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Future Skills: 21ST CENTURY RESUME and COVER LETTERS

Participant Workbook

**21st Century Resumes and Cover Letters: Workshop at a Glance**

**Overview and Purpose**

The workshop offers a basic introduction to writing resumes and cover letters – “works in progress” that are tailored to suit each opportunity. Advice is consistent with looking for work in the digital age. You take part in activities that prepare you for drafting these important job search documents at a later time.

**Time**

The workshop is between three and six hours long.

**Learning Outcomes**

At the end of this workshop you will be able to:

1. Analyze a job posting.
2. Understand the importance of key words.
3. Identify what goes in each part of a standard resume.
4. Differentiate at a glance between a “good” and “bad” resume.
5. Identify what goes in each part of a standard cover letter.

**Leading Questions**

As you complete this workshop, you will think about and answer the following questions:

1. Do I understand how to “read between the lines” to see what employers are looking for?
2. How might my experience, skills and qualifications line up against job requirements?
3. What is the purpose of resumes and cover letters?
4. Do I really have to change my resume and cover letter every time?
5. How ready am I to write an effective resume and cover letter?

**Workshop Agenda**

1. Before We Start
   1. How to Analyze a Job Posting
   2. Key Words
2. Resumes
   1. Steps to Writing an Effective Resume
      1. Summary of Qualifications
      2. Resume Style
      3. Relevant Skills
      4. Effective One-Liners
      5. Experience and Education
   2. Online Resumes
   3. Resume Dos and Don’ts
   4. Emailing
3. Cover Letters

3.1 Types

3.2 Parts of a Cover Letter

3.3 Cover Letter Dos and Don’ts

### 1. Before We Start

“You never get a second chance to make a first impression.”

Increase your chances of success by taking some time to prepare before you begin writing your resume and cover letter. Make sure you really know what employers are looking for and which key words to include in your resume and cover letter.

### *1.2 How To Analyze a Job Posting*

Taking a good look at what employers are looking for is a great investment of your time and energy. During this part of the workshop you’ll learn some useful steps for analyzing a job posting and you’ll apply what you are learning to Sam Gupta, a fictional job applicant.

**Step 1: Decide on the types of jobs you might be applying for.**

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|  | 1. Read the background on Sam Gupta that is on the next page. 2. List two or three positions Sam might be interested in. |

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| **Meet Sam Gupta**  **In general**   * Born and raised in Toronto * While growing up they went to India a number of times for a month each time * Fluent in spoken Punjabi * Eldest of four kids; lives with their family * Sometimes they have to take care of siblings while the parents work * Would like to work while they decide what to do next as they need to contribute to the rent, pay for their phone and clothes, save up for the future   **Education**   * 1 credit short of high school diploma * Has been working for the past year at two part-time jobs * Plans to take the final high school credit online and finish within the next semester * Still deciding what to do after that – is considering whether to enter a trade or take a program at community college   **Work experience**   * 2 years selling shoes and sports equipment at Sports R Us (part-time on Friday night and Saturday) * Started off slowly then has done very well – exceeded sales quotas by an average of 25% * Is especially good at talking to children who come in with their parents. This makes the parents comfortable and more open to spending money on their kids’ shoes. * 3 years as a cashier at Best Food Mart (part-time throughout the rest of the week, variable hours depending on what the store needs)   + handles cash, debit and credit   + their transactions almost always balance   + has memorized a number of scan codes and knows how to troubleshoot problems with the cash register * Always arrives at work 10 to 15 minutes ahead of time to be ready to work when their shift starts * If there’s a public transit delay, they call their supervisor as soon as possible.   **Volunteer experience**   * Served meals at an “out of the cold” program while in grade 10 and 11 to get high school volunteer hours * No time to volunteer right now as they want to be available to take shifts at work when they come up   **Interests**   * Music and basketball |

**Step 2: Find a job posting or job description that interests you.**

Here’s a sample posting that Sam Gupta found online the other day:

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| **Retail Sales Associate**  **RESPONSIBILITIES**   * Ensuring high levels of customer satisfaction by being knowledgeable on all products offered, and teaming up with co-workers to provide excellent sales service * Delivering sales, outstanding customer experience, and operational expectations * Performing POS (point of sales transactions) * Maintaining personal and productivity goals * Connects with every customer by asking open-ended questions to assess needs * Ability to learn and share expertise of products and trends to fit customer’s needs * Maintains an awareness of all product knowledge, and current or upcoming product / trends * Contributes to a positive and inclusive work environment   **QUALIFICATIONS**   * 0-3 years of retail experience * Confident and comfortable engaging customers to deliver an elevated experience * Motivated to achieve great results because of one's enthusiasm from interacting with customers * Initiates completion of tasks or activities without necessary supervision * Flexible availability – including nights, weekends, and holidays * Fluency in second language an asset |

**Step 3: Read the posting carefully so you can understand what the employer is looking for.**

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|  | 1. Read the retail sales associate job posting. 2. Circle 3 areas that you feel that Sam is a good fit for. |

**Step 4: Write down the stated requirements.**

Employers will list the minimum requirements they are looking for, usually under a section called “Qualifications.” The requirements may be a combination of technical skills and transferable skills.

