

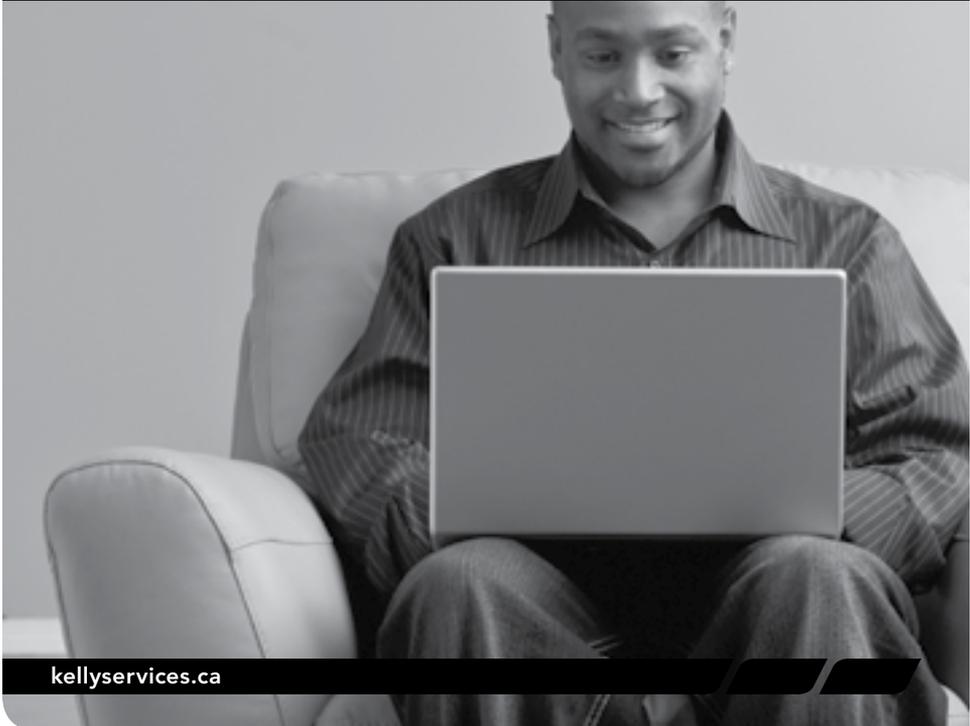


first things first

Kelly Services® guide to writing a winning resumé

Kelly Services is dedicated to providing the resources and tools necessary for success. This guide contains useful information to help you prepare an effective resumé.

The purpose of a resumé is to present your capabilities in a way that compels a potential employer to grant you an interview. Creating a well-written, informative resumé is the first step in opening the doors of career opportunity.





Make the right impression

Your resumé is the first impression you will make on a potential employer. That means the content, organization, and appearance of your resumé will speak for you.

Given the importance of this first impression, it's crucial to take the time to carefully craft a powerful resumé that reflects your professional accomplishments, experience, business savvy, and strengths.

Easy to read, easy to follow

The best way to begin building a winning resumé is to create logical categories that will outline your qualifications and accomplishments. Following are examples of categories you can use.

An objective or a positioning statement. Immediately below the top section of your resumé (containing your name, address, and contact information), there should be a short opening statement—the focal point of your resumé.

- An *objective* simply and directly states the position you are seeking in specific terms, for example: “To obtain a challenging entry-level accounting position with advancement opportunities.”
- A *positioning statement* describes what you have to offer, for example: “Highly accomplished Marketing Executive with more than 10 years experience developing multimillion dollar product lines.”

Positioning statements seem to be preferred because they are a powerful summary of skills and experience. However, an objective can be equally powerful, as long as it is written to match the job you are applying for.

Remember; use either an objective or a positioning statement, not both.

Professional experience. Start with your most recent position, and list your experience for the past 10 years. Include job titles, company names (with brief descriptions and notable company or industry information), location (city and province), and dates of employment. List your key responsibilities and accomplishments.

Skills and abilities. Note relevant special interests, computer knowledge or professional skills. Present your skills in a positive light, but avoid exaggeration.

Education. If applicable, include your degree, major and minor, school, and relevant awards. Education is usually near the end of a resumé. However, if you are a recent graduate with little experience, you can highlight your education by placing it at the beginning of your resumé.

Certifications and associations. If applicable, include any professional memberships or elements that pertain to the job that will add credibility to your qualifications or make your resumé unique.

Be accurate, be honest

Be sure to double-check all dates and information listed on your resumé. Most employers use background checks to confirm dates of employment and verify academic degrees and certifications.



Customize your content

Instead of creating a standard document for use with every opportunity, craft your resumé so it speaks directly to a potential employer's unique needs.

