



How to Attract Interviews with a Winning Australian Resume

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Attention all Job-Seekers

A well-written resume can mean the difference between attracting interviews and securing job-offers or being passed over for promotion and career development by other job-seekers whose resumes more clearly communicate their successes and contributions and effectively position them as the most suitable person for the role.

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There is no doubt that as the job market becomes more competitive, job-seekers will need to adjust their job-hunting strategies to ensure that they are making it to the interview stage. Gone are the days where you were able to secure interviews with a simple template cover letter and resume.

More and more job-seekers are tapping into the professional writing services offered by career development consultants, investing huge amounts of time and money and ensuring that they give themselves the best possible opportunity for interview and ultimately career and job development.

There is no doubt that a well-written resume WILL:

- ~ **Radically improve your chances of attracting interviews and securing job offers.** In some public sector environments decisions to hire can be made on the quality of the written application (usually selection criteria statement, cover letter and resume) ONLY!
- ~ **Position you as the most suitable person.** It should communicate your experience and contributions in a marketing and saleable way and effectively convey your unique selling points.
- ~ **Showcase your accomplishments and get you thinking about your experience in a results-orientated way.** Without identifying and clearly communicating your value, you will blend into the abyss of other job-seekers. Remember that recruiters and hiring managers will need be “Wowed” as it is not uncommon in today’s job-market for them to receive in excess of 50 applications per position.
- ~ **Overcome possible barriers to employment** including limited experience (graduates and school-leavers) lack of local experience and relevant experience (migrants and those seeking a career-change), preconceptions and stereotypes (mature-aged workers) and gaps in employment.
- ~ **Get results** which may mean attracting more interviews, securing better job offers, negotiating higher pay packets and ensuring access to career development opportunities

So, if you’re tired of missing out on interviews for positions that you are well-qualified and experienced for, being overlooked for promotion and career development opportunities and not earning the salary that you deserve you will benefit from reading and incorporating the advice and strategies that I offer as part of this FREE report *How to Attract Interviews with a Winning Australian Resume*.

I know that not everyone can afford to engage a professional resume writer, as part of their job-search strategy, however if you follow my step-by-step advice and incorporate my tips and strategies you will equip yourself with skills and information designed to radically transform your current resume.

Happy resume writing!

Nikky Rhodes

Resume Writing Credentials

Certified Resume & Selection Criteria Specialist (CRS - Australian Public Service)

Certified Expert Resume Writer (CERW)

Certified Advanced Resume Writer (CARW)

Author:

How to Write Selection Criteria: A Step-by-Step Guide

FREE newsletter “*Unlock your Career Potential*” covering diverse range of topics including essential information on writing resumes, addressing selection criteria, preparing for interviews, work/life integration, your rights and responsibilities at work, job-searching, changing careers, your transferable skill set, recruitment and selection, application assessments, salary negotiation and career development.

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Step One

Prepare a rough outline of your resume

Think about the information that you want to include. Generally most resumes will follow a similar structure and framework, however based on your level of experience and the nature of roles that you are applying for you can play around with this.

I'd recommend including the following information at a bare minimum.

Contact Information

Include your name, address, telephone numbers and email address. This may seem pretty obvious but I have seen many resumes WITHOUT this essential information. Try to include this information on every page so that if your application gets mixed up with those of other job-seekers there will be no confusion about how to contact you.

- ~ **Keep your email address professional** – remember you are trying to create a positive and memorable first impression so email addresses such as hotchick@hotmail.com and gorgeoushunk@aol.com should be used for personal communication only!
- ~ **Number all of your pages** by using the page number option as part of your header or footers.
- ~ **Include only your mobile and/or home telephone numbers** unless you know that your business telephone number has a private voicemail that can only be accessed by yourself or if you are happy to take calls at work and can talk openly.

Career Marketing Profile

This has replaced the outdated career objective where you talk about what you are hoping to achieve in your career and has been replaced by a short paragraph, written in a marketing and sales-oriented way, positioned at the beginning of your resume highlighting your unique value, in relation to positions that you are applying for. The information that you include here should summarise your skills, experience and competencies and ensure that the hiring manager or recruiter is easily able to translate your current experience and value-add to their unique situation and challenges.

Remember that in today's competitive job market it is about what you can offer them and NOT the other way around!

Strengths & Capabilities

These are keywords that relate to your knowledge, abilities and expertise and should closely match the keyword outlined as part of job adverts and position descriptions.

In some cases, the initial screening process will be conducted by computer and recruitment software so it is really important that you include keywords that relate directly to your skill set and experience, as well as the requirements of the role.

Computer Skills/Technical Ability

This is especially important if you are applying for positions within administration and ICT however may be less relevant if you are applying for any roles where these skills are less important. Make sure that you include relevant information related to typing speeds and data entry skills.

Don't include information that will date your application. For example – if you used a software application years ago and it has now been replaced by a more up-to-date package don't make reference to it. Doing so will date your application, show your age and also lead to the employer questioning how in touch and up-to-date you are with emergent technology.