Transferable skills are those skills gained in previous jobs, formal or informal, that can be used or applied to the new job you are applying for.

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|  | 1. Re-read the retail sales associate job posting. 2. Write down 3 stated requirements. |

**Step 5: Write down the hidden requirements.**

Employers do not include every single thing they are looking for in a job posting, even though these skills and experience may be important. Why don’t employers include everything?

* The posting would become too long and confusing.
* Many things “go without saying” and are understood in the world of work.

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|  | 1. What might be important for the retail sales associate position but is not included in the posting? List 2 or 3 hidden skills and experience that would be important to the position. 2. Re-read Sam’s background. Do they have what is required? |

**Step 6: Write down your skills and experience beside each of the stated and hidden requirements.** You may also add anything else you feel you bring to the position and the company.

**Step 7: Compare what you have to offer with what the job requires.**

Ask yourself a few questions, such as

* How many of the stated requirements do I meet?
* Which requirements don’t I meet? How close am I to meeting them? What do I need to do to get closer to meeting the requirements?

Here’s an easy way to keep track of the information:

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| Stated requirements  *What does the job posting say they are looking for?* | Hidden requirements    *What else is the employer looking for that they did not list in the posting?* | My qualifications and experience  *How does what I have match what the employer is looking for?* |
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|  | 1. Let’s come back to Sam Gupta. Fill in the blanks in the table below where you see an ‘x’. |

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| **Stated requirements**  *What does the job posting say they are looking for?* | **Hidden requirements**  *What else is the employer looking for that they did not list in the posting?* | **Sam’s qualifications and experience**  *How does what I have match what the employer is looking for?* |
| 0-3 years of retail experience |  | 4 years’ experience in retail and hospitality |
| Confident and comfortable engaging customers to deliver an elevated experience | Excellent ability to make small talk  Outgoing | x |
| Initiates completion of tasks or activities without necessary supervision |  | x |
| Flexible availability – including nights, weekends, and holidays |  | x |
| Fluency in second language an asset |  | x |
|  | Great teamwork skills | x |
|  | Product knowledge | x |
|  | x | x |
|  | x | x |

**Step 8: Decide whether or not to apply for the position.** You don’t have to apply to every position that looks interesting.

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|  | 1. Look at the completed table from Step 7. Do you think Sam should apply for the retail sales associate position - Yes or No? 2. Explain your answer. |

### 1.2 Key Words

The ability to post jobs online and to email or upload resumes makes it easier than ever for companies to look for applicants. It costs very little, widens the search beyond the local area and may result in a large number of applications. Companies may be in a hurry to hire and don’t want to pay their staff to read through every resume.

An increasing number of large- and medium-sized employers use applicant tracking system (ATS) software to manage the volume of resumes received. The program scans the resume for key words from the job posting. The more key words there are in the resume, the greater the chance it will move on to the next step. The fewer the key words, the more likely the resume will be screened out, regardless of how qualified the applicant may be.

So, it is essential to understand the concept of key words. You will use them in resumes, cover letters and job interviews.

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|  | 1. Read through the job postings below. 2. Use a highlighter to mark the key words in each job posting. 3. Be prepared to talk about your choices. |

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| **Job Posting #1: Retail Sales Associate**  Urgently hiring  Toronto, ON  Full-time, Part-time, Commission  $14 an hour  **Do you have a flare for Fashion?**  Nan’s Fashions is looking for fashionable, energetic, full-time Retail Sales Associates to join our winning team and continue building our legacy of trusted customer service. Join our customer service team at our exciting flagship store located at 887 Robert Street!  **Job Responsibilities include but are not limited to:**   * Making sure each customer receives a superior shopping experience * Maintenance of online store * Listening to the individual needs of the customer and providing tailored advice in a professional manner * Providing solid product knowledge to our customers * Building a close rapport with your clientele * Processing orders and payments for your clients   **You Are:**   * A sales driven, goal oriented individual with a positive, high energy personality and a strong keen sense for fashion * Previous experience in a retail sales environment * A strong communicator, both verbal and written * Skilled at handling a retail POS system (computer skills a must) * A builder of lasting client relationships * Customer service driven, able to work in a fast paced environment * Tech savvy * A team player |

**Job Posting #2: Sales Associate**

**Jack Paints** is an independently owned paint store located in the Junction neighbourhood. We are inspired by colours that bring home decor ideas to life. We have a creative work environment and are a teamwork-based company.

