

Resume Guide



The purpose of a resume is to showcase your experiences and relevant transferable skills. Your resume should include a minimum of six sections:

1. Contact Information
2. Education
3. Work Experience
4. Career Skills and Awards
5. Extracurricular/Volunteer/Community Activities
6. Interests

1. CONTACT INFORMATION

- Your name should be bolded and a slightly larger font than the other text
- If your home and school address are different, use the address where you would be living if you secured the job
- Ensure you have a professional voice mail message for the number you provide
- Include LinkedIn profile address
- Use your McMaster e-mail address

2. EDUCATION

Variations EDUCATION AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS
 EDUCATION AND AWARDS
 EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Include expected date of completion
- Include coursework/special projects if relevant to role
- Do not include a list of specific courses unless they are specifically requested
- Scholarship and Academic Awards: state merits for receiving - do not include if awarded only for financial need
- Include GPA if requested by employer or if you feel confident that it will strengthen your application
- Include any relevant designations, either completed or in progress; if in progress include dates, level
- Include exchange experience, format in the same way as DeGroote Education

3. WORK EXPERIENCE

Variations PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE
 RELATED EXPERIENCE

- In heading – Job title should come first (bold); next line, employer, city and province (italics)
- List experiences in reverse chronological order,
 - Dates should be right justified
- Include three to five STAR statements per work experience (see Pg. 2 for details)
- Do not repeat words - vary the action-verbs used
- Include experiences from the last four years (high school experiences should be limited)

4. CAREER SKILLS

Variations SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS
CAREER SKILLS

- Include computer related skills with level of proficiency
- Include language skills (state level of proficiency and differentiate between verbal/written skill)
- List achievements that would directly enhance brand and relate to role (ie. certificates, community awards), if irrelevant, do not include (ie. smart serve or life guard certification for a job in finance)
- Do not simply list words or soft skills (i.e. organized, team player) these should be incorporated within your experiences

5. EXTRACURRICULAR AND VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

Variations COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

Best Practices

- In heading – Title should come first (bold); comma, organisation name (italics)
- Reverse chronological order, including dates (right justified)
- Treat these activities the same way you would your work experience - ensure that you are highlighting transferable skills and achievements
- Include two to three STAR statements per activity; you can use character skills/qualities here, ie. encouraged, motivated, showed compassion, persevered
- Includes roles within clubs, organizations and sports teams (if beyond basic membership)

6. INTERESTS

Variations ACTIVITIES AND INTERESTS

- Include a minimum of three
- Include memberships, competitions
- Be specific, not just "travel" or "music" – include why, what, dates, etc.

STAR STATEMENTS

For the WORK EXPERIENCE, EXTRACURRICULAR, VOLUNTEER AND COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES sections of your resume, every bullet describing your experiences should be STAR statements.

Your experiences may not seem relevant to your future career. However, all your experiences help you develop transferable skills. You simply need to identify these skills and share their value with a prospective employer.

By using STAR statements you will highlight relevant transferable skills that you developed and demonstrated. Now those seemingly irrelevant experiences are suddenly very relevant and add great value for the employer!

Skill: Which skill was used?

Time: When did you use that skill?

Action: What specific action did you take?

Result: What impact/outcome was achieved? (See Pg. 3 for examples)

Sometimes it can be hard to articulate which skills you used. Below is a list of some transferable skills:

Adaptability/Flexibility	Facilitating	Managing Others
Attention to Detail	Judgment	Planning and Organization
Communication	Influencing/Persuading	Problem Solving
Critical Thinking	Initiative	Presenting
Customer Focus/Managing Relationships	Innovation	Technical & Professional Knowledge
Creativity	Integrity	Teamwork
Conflict Management	Interpersonal Skills	Time Management
Decision Making	Leadership	Work Ethic

MOST IMPORTANT SKILLS TO INCLUDE:

On every job description the employer will list skills and qualifications they are looking for. Incorporate as many of these that you possess (keep it honest!). The more closely your resume reflects the job posting the better! Try to include these skills near the top of your resume.