Education/Professional Development

If you are a new graduate or have not been out of school for very long, it may be prudent to include the dates of your recent education and/or current qualifications that you are pursuing. As you gain more experience within the workforce this may prove less important.

The idea is that you include information that supports your application. Including dates about your school certificates when you have over 10 years of work experience will date your application and may lead to

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employers/hiring managers making quick judgments about you and experience. A modern resume will be truthful and engaging and should not include anything that may harm your application!

It's not necessary to include information about ALL of the professional development courses that you have completed over the course of your career to date. Instead you may choose to include only courses that you have completed over the past 5 years or those that are directly relevant to your application. If you are applying for roles in the APS remember to include all information on all partially completed courses and those that may relate directly to health and safety, cultural diversity, equal employment opportunity and APS Values and Code of Conduct.

Internships/Clinical Placements

If you are a new graduate or have limited work experience you may choose to include information related to internships or clinical placements. Treat this as you would your paid employment experience and include details such as dates, organisations, departments, duties, challenges and achievements. As you gain more work experience this will become less important, however this information can play a key role in setting you apart from other job-seekers and graduates who may have obtained better grades.

Career History

For each role that you have held you should include the following information:

Company/Organisation
 Dates of employment
 Role/s held
 Overview of your role
 Key accomplishments

Unless your earlier experience is relevant it is not necessary to go back more than 10-15 years. Anything more will date your application and not serve any value. Of course, there are exceptions to the norm and if you choose to include earlier experience, I'd usually recommend highlighting and summarising this as an earlier employment section.

Voluntary Experience

Including information on your voluntary and community contributions will add value to your application in most cases. This is especially true if you have limited work experience, have taken a break from paid employment or are seeking a career change.

Treat your voluntary employment as you would paid experience and think about the challenges that you have overcome and the issues that you have dealt with. Detailing your voluntary experience will give your employer some insight about you as a person and the types of areas that you are interested in.

Referees

In most cases, 2-3 contacts (including contact information) will be sufficient. However, you may wish to provide additional details in case your referees are unavailable. Make sure that you include some detail about their position and employer – this will be particularly important if they have moved companies and it is not immediately clear what the nature of your relationship is.

Try to keep all of your referee information professional and if you have the option to include details for work references, do this ahead of personal and character references. Most recruiters will question only personal referees particularly if you have gained sound work experience and it may result in them questioning your integrity and making assumptions about why you have omitted this information.

Step Two

Decide on a resume format

Whichever way you choose to present your experience make sure that it will support your application and give you the best possible opportunity to secure an interview. There are many resume formats available however I'll outline the two most common formats that I have come across in my career.

Chronological

This format provides a detailed chronology of your career history starting with your most recent position first and the remaining positions are listed in reverse-chronological order. Its presentation ensures that recruiters and hiring managers are able to easily and quickly follow your consecutive career history.

It is my personal favourite and in most cases the ONLY format that I would recommend. On the positive side it is most commonly used by new graduates, professionals, management and senior executives and those with a stable career history outlining a track record of exemplary performance.

Unfortunately for some job-seekers it will NOT hide a shady career history and short stints at multiple jobs without explanation. If this is your situation, you may be better off seeking the advice and support of a qualified expert who should be able to assist you to overcome gaps in employment, the perception of job-hopping and a varied and diverse career history.

Functional

This resume format focuses on your skills and competencies rather than your chronological work history and groups pieces of similar information by skill and competency rather than by employer/job title.

As a recruiter, I immediately became suspicious of applicants who apply for positions using a functional resume format. This is because it is usually the preferred choice of job-hoppers, those with limited experience and skills and those job-seekers with large gaps in employment.

Step Three

Focus on your achievements

The only thing that will set you apart from other job-seekers with similar skills sets and experience will be your ability to clearly articulate what you have achieved for the companies/organisations that you have worked for.

In today's competitive job markets, employers are interested in what you can do for them so you need to ensure that you answer these questions by relating your experience, skills and contributions back to the position description.

Unfortunately, this is the area that most job-seekers struggle with. You may go to work every-day, contribute to projects, improve work practices, save money and time, improve productivity and enhance morale but this is the type of information that will make recruiters and hiring managers sit up and take notice.

In my book "How to Write Selection Criteria; A Step-by-Step Guide" I have dedicated a chapter to this essential process aptly named – Brainstorm for examples, identify your core achievements and transferable skills". For more information head to this link

<http://www.careerpro.net.au/BookshopIndex.html>

In it, are easy, practical questions to ask yourself about the things that you have achieved for your previous employers. They include:

- ~ What challenges/problems have you overcome?
- ~ Where have you saved time/money?
- ~ Improved productivity levels/ ways of doing things?
- ~ How have you improved employee morale?
- ~ What initiatives have you implemented? How did you go about this?
- ~ What impact did your actions/ideas have?