We are looking for a full-time, energetic, passionate, creative colour savvy Sales Associate / Paint Expert who is inspired to serve our customers. You are respectful and friendly towards others and you enjoy working with a team.

You will do the following:

* Assist and recommend products that suit customers’ needs.
* Tint, mix and color match paint and wood stains.
* Manage incoming orders by phone, e-mail and in person.
* Assist in receiving product and stocking shelves when necessary.
* Maintain sales areas and tint areas in a neat and organized manner.
* Monitor stock levels, merchandise shelves and order from suppliers when necessary.
* Assist at point of sale to complete orders.

Experience:

* sales: 1 year (Required)
* customer service: 1 year (Required)

Education:

* Secondary School (Required)

**Job Posting #3: Lifeguard**

**Job Description:** Responsible for ensuring the safety of facility patrons by providing effective and efficient life guarding. Managing a corkscrew slide and the patrons who want to use it.

**Key Responsibilities:** Safe supervision of patrons; conduct swim evaluations of all youth; enforce safety rules around slide and accompanying pool; daily reports

**Qualifications:** Current National Lifeguard (NLS) certification; Standard First Aid with CPR C (current within 2 years); Clear Criminal Background Check

Job Type: Contract

Experience: Life guarding: 1 year (Preferred)

**Job Posting #4: Landscape Labourer**

Secondary (high) school graduation certificate

Experience an asset

Specific Skills

* Weed, prune and trim trees and plants
* Remove litter and garbage
* Plant bulbs, flowers, shrubs and trees
* Lay sod or seed
* Cut grass
* Assist with landscape constructions
* Water and tend to plants, lawns and/or gardens

Equipment and Machinery Experience

* Weed trimmer/edger; Small engine equipment

Security and Safety

* Driving record check (abstract); Criminal record check

Own transportation; Own vehicle; Valid driver's license

Personal Suitability

* Effective interpersonal skills
* Flexibility
* Team player
* Client focus
* Dependability
* Reliability

### Resumes

### We know about stated and hidden requirements, as well as the importance of key words. Now it is time to learn more about why we write resumes and how to prepare the standard sections of a resume.

### A good resume will capture an employer’s interest within seconds and increase your chances of getting invited to a job interview. Employers usually don’t hire someone based on their resume alone. They interview candidates and may check references before offering the position to the person they believe will do the best job.

### A resume should highlight your skills, abilities and accomplishments in a way that tells the employer you have what they are looking for. You may create a master resume where you keep track of all of your jobs so you don’t forget key dates and responsibilities. Every time you apply for a job, you must review your resume and make some changes to tailor it to the position and company you are applying for.

### Following these five essential steps will help you build an effective resume:

**Step 1: Create a summary of qualifications.**

The Summary of Qualifications section of a resume gives employers a brief “snapshot” of your best qualities and qualifications. Try to keep this section to fewer than 2,000 characters. It can be written in point form.

The information included in this section should always match the requirements of the position as closely as possible. Be sure to include key words so that they are picked up by the applicant tracking software. List the most important, and most relevant, qualifications first. Here’s what you might include, depending on the position.

* The number of years’ experience you have working in the field
* Any important certifications you have
* Any programs or technical equipment you can use on the job
* Any personal qualities you think are important to mention
* Any other languages you speak

Here’s a sample summary for Sam Gupta in response to the job posting on page 6. It is 346 characters long, with spaces.

***SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS***

* *4 years’ experience serving customers in retail and hospitality settings*
* *Proven record of consistently exceeding sales quotas*
* *Demonstrated accuracy in completing cash, debit and credit transactions*
* *Reliable, punctual employee with a goal-oriented attitude*
* *Strong communication skills; fluent in English and Punjabi*

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|  | 1. Think about the types of jobs you are interested in right now. 2. List 3 to 5 top qualifications that you might be able to use, depending on the position. |

**Step 2: Choose a resume style that suits you and where you are in your career.**

There are three main resume types: chronological, functional and combination. Here’s a description of each type, followed by examples.

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| **Type of resume** | **What it includes** | **When to use it** |
| Chronological Resume | This is a traditional type of resume that lists your work experiences by date; in reverse chronological order, starting with the most recent position you’ve held. | * If you have extensive experience working in the same field or position * If you want to show promotions within a company * If you want to emphasize specific job titles or companies you’ve worked for * If requested by the employer |
| Functional Resume | This is a skills-based resume that highlights your skills, strengths, and accomplishments. | * If you are looking for your first job, or have very little work experience * If your work history is inconsistent or you have gaps in your employment history * If you want to emphasize transferable skills obtained from previous jobs, volunteer work or school * If you are making a career change * If you have no formal work experience |
| Combination Resume | This type of resume combines the functional and chronological styles. | * If you want to highlight skill sets and work history relevant to the job you are applying for * If you have some paid work experience, but not all related to the job |