For example, you could highlight different accomplishments or go into greater detail about certain contributions. Or, you could speak to how you meet specific requirements in the job posting. Your extra time and effort will produce a resumé that makes you stand out from other candidates.

Special circumstances

Don't worry about having unique situations to address in your resumé. It's quite common for job seekers to have little work experience or gaps in employment history. When preparing your resumé, you can make such circumstances work in your favour. Consider these suggestions.

If you are a recent college graduate with little experience, have gaps in your resumé, or are looking to change careers:

Chances are you still have skills and experience that are important resumé builders. Classes, volunteer efforts, internships, and professional organizations are good examples you can use in your resumé.

Consider using a combination resumé if you have gaps in your employment history. A combination resumé lists your skills and accomplishments first, putting less emphasis on your previous positions and dates of employment. Rather than having a section called "Work Experience," you may wish to have sections titled "Research Experience," "Network Installation Skills," and "Project Management Skills." If you use this type of resumé, you can still list a brief work history near the end of the document.

A combination resumé is also useful if you are changing careers. If you lack experience relating to your new chosen path, the combination resumé allows you to highlight transferable skills.

If you have gaps in your work history, you can address the issue in a cover letter by explaining how you've kept your skills up-to-date through temporary/contract assignments, volunteer work, or professional development courses.

If you've held several temporary/contract positions:

List temporary/contract positions in reverse chronological order, just as you would permanent positions. If you worked with a staffing company, use its name as your employer, grouping all of your assignments together. Be sure to clearly state that the assignments were temporary/contract.

If you're not sure how to list your GPA:

Academic accomplishments become less significant as work history develops. If you've been working for a few years, you don't need to include your GPA. Simply list your alma mater and degree earned at the end of your resumé. However, if you are a recent graduate with a high grade point average or degree from a distinguished university, list this information near the top of your resumé.

If your former employer changed its name:

Simply list the current company name, followed by the former name in parenthesis. By putting both names on your resumé, potential employers can locate information when verifying your work history and conducting reference checks. Also indicate if your former employer has gone out of business. Be sure you've kept in contact with anyone from the former employer if you're using them as a professional reference.

What does the employer *really* want to know?

It's important that your resumé touches on what matters most to a prospective employer. These tips will help effectively address an employer's concerns while telling your story through your resumé.

"What can you do for me?" This is most important to the employer. If your resumé doesn't immediately answer this question, it won't last more than a few seconds. As your selling tool, the opening statement must capture the reader's interest and clearly summarize who you are, your biggest strength, and the main benefit you bring to the employer.

"Are you a valuable employee?" A sure way to establish your value is to demonstrate that you made successful contributions elsewhere. Be sure to list measurable accomplishments and other details.

"Do you have the skills I need?" Determine the skills that are most relevant to prospective employers and place the related key words or phrases from job ads and descriptions throughout your resumé.

"Do you have relevant experience?" A job title might not truly convey relevant job experience. Consider using bullets to outline interesting information that applies to the position. Keep this information brief.

"Are your education and credentials appropriate for this position?" List relevant education, training, and credentials, and use proper terminology and keywords to ensure your information isn't overlooked by employers or resumé scanners.

"Tell me about your previous jobs." Be sure to include where you worked, for how long, and previous job titles/experience.

"How are you unique?" It's important to include any special information that will help distinguish you from other candidates even before you meet the prospective employer. Examples include a description of your computer skills or foreign languages you speak.

"How do I get in touch with you?" You can have the best resumé in town, but you'll never hear from the employer if you don't include a phone number, street address, and e-mail address on the resumé.



Tips to make your resumé even better

You can expect to write, edit, and rewrite your resumé several times before finalizing the content. These tips will help you generate a strong final document.

Use action words. Strong action words—such as developed, designed, championed, initiated, established, executed, managed, organized, and implemented—will promote you as a dynamic, powerful individual.

Summarize your responsibilities. Make sure your resumé does not read like a job description. Less is more here.

Focus on accomplishments, not daily tasks. When describing your professional experience, you might want to highlight your accomplishments with the use of concise, easy-to-read bullet points. Don't just list tasks and duties.

Put numbers in action. Quantify your results whenever possible. Using dollar amounts to show the size of a budget or project you managed—especially if it is significant—is a great way to highlight your capabilities. Listing the number of people you managed or projects you completed will help employers visualize your potential.

What's all the buzz about keywords?

Keywords are specific words or phrases that job seekers use to search for jobs and employers use to find the right candidates. They are used as search criteria in the same way you do research on the Internet.

