates, as advertised on the Randstad website.

In November 2014 I completed my VCE studies and also obtained a Certificate II in Business Administration. This has given me a range of practical capabilities that will meet the needs of this role.

While completing my VCE studies I worked part-time as a Customer Service Assistant for KSmart. My responsibilities in this role included providing face-to-face customer service and assisting on the floor with stock movements and visual merchandising. This position has given me key employability skills while also allowing me to experience working in a professional and fast-paced work environment.

My teachers and employers have commended me for my high level of interpersonal skills and naturally engaging personality. My motivations include learning new things and the challenge of meeting key objectives. My current and previous managers can be contacted to provide more information about my ability to meet the needs of this job.

I understand that you will receive a large number of applications for this role. I do, however, believe that my motivation, commitment and pre-existing skills will allow me to fit into your work environment and immediately start supporting the needs of your organisation.

I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss my application at an interview. I have enclosed a copy of my resume for your consideration. I can be contacted at all times on the details provided above.

Kind Regards
Lauren Smith

Activity to practise

Cover letter

Practise writing the main sections of your cover letter below.

Introduction

Mention the job, and where you saw the ad.

Second paragraph

Explain why you're perfect for the role.

Third paragraph

Explain why you want to work for them.

Fourth paragraph

Explain that you've enclosed your resumé and look forward to an interview.

Cover letter

Checklist

To check that your cover letter is correct, make sure you've ticked off these things:

1. Overall

- You've written a new cover letter for each job application.
- Your letter addresses the job requirements.

2. Format

- Your paragraphs are short and succinct (no longer than six lines).
- Your letter is one page.
- Your letter is easy to read.

3. Structure

- You've referred to the job you're applying for, where it is and where you saw the ad.
- You've stated who you are, why you're best for the role and what you want out of the experience.
- You've explained why you want to work for them.
- You've said you've enclosed your resumé.
- You've stated what action should be taken next.

4. Language

- You've double-checked spelling and grammar.
- You haven't used technical jargon or abbreviations.

Your job application

Applying for a job is like a recipe – following the right steps will provide you with the greatest chance of gaining a face-to-face interview.

Application forms

Some companies ask you to complete an application form before you send them your resumé.

Do

- Copy the form and create a draft.
- Read the instructions fully.
- Highlight your relevant skills and achievements.
- Make positive statements.
- Use sections for any other information as a chance to sell yourself even more.
- Complete the form promptly.
- Photocopy the finished form for your interview or save a copy.
- Refer to your resumé for further achievements.
- Send the form together with a copy of your resumé.

Don't

- Leave questions unanswered – write 'not applicable' for any questions that aren't relevant.
- Mention salary – you should say 'to be discussed at interview' or 'negotiable'.
- Send your resumé if you've been asked not to.

Selection criteria

For some employers, you may need to meet the selection criteria, usually for Government and Public sector roles. The selection criteria will specify the job requirements to help identify the best person for the role and are rated as either 'essential' or 'desirable'. You need to meet all the 'essential' criteria, and as many of the 'desirable' criteria as you can.

Your job application

How to answer government selection criteria:

1. Highlight key words, for example, 'excellent written communication skills', 'capacity to work under pressure and meet deadlines' or 'skilled in information management skills'.
2. Research the role and company to find out what it does, what direction it's heading in and what its major activities are for details to include in your resumé, letter and responses.
3. Think about how you've addressed each criterion in your current or previous role. If you don't have a work example, see if you can address it outside of work, such as at uni, clubs or in the community.
4. Write your opening sentence. Then use the selection criteria as headings and start by stating that you have the skills and/or experience required. For example, for the criterion of 'excellent written communication skills', you may write that 'I have strong written communication skills, which are essential in my current role of Administration Assistant to the Cunningham Highway Upgrade Project'.
5. Provide evidence to back up your opening sentence. Use the ideas in Step Two and the STAR method to provide enough information and show you're suited to the job. If you're responding to a 'knowledge of...' criterion, explain how you gained the knowledge and used it in the past. If you're responding to an 'experience' criterion, you can use responses that are similar to your resumé. Give details of where you've worked, your duties and your achievements, but avoid repeating the same achievements every time.
6. Draft your paragraph in full.
7. Proofread your work, checking the following:
 - Am I positive?
 - Am I specific?
 - Have I supported my claims with evidence?
 - Are my examples repetitive?
 - Have I assumed the panel already know the details of my current role?
 - Have I addressed all aspects of the criteria?
 - Is my spelling and grammar correct?

Activity to practise

Responding to selection criteria

Use this table to practise responding to selection criteria using the STAR method.

Achieves results:

You use your expertise to help achieve team outcomes and show flexibility to adapt to changes in the work environment in a positive way.

Supports productive working relationships:

You build and sustain positive relationships with team members and clients by actively listening and acknowledging, and responding to different personal styles with respect and courtesy.

Displays personal drive and integrity:

You take personal responsibility for accurate completion of work and seek assistance when required. You acknowledge mistakes and learn from them.

Communicates with influence: you present messages clearly and concisely by explaining information using language appropriate for the audience.

My response	Situation or task	Action you took	Results you achieved
<hr/>			
<hr/>			
<hr/>			
<hr/>			

Your next career step

If you're looking for your dream job, the Make It Happen Toolkit has everything you need to make your next move an unforgettable one.

From crafting your resume through to tackling the toughest interview, these tried-and-tested tips will empower you to move into your next role with ease.

Make sure you explore each section in this five part series.