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|  | 1. Which style do you think is best for you at this time? 2. Which style would be best for Sam Gupta? |

**Chronological Resume – Sample**

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| |  | | --- | | **PAYTON Taylor**  611 Metro Street  Toronto, Ontario  M9R 6J1  (416) 555-1212  payton\_taylor@gmail.com |   **SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS**   * 5 years’ experience working in customer service and sales * Solid experience with cash, credit and debit card transactions * Proficient in Microsoft Office, Windows XP, email and internet * Excellent interpersonal skills; able to effectively anticipate customer needs * Fluent in English, French and Spanish   **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Customer Service Representative, Toronto Blue Jays** | **Toronto, ON** | **2018 – 2020** |  * Provided accurate information to customers about ticket prices and event dates * Completed various clerical procedures including data entry, filing, and answering phones * Listened effectively to customers, resulting in excellent customer relations and positive customer feedback * Mailed information packages to potential customers  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Sales Associate, Cool Clothes** | **Toronto, ON** | **2017 – 2018** |  * Successfully diffused angry customers by using patience and excellent listening skills * Courteously handled all customer concerns, using problem-solving/conflict resolution skills and making appropriate suggestions * Acted as Key-Holder, ran cash register reports, balanced cash at the end of day, and opened and closed premises * Accurately and efficiently completed daily cash and debit card transactions  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Customer Service Representative, ABC Dealership** | **Toronto, ON** | **2016 – 2018** |  * Filed client information in numerical sequence * Answered phones and provided information in a friendly, professional manner * Efficiently sent documents through various courier services * Sorted and delivered a high volume of mail to the appropriate persons and departments   **EDUCATION AND TRAINING**   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | 2016 | Customer Service Training Certificate, The Training Institute | Toronto, ON | | 2015 | Ontario Secondary School Diploma, Central Technical School | Toronto, ON | |

**Functional Resume – Sample**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| |  | | --- | | **Alix Brosseau** | | 50 York Avenue ▪ Toronto, Ontario ▪ M9R 3J5 ▪ (416) 555-3798 ▪ alex\_simpson@gmail.com |   **SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS**   * 2 years’ experience completing administrative tasks * Demonstrated ability to effectively communicate with clients to build excellent customer relations * Works well in collaboration with colleagues and management to maximize productivity and efficiency * Sound knowledge of practices and ethics in the administrative field * Successfully organizes, prioritizes, and coordinates workload * Proficient in Microsoft Office Suite, Windows XP, email, and internet   **RELEVANT SKILLS AND ACHIEVEMENTS**  **Administration**   * Provided office administration support to staff, implementing various time-saving procedures including speedy filing systems and data-entry methods * Produced reports including time and attendance records, budget expenditures and business transactions * Collected, sorted, and distributed mail to the appropriate departments and couriered packages to external business partners * Scheduled and participated in meetings, appointments, and conferences, taking and recording concise minutes   **Customer Service**   * Listened effectively to customers, resulting in recognition for excellent customer relations * Successfully diffused angry customers by using patience and excellent listening skills * Professionally and courteously answered approximately 100-150 inbound customer calls a day * Assisted a high volume of customers by researching lost orders and tracing shipments * Accurately entered customer orders into the database resulting in a more efficient and effective client account retrieval   **Technical**   * Ensured that all client data was accurately entered into the database in a timely manner * Accurately organized and maintained the office filing system ensuring easy access to client and account information * Ensured a quick and prompt solution to all questions and arising issues * Operated office equipment including photocopier, scanner, and multi-line phone system, trouble-shooting technical difficulties   **WORK HISTORY**   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | Sales Associate, Cool Clothes | Toronto, ON | 2014 – 2020 | | Office Assistant/Customer Service Representative | Toronto, ON | 2012 – 2014 | | Volunteer Daycare Assistant, Sunny Daycare | Toronto, ON | 2011 – 2013 |   **EDUCATION AND TRAINING**   |  |  | | --- | --- | | Ontario Secondary School Diploma, Toronto Secondary School | T Toronto, ON 2011 | |