EXAMPLE RESULTS:

- ...**increased** speed and service to clients
- ...**ensuring** all customer questions were answered and problems resolved
- ...**resulting** in awareness of products and profitability for the store
- ...**receiving** positive feedback from children and parents
- ...**enhancing** customer satisfaction and retention
- ...**developing** team cohesion and efficiency
- ...**saving** processing time for staff to complete other duties

*Any results which also include quantifiable outcomes or accomplishments are highly encouraged

FORMATTING TIPS

- All dates should be right justified
- Resume should NOT exceed two pages
- Must fill at least 2/3 of page two in order to justify a second page
- At the top of page two –include NAME, E-MAIL, PAGE 2 of 2
- Do not include the same year twice for an experience (May-June 2015 *not* May 2015-June 2015)
- Ensure all bullets and spacing are consistent
- All bullet points should be written in past tense
- Do not use any personal pronouns- “I”, “me”, “my”
- Number one to ten written in full; 11+ written numerically
- Limit of 2 different font sizes
- Same font throughout
- Don’t overuse bolding/italics
- The bullets for an experience should not be broken up over two pages
- Spell check – once, twice, three times at least!

Sample Resume:

Jane M. Smith

Address, City, Province A1B 2C3
(905) 555-1234 • janesmith@mcmaster.ca
www.linkedin.com/your.profile

EDUCATION

Honours Bachelor of Commerce

September 2013 - Present

DeGroot School of Business, McMaster University, Hamilton, ON

- Area of focus: Accounting, Pursuing Minor in Economics
- Dean's Honour List 2011 and 2012
- Member of Golden Key Honour Society for being amongst top 15% of class, September 2012 – Present
- Expected Completion: April 2017

Honours Bachelor of Commerce

July – December 2016

Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand

- Studied Level 3 Business as an international student for one semester

Chartered Financial Analyst Program, Level 1 exam

June 2016

WORK EXPERIENCE

Sales and Operations Support

May 2015 - August 2016

IBM Canada, Markham, ON

- Trained four new sales representatives on the Forecasting template and sales growth strategy for 2016, which allowed individuals to update and manipulate data as required
- Prepared Personal Business Commitment packages for representatives and Manager, improving internal customer relations
- Created e-contact customer list and new tracking system in Microsoft Access identifying new business leads for national sales force
- Recognized for "Excellent Sales Support and Willingness to Learn" and for "Quickly Picking up the Role and Adding Value to the Team" as part of the Thanks! Award Program

Shift Supervisor

September 2013 - August 2014

Starbucks Coffee, Hamilton, ON

- Led and directed a team of 12; received 'Moves of Uncommon Greatness' award for receiving 99 percent store 'Snapshot' based on excellent service provided to secret shopper
- Delegated tasks based on personal strengths and interests to a team of six shift employees, which motivated them to perform tasks to best of ability
- Brainstormed with other supervisors to design and implement new strategies to improve store dynamic; created communication log increasing consistency in delivery of store and promotions announcements.
- Coached 16 new employees, one-on-one and delegated responsibility with respect, resulting in increased speed and service to patrons
- Analyzed inventories of coffee and paper supplies created stock orders and partnered with suppliers ensuring shipments delivered on time

Employment Clerk

April – August 2013

Mohawk College, Hamilton, ON

- Implemented strong attention to detail when completing typing, printing, and the assembly of custom courseware manuals and course outlines, optimizing the operations of the office
- Prepared databases and performed merges for large mail-outs using Word, managing tight timelines and using organization skills, ensuring timely distribution to external clients
- Handled reception of visitors, transfer of calls, answered general inquiries, delivering quality customer service and upholding the brand standard of the college

SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS

- Proficient in Microsoft; Excel, Word, PowerPoint and Access
- Basic knowledge of HTML programming
- French: strong written and basic verbal communication skills

