

Resumes and Application Tips

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Career Inventory

Start by spending 10 minutes of quiet time answering the following questions – be honest!

- What do you enjoy doing at work?
- What are top five key strengths or talents?
- Is the advertised job a good fit for you, your experience, qualities, knowledge and experience?
- What interests you the most about this job?
- Where do you want to be in 1 year?
- Where do you want to be in 5 years?

Resumé Writing

Your resumé is a marketing tool that highlights your strengths and skills to a potential employer. You must be able to present it with confidence:

- Review your résumé at least 4 times a year
- Update and re-format and ensure there are no spelling errors
- The first page is critical to the reader
- Do not make unsupportive claims
- Only list your relevant roles
- Do not list all details of roles over 10 years old, these can be condensed
- Be succinct and clear and use dot points for easy reading
- Referees need not be listed
- List in chronological order your qualifications, education and training
- Use subtle colour and professional font design
- List up to 5-6 main responsibilities and 3 achievements
- Must be no more than 2-3 pages
- Include a cover letter, only if requested

Application Writing

An application gives you the opportunity to provide in detail your experience, knowledge, skills and ability.

- Read the role description and duties thoroughly
- Discuss job requirements with the nominated contact person and ask them some questions about the role while introducing yourself!
- Tailor the application to suit the roles keywords and duties
- Save a new application, do not cut and paste from previous applications
- Maintain their interest as if reading a book
- Use the same style of writing, such as past or current tense
- Re-read, ask a friend to proof read, check spelling and grammar
- Respond to all the criteria or competencies as advertised by using strong work examples
- Keep to any requested requirements such as 2 pages in length

Format and Structure

- Choose moderate margins in your word document and no smaller than 1.75cm
- Format document with the same font and size, do not use any font below 10
- Avoid jargon and acronyms unless spelling them out in full
- Use headings well to clearly identify the sections or response required
- Use colours where necessary to brighten up a resume, preferably blue, dark red or blue/grey
- Use dot points to easily explain a task and the associated actions
- Use non-standard dot points to highlight your strengths and core skills
- Use well-structured paragraphs
- Remove any track changes from documents
- Check headers and footers
- Insert a page number, your name and any job references
- Use good quality A4 paper

Brainstorming Exercises

Not all examples are **good** or **relevant** to the job role. Make sure you do some brainstorming before writing your answers.

Finding **strong** examples to demonstrate your abilities can be challenging. You will need to jog your memory!

The following will help you respond to some of the standard criteria statements. Write down short answers and where possible include an example from your current or immediate role.

- What are the essential elements of communication?
- How do you build productive relationships at work with others?
- Where have you previously supervised or mentored another person?
- How do you achieve a win/win outcome when negotiating with clients?
- Where have you improved business processes?
- Describe how you interpret and apply complex legislation to customers?
- How do you convey technical knowledge to a non-technical audience to ensure your message is clearly understood?
- Where have you benefited a team, division or an organisation?
- Describe a time when you managed a project from start to finish and what was the outcome?
- How do you manage competing shifts in priorities?
- What are the important elements of customer service?
- Explain how you have solved a complex problem and arrived at a solution. What was the outcome?

STAR Method

A tried, tested and proven method in writing succinct, tailored work examples when writing applications, particularly for government roles.

- **Situation** – describe the scene in two or three sentences, what was the work environment and your role or responsibility in the situation
- **Task** – describe what the specific duty or task that you completed and why it needed to be done
- **Action** – how did you complete the task, what steps were required and what skills or knowledge were utilised. Was anyone else involved?
- **Result** – explain the end result or outcome in one or two sentences was it a success or is it still in progress, be specific

Do the **STAR** test for your application examples.

- S** Did you describe a SITUATION?
- T** Did you describe the TASKS involved?
- A** Did you explain the ACTION that was taken?
- R** Did you describe the RESULT from the action taken?

You should be able to answer 'Yes' to all questions listed above.

However, if you find some that cover the below questions, you are on the right track.

You should be able to answer 'Yes' to all these questions below once you have written your application.

- Does your example describe a behaviour or situation? Yes/No
- Does your example directly relate to the key duty or task? How?
- Is the example set in an area or environment relevant to the job? Yes/No
- Was the outcome positive and showed high quality performance?

Now use the following checklist to complete your resumé and application process.

Your Checklist

| | |
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| Obtain copy of role description and other relevant information | |
| Establish the job requirements and read the role description thoroughly | |
| Do I want this job? Why do I want this job? | |
| Do I meet the requirements? Will this fit my personality? | |
| Clarify questions with contact officer and call them | |
| Is the resumé a true reflection of myself and is it updated? | |
| Is the resumé highlighting key achievements, strengths and value that I can offer? | |
| Is the resumé clear, concise and easy to read? | |
| Check application for spelling, positive language and simple English | |
| Does application highlight my strengths? (STAR test) | |
| Get a friend or colleague to proof read | |
| Submit your application on time or earlier | |
| Do I have supporting material that I can take into the interview? | |
| Prepared a different example for each criteria or competency | |
| Prepared and read through sample questions for interview | |
| Recapped my application and job requirements before interview | |
| Things I need to remember.... | |