**Combination Resume – Sample**

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| |  | | --- | | **Chris Smith**  500 Madill Avenue  Toronto, Ontario ▪ M9R 3J5  (416) 555-3798 ▪ chris\_smith@gmail.com |   **SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS**   * Over 2 years’ experience working within the food and beverage industry * Experienced in delivering outstanding customer service within a high-paced environment * Passion for cooking; committed to producing the highest quality meals * Reliable, hard-working professional who works well under pressure * Accurately handled a high volume of cash, debit and credit transactions   **RELEVANT SKILLS AND ACHIEVEMENTS**  **Food and Beverage**   * Ensured that all food preparation/cooking areas were properly organized, clean and sanitized * Maintained, organized, and responsibly prepared food for a busy salad bar * Assisted kitchen staff with washing dishes and various kitchen duties when needed * Earned a reputation as a hard worker who could be counted on to do anything needed from cleaning, stocking, organizing to kitchen maintenance   **Customer Service**   * Successfully diffused angry customers by using patience and excellent listening skills * Provided customers with accurate information regarding menus and special offers * Attended to customer needs and provided guests with clean silverware, ice water and condiments * Presented menu, answered questions and made suggestions regarding food and service   **WORK HISTORY**   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Cashier/Food Preparation Worker, Tim Hortons** | **Richmond Hill, ON** | **2018 – Present** |  * Efficiently prepared a variety of food items including, sandwiches, bagels, baked goods, and coffee * Ensured all food-preparation utensils and tools were cleaned and maintained * Displayed excellent customer service skills resulting in a higher volume of satisfied customers * Processed cash, debit, and credit card payments and returned accurate change as required  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Prep Cook, Blue Bay Restaurant** | **Toronto, ON** | **2011 - 2016** |  * Efficiently prepared a wide range of food items including pastas, grilled dishes rice, salads, and desserts * Stored fresh produce and meats following safe food-handling procedures * Closed the premises at the end of the day and ensured that all equipment and areas of the facility were cleaned and sanitized   **EDUCATION**   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Ontario Secondary School Diploma, East York Collegiate** | **Toronto, ON** | **2010** | |

**Step 3: Identify relevant skills.**

Remember to do the stated and hidden requirements exercise, and to make a list of key words, every time you are seriously considering a position. Use the information you collected to write the relevant skills section of your resume. Make those key words count!

Is there anything you’d like to add? Do you have transferable skills that will help you succeed in the position you are applying for? For example,

*Customer service skills gained from a Retail Sales Associate may be relevant in a Receptionist position where there is a high level of customer interaction.*

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|  | 1. Think about the jobs or volunteer positions you’ve had so far. 2. What do they have in common? 3. How are they different? 4. What skills did you use in more than one position? 5. What personal qualities do you have that apply to more than one position? 6. Make a list of your top skills and qualities. |

**Step 4: Write effective one-liners.**

A one-liner is an action statement that describes your accomplishments, skills and tasks – as they relate to the position you are applying for. They are sometimes called “accomplishment statements.”

Where to put them

* If you have a chronological resume, they are placed beneath the job title in the work history section.
* If you have a functional resume, they are placed beneath the skills headings.
* If you have a combination resume, the same procedures apply for the chronological and functional sections.

How to write them

* Start with a verb written in the past tense if you are no longer in the job, present tense if you are.
* State the experiences and achievements you acquired at that job.
* Show the positive results of your actions, indicating the benefits to the company.
* Quantify your accomplishments whenever possible; that is, include numbers.

Samples

* *Creatively rearranged the office filing system, which led to more efficient file retrieval for all staff members*
* *Served 8-10 tables simultaneously, increased revenue by up-selling food and beverage items*
* *Successfully handled over 100 phone calls per day and directed each to appropriate staff or took messages as needed*
* *Exceeded sales targets of $5,000 per shift by providing attentive customer service*

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|  | 1. Think about the jobs or volunteer positions you’ve had so far. 2. Write down 3 accomplishment statements. You might want to consult the action word list in Appendix 1 on page 35. |

**Step 5: List experience and education.**

**Work and volunteer experience** can be listed under separate headings or together under “Experience.” Put the most recent position first and the rest in reverse order. Include the following for each job:

* Job title
* Company name
* City, province, or country you worked in (if outside Canada)
* Year(s) of employment (you may include the months)

The placement of your one-liners will vary, depending on the resume style you’ve chosen. See Step 4.

The more work experience you have, the farther down the **education** section comes in your resume. If you are just starting out, you’ll likely put education near the top. If you have had a few jobs, put education near the bottom. Include the following:

* The program or highest level of education you have attained, the name of the school or institution and dates
* The city and province or country of the school you attended
* If you have completed post-secondary studies, do not include your high-school credentials.
* Additional training or certificates that are relevant to the position

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|  | 1. List the above for one position. 2. List your education. |

### *Online Resumes*

Some companies ask applicants to submit an “online resume” that looks like a combination of a resume and job application because it has standard resume sections as well as some questions for you to answer. You may need to enter your email address before you can see the full application. Note that your LinkedIn profile is also considered a form of online resume.

The software may draw from your uploaded resume to populate sections online, then offer you a chance to edit the imported parts to make sure they are correct. Here are some tips for ensuring that your online resume will stand out.

Be prepared!

* Keep a detailed listing of your work history over time and have it handy.
* Know what you are looking for, what your salary expectations are, etc.
* Read through everything before you begin uploading information so that you know what to expect and what additional information you may need to find.
* Consider drafting responses in a separate file first so you can cut and paste the finished sections.
* Leave yourself extra time.