EXTRACURRICULAR AND VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

Volunteer, *Hamilton Cancer Assistance Program, Hamilton, ON*

March 2014 – Present

- Organized four annual events, in collaboration with the Coordinator, to help raise over \$1K annually for the Hamilton Cancer Society
- Recruited and trained over nine student volunteers for telethon promotions, supporting the organization to successfully meet monthly targets for fundraising

Welcome Week Greensuit, *DeGroot Commerce Society*

September 2014

- Directed traffic and unloaded belongings for over 600 first year Commerce students during Welcome Week, using initiative, organization and strong interpersonal skills to help effectively transition them to the university and campus

Administrative Assistant, *Ontario Ball Hockey League, Hamilton, ON*

June 2012 – July 2014

- Organized practice and tournament dates and collected fees from players to ensure smooth execution of the league each week

INTERESTS

- Student Member, CPA Ontario
- Student Member, DeGroot Accounting Association (September 2016 – Present)
- Participant, McMaster DECA U Business Case Competition (January 2015)
- Attended the Sports and Business Conference, John Molson School of Business
- Sports – recreational swimming, snowboarding
- Travel – backpacked across India and Turkey (Summer 2013)
- Daily reader of the Wall Street Journal and avid followers of the TSE

Additional Resources

Action Words

Using “action words” when describing your past experience helps to convey the impression that you have taken action and achieved results in the past. Action words also help to demonstrate and describe your uniqueness.

GENERAL VERBS AND DESCRIPTORS

affected	effected	monitored	revised
accelerated	eliminated	motivated	scheduled
accepted	encouraged	observed	served
achieved	enjoyed	obtained	set priorities
acted	established	organized	set up
adapted	evaluated	participated	shaped
administered	examined	performed	significantly
approved	excelled	persuaded	simplified
assisted	expanded	pinpointed	solved
automated	expedited	planned	sparked
collected	facilitated	practiced	strategize
completed	followed through	predicted	streamlined
composed	found	prepared	strengthened
comprehend	generated	presented	structured
conceived	guided	prioritized	studied
concentrated on	handled	produced	successfully
conducted	heavily involved in	programmed	supplied
conferred	helped	proposed	synthesized
copied	identified	provided	taught
created	improved	purchased	tended
debated	increased	recommended	tested
delegated	influenced	recorded	translated
delivered	interpreted	reduced	trimmed
demonstrated	investigated	reinforced	tutored
designed	launched	reorganized	upgraded
developed	led	reported	utilized
directed	maintained	represented	wrote
displayed	manipulated	researched	
distributed	mediated	revamped	
edited	modified	reviewed	

WORDS RELATED TO ABILITIES AND SKILLS

ability to	counseled	lectured	strong dedication to
adept at	created	mastered	supervised
analyzed	delegated	operated	taught
appraised	developed	performed	technical competence in
aptitude for	assisted	planned	thorough understanding
artistically presented	implemented	practiced	trained
assembled	increased productivity	proficient in	understood
built	increased profit	recruited	well versed in
capable of	initiated	reduced expenses	worked well with others
communicated	innovated	repaired	wrote
composed	installed	scheduled	
conceived	instructed	solved problems	
constructed	interviewed	strength in	

WORDS STRESSING ABILITY TO ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY

accelerated	guided corporate	operated	solid foundation in
accepted responsibility	policies	planned	sound overview of
alerted	handled	prime emphasis on	sparked
automated	handled stress	prioritized	streamlined
concentrated on	heavily involved in	processed	strong dedication to
controlled	identified	produced	well versed in
coordinated	implemented	revamped	worked well under
drove	improved	scheduled	pressure
guided	increased efficiency	shaped and directed	
	independent		

WORDS AND PHRASES WHICH INDICATE DESIRE TO GET AHEAD

accepted responsibility	enormous capacity	improved	results-oriented
action-oriented	entrepreneurial	invented	self-motivated
adapted	viewpoint	launched	strategic
compulsive drive	high-energy person	met deadlines	success-oriented