It may help you when you brainstorming your achievements to use the CAR/PAR model.

C - Challenge

A - Action

R - Result

P – Problem

A – Action

R – Result

Think about the challenges that you have faced or problems that you have overcome, the actions that you have taken and the outcome of your actions.

Step Four

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Quantify your achievements!

What I mean by this is that you should add context to your achievements/contributions by highlighting your results and providing an accurate measure of what you have achieved!

Unfortunately, this is not always possible but if you are able to provide this information then you should do so. **Examples include:**

- ~ *Reduced workload from 50% to 25% through streamlining administrative procedures which enabled greater focus on strategic human resources*
- ~ *Led service improvement initiatives in the use of advanced image processing equipment. Recommended the introduction of “dummy shots” (conditioning of tubes) on different KVs which minimised the need for costly tube-changes saving \$20,000.*
- ~ *Significantly reduced repair and service costs resulting cost-savings of 66% and 75% for the Mater Hospital.*
- ~ *Successfully achieved sales of 150% over target through proactive, persistent and tenacious approach to new business development and marketing.*
- ~ *Achieved overall employee satisfaction ratings of 110% through hands-on approach to team management, clear communication and capacity to resolve interpersonal issues through collaborative work practices.*

Step Five

Use information from third parties to support your claims

Include extracts/information from references, letters of recommendation, client thank you notes and performance reviews to add credibility to your resume. It's really easy to go overboard here so try to use this information sparingly.

I'd also recommend starting a resume update folder, either electronically, or paper-based where you can file and record this information. By doing this, you will be able to locate and easily update your resume the next time you are looking for employment.

This is an excerpt from my own resume and you can see how effective it is:

CAREER MARKETING CONSULTANT

+ 10 years of combined experience as Professional Writer, Recruiter, Hiring Manager & Human Resources Expert

"I hope you are well. This is a quick message to let you know how grateful I am for all the work you've put into my resume, cover letter and selection criteria. To date, I have managed to secure two interviews for two fantastic senior positions. And all I had to do was to adapt the documents that you had prepared for me to suit the roles. What's more it ONLY took the recruitment consultant less than 20 minutes and 2 hours respectively to respond to my online applications! Today I'm going for my first interview, -very excited, my second one is next week!"

Irina Tadevosyan, Marketing Professional

Step Six

Nominate your referees wisely!

The information that your referees provide to your prospective employer or hiring manager can literally make or break your application so choose them wisely. Consider the following information when nominating your referees.

- ~ **Choose someone who you KNOW will support your application!** Seems obvious I know, But you'd be surprised at the number of job-seekers that I have spoken to who have got all the way to interview only to have their job offers cruelly withheld from them because they have not been supported by the person that they have nominated as a referee!
- ~ **Tell your referees that you are looking for employment and warn them that they may be contacted by a prospective employer.** When I worked as a recruiter there was nothing worse than contacting a referee who had no idea that they had been nominated as one! If you can, tell them

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about the roles that you will be applying for and make sure that they have a copy of your current resume on record so that they are knowledgeable and professional when communicating about your experience and credentials. Remember, they should be supporting your application and working in your best interests.

- ~ **If you have limited work experience, try to choose someone who can comment on your ability within a work capacity.** This may be someone from your voluntary or part-time employment. If you are struggling with nominating referees consider someone who will be able to support your claims and add credibility to your application.

Step Seven

Proof-read your resume and make sure that it is visually appealing

It goes without saying that you **MUST** proof-read your resume prior to submission and if you have the time get a friend to proof-read it for you. Things to watch out for:

- ~ **Check any application requirements.** Review the application instructions, particularly if you are applying for a role in the APS. There may be specific requirements in relation the length of your resume, type and size of font and information required.
- ~ **Set your spell/grammar check** to English-Australian rather than English US which will avoid common differences in spelling such as organisation/organization, behaviour/behavior, and maximise/maximize.
- ~ **Try to give yourself some time away** from the document so you that you can review it after a break. You will be more likely to pick up mistakes once you've had some time away from the document.
- ~ **Make liberal use of "white space"** to break up thick chunks of text and create balance on the page. Another good idea is to use bullets to ensure that your information is well-organised and easy to follow.
- ~ **Use bold, underlining, and italics** for information that you wish to highlight and draw attention to but don't overdo it as if you go overboard your resume will become hard to read and follow.

OK, so what next?

This FREE resume writing guide is a good place to start in researching, preparing and writing your resume. You can use it as a simple framework to expand your knowledge and capabilities within the area.

Alternatively, if you want to save time and improve your chances of interview, why not get us to develop your resume on your behalf?

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I welcome your feedback on this resource and will happily respond to any related questions you may have about preparing cover letters, government applications and resumes. I look forward to hearing from you!

If you have found this FREE download useful, you may be interested in reading more as part of my e-book on "How to Write Selection Criteria: A Step-by-Step Guide: <http://www.careerpro.net.au/BookshopIndex.html>