Here’s what you may need to have ready:

* Specific information about each job you list under Experience
* Day/month/year for when you started and finished working
* Position title
* Summary of what the job is/was about
* Reason for leaving
* Answers to questions such as
  + Which hours you can work if you get the job
  + Which languages you speak
  + What you earn now
  + What you’d like to earn

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|  | 1. Write down, in one short sentence, why you left a previous job, either paid or volunteer. 2. You can see that you’ll need to keep track of a lot of information in order to answer specific questions. What’s your plan for keeping organized? |

### *2.3 Resume Dos and Don’ts*

* Target your resume for each different position you apply for.
* Use a professional resume format.
* Avoid a fancy resume design and using colours.
* Use a popular and professional font, such as Arial or Times New Roman.
* Single-space your resume, with double spaces between sections/headings.
* Have several people proofread your resume for spelling, content and grammar.
* Attach your resume as a Microsoft Word document (.doc or .docx).
* Use an overly casual, “funny,” or unprofessional email address.
* List your age, date of birth, or social insurance number.
* Lie, exaggerate or inflate your actual skills, education or experience.
* List the jobs you were fired from.
* Use coloured paper if you are handing in your resume – plain, white paper is best.
* Write long sentences, or paragraphs on resumes. Point form is best.
* Use resume templates as employers may not be able to open the file.
* Use acronyms or short forms – write everything out in full.

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|  | 1. Can you think of anything to add to these lists? |

### *2.4 Emailing Resumes and Cover Letters*

Many employers and companies will only accept resumes that are sent via email or uploaded to the company website. The quality of your email will make an impression on employers. Be sure to have excellent spelling and grammar. Here are some more tips:

1. Make sure your email address contains your first and last name.

2. Write a simple, straightforward subject line.

* Include the name of the position and/or posting number or follow the employer’s instructions.
* Do not leave the subject line blank.
* DON’T USE ALL CAPITALS, or all lower case in the subject line.

*Application for Full-Time Customer Service Position*

*Application for Graphic Design Position #7845*

3. Look professional.

* Keep your email simple and short. In a few words, let the employer know why you are emailing them.
* Do not use any slang, abbreviations, or emoticons ☺.
* State that your resume and cover letter has been attached to the e-mail.
* End by thanking the employer for their time.
* Include your name and telephone number at the end of the e-mail message as a signature line.
* Proofread your email message: use proper spelling, grammar and punctuation.

*Dear Ms Bruce.*

*I am pleased to attach my resume and cover letter in response to your posting on Indeed for a part-time cashier at your store, position #772.*

*Thank you for your attention.*

*Sandy McAllister*

*647.999.9999*

4. Attach your resume and cover letter.

* Check for any instructions the employer has given and always follow them exactly.
* Name your attachments logically – for example “janesmithresume.doc” or “janesmithcoverletter.doc”
* Take one last look before you submit your documents. See the Resume Checklist on page37.

5. Monitor your email.

* Check your e-mail at least once a day and respond promptly to all messages from employers. Also check your texts.

1. **Cover Letters**

A cover letter is your chance to promote yourself to a potential employer as the best candidate for the job. This means that your well-written and thought-out cover letter is just as important as your resume. Your cover letter should detail your intentions, what you bring to the job, and why you are the best candidate for the position. It is not a repetition of what’s already in your resume.

### *3.1 Types of cover letters*

There are different reasons for contacting employers and each way requires a slightly different cover letter. Here are three main types of cover letters:

1. **Letter of application**

* used when applying for a specific job opening or responding to a job advertisement
* used when you know of an open position at the company

1. **Letter of inquiry**

* used when you are inquiring about possible openings within a company
* used to network with companies to show your interest in working with them when a position becomes available

1. **Referral**

* used when you found out about a job opening in a company from someone who works there
* used when you know someone who works for the company already
* only use this format if the referral is someone who will help you (if they were fired recently, it might not be a good referral)

**For letter of inquiry and referral**

* Create immediate interest from the employer’s perspective by stating your compatibility with the work environment and your sincere interest in the company.
* State the purpose of your letter (to obtain employment with their company).
* State who referred you to the company, if applicable.
* State your skills/accomplishments, experience and personal traits, and illustrate how these will benefit the organization.
* State your career objective, refer to your attached resume, and indicate your plan to follow up.
* Thank them for their time and consideration.