WORDS REFERRING TO COMPETENCE WITH DATA

analyzed	completed	evaluated	summarized
automated	computed	filed	synthesized
calculated	coordinated	formulated	
compared	copied	memorized	
compiled	estimated	solved	

WORDS AND PHRASES TO INDICATE MANAGEMENT ABILITY

administered	inspired confidence
advised	instituted
aptitude for	involved
authority over	led
built	leadership ability
capable of formulating and directing	managed
capacity for	mastered
closely supervised	motivated
command respect	negotiated
conducted	operated
constructed	organized
controlled	oversaw
coordinated	promoted
decision maker	recommended
delegated	recruited
directed	reorganized
drove	set up
effective in	shaped
established	spearheaded
expanded	strict control of
founded	strong leader
guided	successful with people
headed	supervised
high-level supervisory skills	took charge of
hired	trained
in charge of	well-grounded
increased productivity	willing to take the initiative
initiated	

WORDS AND PHRASES TO SHOW PROFIT ORIENTATION

ability to trim costs and increase efficiency	increased profit
ability to identify and solve problems	problem solver
organizational cost cutting measures	profit-conscious
bookkeeping	profit-minded
budgeted	raised funds
controlled spiraling costs	reduced excessive costs
cost-oriented	results-oriented
curtailed spending	set priorities
drastically cut without reduced sales	shortcut to
efficient	simplified procedures
eliminated bottlenecks	sold
expense-minded	streamlined
generated cost savings	strict control of

WORDS AND PHRASES WHICH STRESS COMPETENCE

ability to demonstrated knowledgeable confident in	energetic about enthusiastic about expertly trained passionate about	perform well under pressure persistent results-oriented	self-motivated skillful strength in thoroughly trained in
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WORDS REFERING TO COMPETENCE WITH OTHERS

advised communicated cooperated crises intervention developed support/trust diverted	encouraged listened helped instructed mentored negotiated	participated partnered with persuaded resolved respected served	signaled spoke to supervised team player understood
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WORDS OR PHRASES THAT REFLECT INTELLIGENCE

able to think analytically fast-thinking inquisitive numerical ability	common sense good memory logical thinker perceptive	creative idea generation mental capacity probing mind
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Adapted from: The Complete Do-It-Yourself Resume Manual, H.A. Bezanson, Fleetwood Communications, 1985

Action Oriented Words and Phrases

The following lists can help you develop STAR statements for your activities; these are examples of activities that demonstrate the skills employers are seeking. **Use them to help you get started, however you must add specific details and results to show how and where you demonstrated these skills.**

LEADERSHIP SKILLS

- independently moved into totally new situations
- took initiative in developing relationships
- continually searching for more responsibility
- excellent at organizing my time/time of others
- works without supervision/self-directed
- unwilling to automatically accept status quo
- keen perception of the potential of things rather than accepting status quo
- acts as agent of change/promote major changes
- plans, initiates, affects change
- sees a problem and acts immediately to solve it
- deals well with the unexpected or critical issues
- able to act decisively in emergencies
- adept at confronting others with difficult personal matters
- no fear of taking manageable/educated risks
- adept at policy making
- able to terminate projects/people/processes when necessary
- inspiring, motivating, and leading organized groups
- skilled at chairing meetings
- leads others/impresses others with charisma and enthusiasm

ABILITY TO PERFORM

- confidently participates in group settings
- poised in public appearances
- exceptional speaking ability
- articulates/stimulates people and generates enthusiasm
- understands value of the ridiculous in illuminating reality
- conducting and directing public affairs and ceremonies
- develops strong, artistic (visual) presentations

