



RESUME TIPS

Writing a résumé is not always the easiest of tasks. Here are a few tips to help get you started and on the right track to developing a résumé that shines...

1. Be targeted and personalized

If you were looking to buy a new product or seeking out a service, you would be on the look out for key specifications or features. That is essentially the purpose of an employer's position description or job advertisement.

Treat your résumé as an opportunity to showcase the skills, knowledge, experience and attitudes you bring to the table which respond to the employer's need.

If a product or service's specifications were vague or claimed to be able to do EVERYTHING, we would be wary. Employers approach résumé screening with the same lens.

Be sure that your job search documents articulate a clear goal (eg. insurance underwriter, adjuster, broker) and are tailored to fit the needs of that role.

2. Keep it short and sweet

Employers tend to spend on average between 30 – 90 seconds on an initial scan of a résumé.

To maximize your impact:

- order your résumé and accomplishments from 'most relevant' to 'nice to know'
- make use of clear bullet points in language that will resonate with the employer (if it sounds "like them", they are more likely to see a fit)
- keep your résumé to a maximum of two pages

3. Include the following typical sections in your résumé.

Typical best practice in résumé development suggests including:

Objective – articulate what you are looking for; state your job search goal. For example, 'Junior Underwriter,' or a statement like: 'Analytical, relationship focused and detail oriented individual seeking an entry level role in underwriting.'

Professional Profile – highlight your education, relevant experience/accomplishments and specialized skills, relevant to what the employer is looking for, in four to six (4 – 6) bullet points. There are lots of great examples of how to shape this section of your résumé available on-line and in Career & Employment centres.

Education & Designations – If you are currently pursuing your degree or a designation, indicate when it is expected. Be sure to include relevant courses and if noteworthy, your cumulative GPA or other academic accomplishments (eg. scholarships, academic awards).

Professional & Volunteer Experience – list the roles you've had in reverse chronological order (most recent then previous then past). Highlight your key accomplishments and skills utilized in each role.

Start each of your accomplishment statements with an **action verb** versus making statements like “Responsible for”, “duties included.” This can be more impactful with employers.
[For help with action verbs, see additional resource]

Don’t leave anything to the employer’s imagination. Simply stating what you did may not tell the whole story. Also, include how you did it, the impact of your work and be sure each experience you have had is talked about in relation to your job goal.

[Not sure how to describe your results and accomplishments? Check out the action verbs resource for tips to get you rethinking what you’ve done in your previous roles.]

You may want to look at examples on-line, visit Career & Employment Centre, at the library or ask industry professionals you have connected with to help you write this section.

References – “References available upon request” has become the traditional ‘end transmission’ of résumés and lets employers know these are lined up if required.

Optional sections – Activities & Interests, Community Involvement, Awards & Accomplishments
[For additional help with setting up your resume, see template provided]

4. Ensure your résumé is error-free

Insurance is a detail oriented industry – demonstrate your attention to detail and communication skills in your job search documents. Be rigorous in your editing and make sure to double and triple-check for grammatical and spelling mistakes.

5. Choose a readable font and make use of white space

Choose a font which is clean and readable (both in style and size; no less than 10 pt).
White space (even, just a little bit) helps guide the eye and ensures easy scanning.

If you are sending electronically, consider converting your document to a pdf, since a pdf:

- a. helps with compatibility issues
- b. embeds the fonts and enables the file to be uploaded properly
- c. ensures that the document cannot be inadvertently altered.

6. Get Feedback

Finally, once you have a working copy of your résumé, review it with a trusted friend, industry professional or career counsellor to get their feedback and help make your resume the best it can be.

You may find it helpful to send three to five (3 – 5) job postings to those reviewing your resume in order to help them better understand your job search goals and offer suggestions that are specific to relevant and interesting roles for you.

Good luck!

This resource on “Resume Tips” is provided by Career Connections, which is a career awareness program coordinated by the Insurance Institute of Canada on behalf of the property & casualty insurance industry. Our website and these resources are provided to help you find a career in insurance. For more information, to including career videos, career profiles and more resources, please visit: www.career-connections.info.