Employers often digitize job-seeker resúmes, placing those resúmes in keyword searchable databases and using software to search those databases for specific keywords that relate to job vacancies. So it's important to incorporate keywords into your resumé to ensure your resumé is picked up by such scans.

Consider these tips for using keywords:

- Make sure to use keywords that are specific to the industry. Focus on words that are repeatedly mentioned in association with a given job title.
- The more keywords you use, the better your chances that a recruiter will see it.
- When responding to a job posting, use words from the job description as keywords.

Check out the career section on kellyservices.ca for more useful information.



Fine-tune your resumé

You can't be too careful when finalizing your document. Consider the following suggestions.

- At the bottom of your resumé, you may state "References available upon request." Then, on a separate sheet of paper, list the name, job title, organization, address, and phone number of each of your references (always ask for permission before using someone as a reference). If the recruiter asks you for references, you can quickly provide your list.
- Always proofread your resumé and have others proof it as well, because typographical and grammatical errors on a resumé may eliminate you from consideration—even the smallest mistake can hurt your chances.
- Remember to keep your resumé short and simple. Avoid overcrowding by using lists or brief paragraphs, eliminate unnecessary words, and use bullet points whenever possible.
- Do not include personal information (e.g., age, race, religion, marital status). It is illegal to make hiring decisions based on these factors and having them in your resumé is inappropriate.
- Avoid personal pronouns (e.g., I, me). It's okay to state, "Accomplished a 40 percent increase in sales," instead of, "I increased sales by 40 percent."
- Make your resumé easy to read. Do not use multiple fonts, font sizes, or complicated formatting. Keep it clean, simple, and professional.
- Do not attach copies of transcripts, letters of recommendation, or awards to your resumé. If the recruiter wants any of these, he or she will ask for them.
- Remember, it's all about first impressions. Use high-quality resumé paper in a neutral color, and avoid background graphics and staples.

Things to know about electronic resumé

When sending your resumé electronically, the format will have to be changed so that the content will be understandable to online recruiters. The following guidelines will help you format an easy-to-read electronic resumé.

- Use plain text—avoid bold or italic words.
- Use hyphens (“-”) instead of bullets.
- “Save” or “save as” your resumé as a text-only (TXT or RTF) file.
- Left justified is the preferred format for online viewing.

Posting online vs. working with a recruiter

As a job seeker, you obviously want access to the best opportunities. Using online job boards as well as recruiters can be a great way to gain the visibility you need, but it should be done with caution. Keep these tips in mind when posting your resumé online and working with a recruiter simultaneously.

Be in control. Always keep track of your resumé. Carefully select where you post it online, and communicate that information to your recruiter to avoid overexposure and confusion by the potential employer.

Be selective. When it comes to job boards, it’s worth spending time to research the various resources available. It makes sense to use job boards specifically for your skills and industry.

Be alert. If you are currently employed, find out which online resources your company’s recruiters use to find new employees. That way, you’ll avoid the awkwardness—and potential negative outcome—of your company finding out that you are actively searching for a job. In this case, it’s probably a good idea to consider working with a recruiter only.

Now what?

Follow-up is an essential part of the job search. After sending your resumé to a prospective employer, you don’t want to simply wait around for a response, and you shouldn’t call the next day either. These guidelines will help you follow up appropriately.

- Practice a one-week waiting period. It could take your resumé a few days to get to the right person, and that person will most likely need a few days to review it.
- It is acceptable to send a brief e-mail, rather than make a phone call. Just be sure to include your full name in the subject line and the position you applied for somewhere in the message.
- Restate your qualifications as well as your interest in the position. Feel free to inquire about the timeframe for filling the position.
- If sending an e-mail, you could attach your resumé in case the recipient has not yet had a chance to review it.
- Proofread your e-mail very carefully. Errors could reflect negatively on your qualifications.
- Whether making a phone call or sending an e-mail, it’s important to come across as being proactive, not pushy.

Embrace technology

Recruiters and personal relationships are probably the most effective means to building your network and securing a new job. But don't overlook the benefits of technology. More and more recruiters and companies are using today's digital mediums to find the best talent. As a job seeker, you can make these mediums work for you, too!



Temporary
Temporary to Hire
Direct Hire

Areas of Expertise*

Automotive
Contact Centre
Creative Services
Education
Electronic Assembly
Engineering
Finance and Accounting
Government
Healthcare
Industrial
Information Technology
Law
Marketing
Office
Science

Project Services

Project Teams
Project Management
PMO Integration
SOW-based Services

Outsourcing & Consulting Solutions

Recruitment Process Outsourcing
Business Process Outsourcing
Contingent Workforce Outsourcing
Human Resources Consulting
Career Transition & Organizational Effectiveness
Executive Search

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