INFLUENCE/PERSUASION SKILLS

- establishes rapport quickly
- inspires trust in minds of others
- expert in reasoning persuasively/developing a thought
- influences the attitudes, ideas of others
- promotes ideas, products effectively without tearing down competing ideas or products
- sells program or course of action to decision-makers
- develops markets for ideas/products
- motivates others and stimulate them to action
- gets diverse groups to work together, adept at conflict management
- mediates between contending parties or groups
- negotiates to joint decisions
- crisis intervention

DETAIL AND RESULTS ORIENTATION

- follows detailed instructions
- expert at meeting deadlines, within budget
- skilled at making arrangements for events, processes
- adept at finding ways to speed up a job
- able to handle a variety of tasks and responsibilities simultaneously and efficiently
- works well under stress and can still improvise
- keen and accurate memory for detail
- excels at systematic ordering and manipulating of data
- collates data accurately and compares with previous data

NUMERICAL/ACCOUNTING/FINANCIAL SKILLS

- high accuracy in computing
- financial planning and management/maintain financial records
- conducts economic research and analysis
- performs cost analyses, estimates, projections, comparisons
- develops a budget/budget planning, preparation, justification, administration, review
- skilled at allocating scarce financial resources
- prepares financial reports
- uses numbers as reasoning tool/sophisticated mathematical abilities
- effective at solving statistical problems

COMMUNICATION SKILLS/ABILITY TO CONVEY IDEAS

- expresses self clearly, effectively; intelligently expresses a position
- able to explain difficult or complex ideas, concepts, problems
- verbal/linguistic skills in foreign language(s)
- adept at translating jargon into meaningful terms
- explicit and concise writing skills
- flair for writing reports and speeches (technical or otherwise)
- creates imaginative advertising and publicity programs
- relates well in dealing with the public
- excels at customer relations, services

HUMAN RELATIONS/HELPING/SERVICE SKILLS

- sensitive to other's needs
- keen ability to relate to people
- listens intently and accurately/conveys awareness
- expertise in interpersonal contact
- tactful, diplomatic, discrete
- effective in dealing with different kinds of people
- works well as part of a team/collaborates with colleagues skillfully
- motivates others
- readily willing to share credit with others and express appreciation
- works well in hostile environment/handles difficult customers/employees tactfully and effectively
- able to ignore undesirable qualities in others
- thorough understanding of human motivations
- adept at helping people with life/work adjustments

INSTRUCTIONAL/EDUCATIONAL SKILLS

- fosters a stimulating learning environment
- adept at using visual communications
- advises/aids people in making decisions
- ability to hear and answer questions perceptively
- keen ability to help others express their views
- facilitates personal growth and development of others
- clarifies goals, values of others
- designs educational events/organizes and administers in-house training programs
- trains/group facilitating/provides leadership to groups, encourages discussion

OBSERVATION SKILLS/ABILITY TO LEARN

- highly observant of people, data, things
- skilled listener
- committed to personal growth and learning
- learns from example of others
- assesses and identifies potential in others
- assesses situations quickly and accurately
- instinctively understands political realities

ORGANIZATION AND PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT SKILLS

- approaches goal-setting systematically
- establishes effective priorities among competing requirements
- policy formation and interpretation
- excels at program development, planning
- skilled at planning well-run meetings, seminars
- adept at bringing order to chaotic environment
- brings people together in cooperative efforts
- able to call in experts/helpers as required
- recognizes and utilizes skills of others
- creates and maintains on-time work schedules
- coordinates operations and details
- assesses the effectiveness of other people
- property, plant, facilities management
- makes decisions about others and supervises/manages the output of others

RESEARCH/ANALYSIS/EVALUATION SKILLS

- anticipates situations before they become problems
- recognizes the need for more information to make an intelligent decision
- skilled at clarifying problems or situations
- adept at gathering information
- analyzes community needs, values, resources
- perceives and defines cause and effect relationships
- ability to trace problems to their source
- organizes material, information in a systematic manner
- excels at problem-solving, trouble-shooting
- reviewing and evaluating proposals by measurable or subjective criteria
- high level of decision-making skills, not afraid to re-evaluate programs, decisions, ideas