### *Parts of a Cover Letter*

Your Name

12 – 456 Queen Street West, Toronto ON, M6R 2K8

416.236.4587 ▪ payton.smith@gmail.com

Date

Employer Name

Employer Job Title

Company Name

Company Address

Dear Mr./Ms Last Name:

Paragraph 1 - Introduction

* State your enthusiasm and the title of the position you are applying for
* Where you saw the advertisement
* If you found out about this position through networking, use the name of the person here

Paragraph 2 - Your accomplishments

* State what you can bring to the job. Indicate your skills, related education and/or training completed, achievements and experience as they relate to the job requirements

Paragraph 3 - Why this company or career?

* From your research, tell the employer why you want to work for them
* Mention how you are compatible with their company culture and are able to contribute to their mission, or how you are able to serve their clientele
* Offer insight into their needs and how you will be able to meet those needs

Paragraph 4 - Closing

* Be assertive with closing remarks to show interest
* Indicate that you will follow up and when
* Thank them for their time and consideration

Sincerely,

Your Name

**Cover Letter Example - Sam Gupta**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | 1. Review the retail sales associate position and background on Sam Gupta. 2. If you were Sam, what would you include in your cover letter? Use the table below to record your thoughts. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Paragraph** | **What Sam might include** |
| 1 – Introduction |  |
| 2 – Accomplishments |  |
| 3 - Why this company or career |  |
| 4 – Closing |  |

**Sample letter – job ad**

Amy Sherwood

930 Highland Avenue, Toronto, ON ▪ M3L 7W9

(416) 555-5545 ▪ amy.sherwood@gmail.com

November 16, 2019

Mr. Ryan Smith

Executive Director

Allen Investments Inc.

1023 Collins Ave.

Toronto, ON M8B 3J5

**Re: Client Account Coordinator Position, Job # JU890**

Dear Mr. Smith,

I was excited to learn about the Client Account Coordinator position, which was advertised on the Indeed website on November 14, 2019. With a diploma in Business and relevant work experience within administration and sales, I believe I am well suited for the position you offer.

Enclosed is a copy of my resume for your review.

According to the job ad, you require excellent communication skills, computer literacy, and related education in business, economics or finance. I recently graduated from Seneca College completing relevant courses such as: Computer Science, Management Information Systems, Communications and Business Writing. I have also gained valuable experience in managing a high number of client accounts within my recent placement at Hunter & Thompson Finance Inc. I am an excellent team player, work well under pressure and communicate very effectively with clients and staff.

The prospect of joining Allen Investments Inc. is a very exciting one, as I, too, am passionate about providing outstanding service in an attempt to exceed customer expectations. The approach that Allen Investments Inc. takes with corporate responsibility sets it apart from other financial institutions. Working for an organization that shares the same values and respect for client service is an important factor in determining the ideal employer I aspire to work for.

I would be pleased to come in for an interview at your convenience to further discuss my qualifications as they relate to this position. I can be reached at (416) 555-5545. I will call in a few days to ensure that you have received my resume.

Sincerely,

Amy Sherwood

**Sample letter – inquiry / referral**

Marina Thompson

3687 Dufferin Street

Toronto, Ontario, M85 4B6

(416) 668-8866 [Mthompson@hotmail.com](mailto:Mthompson@hotmail.com)

November 10, 2019

Mr. Roger Sawyer

Vice Manager, Human Resources

Applied Digitech, Inc.

2296 Evans Street

Toronto, ON M74 3B5

Attention: Mr. Sawyer

For the past two years I have provided professional administrative support to John Smith, President of B.B. Resources. As you may know, our company has moved to British Columbia. Mr. Smith suggested I contact you about a possible opening in your firm.

As Mr. Smith’s assistant, I scheduled and managed his appointments and professionally interfaced with our vendors. I wrote various documents for the company, and trained and worked with a team of 10 to 12 people.

Through my research, I know your company has been successful for over 30 years. As your company appears to be growing, I thought your organization would benefit from hiring a career-oriented, dedicated and hard-working professional, such as me. My enclosed resume outlines more of my responsibilities at B.B. Resources.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration. I can be reached at (416) 668-8866 to arrange an interview. I look forward to hearing from you soon. I will be in touch shortly to further discuss my qualifications and skills as they relate to your current needs.

Sincerely,

Marina Thompson

**Sample letter – referral**

Eric Stadler

123 Tucker Road, Toronto, ON M4J 5B8

(416) 555-6645 eric\_stadler@live.ca

November 10, 2019

Robert Morris

Manager

Morris Construction

756 Harbour Road

Toronto, ON, M5Q 4H8

Dear Mr. Morris,

John Lovell advised me of a Foreman position that is available at your company. I am very interested in the position and have attached a resume.

As the former manager of a small business, I appreciate the importance of customer satisfaction. I am a diplomatic manager, which enables me to get along well with clients, supervisors and staff. My ability to maintain high morale among workers increases retention and contributes to safety - a crucial factor in the success of a construction company.

I understand that your company is regarded as one of the area’s most progressive companies and for that reason I would like the opportunity to be a part of it.

I will call you in a few days to see if you have received my resume and discuss if we can meet for an interview at your convenience. I may be reached at 416-555-6666. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Eric Stadler

##### 

### *3.3 Cover Letter Dos and Don’ts*

* Tailor your cover letter for each different position you apply for.
* Address the letter to the hiring manager using their correct name and title.
* Always proofread, checking for grammar and spelling errors.
* Use specific examples and tailor your cover letter using key words and qualifications listed in the job ad or job you are looking for.
* Indicate when you will follow up.
* Show sincere enthusiasm.
* Remember to sign your cover letter in blue or black pen if delivering your cover letter by mail or in person.
* Remember to quote the position title and job ad number if this information was given
* Use a popular and professional font, such as Arial or Times New Roman.
* Attach your resume as a Microsoft Word document (.doc or .docx).
* Keep your cover letter to no more than 2,500 characters in case it is read on a smart phone.
* Use the same cover letter for all positions.
* Mention negatives or use negative language.
* Use slang.
* Mention salary or wage unless requested.
* Discuss “leaving story” (why you were fired or quit previous jobs).
* Discuss availability (such as days or weekends unless requested by employer).
* Use first names (e.g. “Attention Dan”) or “To whom it may concern”.
* Lie.
* Put your references in your cover letter.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | * 1. Can you think of anything to add to these lists? |

**Appendix 1: Action Words**

You may find these action words useful as you write your resumes and cover letters. Think about what you have done and see if you can find a good word to describe it. Collect additional action words from job postings and job descriptions you see as you look for work.

**Helping Skills**

Assisted

Clarified

Coached

Counselled

Demonstrated

Diagnosed

Educated

Expedited

Facilitated

Familiarized

Guided

Motivated

Referred

Rehabilitated

Represented

**Teaching Skills**

Adapted

Advised

Clarified

Coached

Communicated

Coordinated

Demystified

Developed

Enabled

Encouraged

Evaluated

**Accomplishment Skills**

Achieved

Expanded

Improved

Pioneered

Reduced (losses)

Resolved Restored

Spearheaded

Transformed

**Clerical Skills**

Approved

Arranged

Catalogued

Classified

Collected

Compiled

Dispatched

Executed

Generated

Implemented

Inspected

Monitored

Operated

Organized

Prepared

Processed

Purchased

Recorded

Retrieved

Screened

Specified

Systematized

Tabulated

Validated

**Creative/Detail Skills**

Acted

Conceptualized

Created

Customized

Designed

Developed

Directed

Established

Fashioned

Founded

Illustrated

Initiated

Instituted

Integrated

Introduced

Invented

Originated

Performed

Planned

Revitalized

**Management Skills**

Administered

Analyzed

Assigned

Attained

Chaired

Consolidated

Contracted

Coordinated

Delegated

Developed

Directed

Evaluated

Executed

Improved

Increased

Organized

Planned

Prioritized

Produced

Recommended

Reviewed

Scheduled

Strengthened

Supervised

**Communication Skills**

Addressed

Arbitrated

Arranged

Authored

Collaborated

Convinced

Corresponded

Developed

Directed

Draft

Edited

Enlisted

Formulated

Influenced

Interpreted

Interpreted

Lectured

Mediated

Moderated

Negotiated

Persuaded

Promoted

Publicized

Reconciled

Recruited

Spoke

Translated

Wrote

**Research Skills**

Clarified

Collected

Critiqued

Diagnosed

Evaluated

Examined

Extracted

Identified

Inspected

Interpreted

Interviewed

Investigated

Organized

Reviewed

Surveyed

Systematized

**Financial Skills**

Administered

Allocated

Analyzed

Appraised

Audited

Balanced

Budgeted

Calculated

Computed

Developed

Forecasted

Managed

Planned

Projected

**Technical Skills**

Assembled

Built

Calculated

Computed

Designed

Devised

Engineered

Fabricated

Maintained

Operated

Overhauled

Programmed

Remodelled

Repaired

Solved

Upgraded

**Appendix 2: Resume Checklist**

Is your resume ready?

Take a moment to make sure you agree with the following statements before you submit your resume – every time you apply for a position. You may add other statements at the bottom of the table.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| √ | Task |
|  | I have reviewed the job posting or job description one last time to make sure I haven’t missed anything important. |
|  | My address is complete and correct. |
|  | My phone number is correct. |
|  | My email address is professional. |
|  | The details I have chosen to include are related to the requirements of the posting I am applying for. |
|  | I have asked someone with good spelling and grammar skills to proofread my resume. I have made corrections, if needed. |
|  | My resume is two pages or less in length. |
|  | I know how the employer wants me to submit this resume; for example, upload or email. |
|  | I have kept a copy of the job posting and the resume for my records, along with the date I submitted my resume. |
|  | Other: |
|  | Other: |