

RESUME TIPS: THINKING LIKE AN EMPLOYER

Lauryn Poulin
Career Advisor, Centre for Career Action
January 10, 2023



UNIVERSITY OF
WATERLOO



Image from "What Do Customers Look for in a Business?" ([businessnewsledger.com](https://www.businessnewsledger.com))

CENTRE FOR CAREER ACTION

**DID YOU BINGE
WATCH
ANYTHING OVER
THE BREAK?**



HOUSEKEEPING ITEMS



Image from: <https://reporter.mcgill.ca/from-surviving-to-thriving-peer-led-workshop-helps-grad-students-develop-resilience/>

Slides will be sent to you.

Lindy and Sana– technical support.

Have your resume handy (if you want)!

TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The University of Waterloo is located on the territory of the Neutral, Anishinaabeg and Haudenosaunee peoples and is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to the Six Nations that includes ten kilometers on each side of the Grand River.

Outside of KW area? Check out: <https://native-land.ca/>

[Office of Indigenous Relations](#)



LET'S MAKE THIS A SAFE SPACE

We are entering this workshop with the intention of creating as safe a space as possible for you.

- Participate in the way that feels most comfortable for you.
- Listen and learn from each other with grace.
- Ask questions.
- Remain respectful of others. We do not tolerate harmful behaviour.

STEPS TOWARDS BUILDING A GREAT RESUME

1



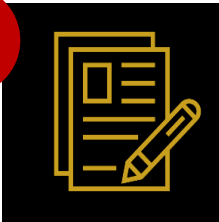
IDENTIFY your skills, interests, experience, values and work search goals.

2



ANALYZE job description(s) and **IDENTIFY** what employers are looking for in a successful candidate.

3



DESIGN & CREATE a document that showcases how you could contribute via your skills/experience.

4



REFINE your document to ensure it is making the right impression, highlighting your strengths, and speaking to employers.

STEPS TOWARDS BUILDING A GREAT RESUME



IDENTIFY your skills, interests, experience, values and work search goals.



ANALYZE job description(s) and **IDENTIFY** what employers are looking for in a successful candidate.



DESIGN & CREATE a document that showcases how you could contribute via your skills/experience.



REFINE your document to ensure it is making the right impression, highlighting your strengths, and speaking to employers.

SKILLS CAN COME FROM ANYWHERE



- Formal / informal training, courses, workshops.
- Relevant skills/experience:
 - Paid jobs
 - Volunteering
 - Student club/organization
 - Hobbies/Extracurricular activities
- Relevant projects/achievements.
- Awards and recognitions.

Role/Activity/Project/ Class/Club	Experience	Skills/Attributes
Took Biol 130 (Introductory Cell Biology).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed a DNA extraction and sequencing project and created a presentation for the class (received a grade of 89%). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project management. Communication and presentation skills. Laboratory skills (DNA extraction & bacteria culture).
Organized Fundraiser for Environmental Club.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinated and scheduled club meetings, annual clothing drive, bake sale events. Created posters and advertising materials. Managed the club's community bank account. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Microsoft Excel, Canva. Event planning, organization, and management. Budget and financial reviews.
Server at Boston Pizza.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Took food and drink orders from customers accurately and with a positive attitude. Collected payments from customers. Entered orders into computer system. 	

What skills do I want to (further) develop?

STEPS TOWARDS BUILDING A GREAT RESUME



IDENTIFY your skills, interests, experience, values and work search goals.



ANALYZE job description(s) and **IDENTIFY** what employers are looking for in a successful candidate.



DESIGN & CREATE a document that showcases how you could contribute via your skills/experience.



REFINE your document to ensure it is making the right impression, highlighting your strengths, and speaking to employers.

THE EMPLOYER PERSPECTIVE

What are employers looking for?	What problems do they notice?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relevant knowledge, skills, education, experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vague, confusing, or irrelevant content.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accomplishments and results– NOT duties performed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Poor written communication.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personality (and how it fits).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of visual appeal/formatting consistency.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Here's what you can do for me."

JOB DESCRIPTION ANALYSIS

Administrative Assistant | Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada

The Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada is an international leader in providing innovative services for people with MS and their families and advancing research into the cause and cure of multiple sclerosis. Reporting to the Finance Department, the successful candidate will be involved in the regular processing of financial transactions at the chapter, division, and national office level as well as a number of Finance projects supporting different business units. We are looking for an enthusiastic individual to fill an Administrative Assistant position with us.

Specific job responsibilities:

- Enter bank deposits from regional locations into accounting system
- Processing of accounts payable and accounts receivable transactions
- Review financial statements and maintain cash flow schedules for all locations on a monthly basis
- Complete financial analysis for various projects
- Assist with budget analysis and preparation of budget templates for next fiscal year
- Generate tax receipts for donations to fundraising events, process credit cards and encode cheques for fundraising events
- Assist with formatting and distribution of financial statements as required and other finance members with filing as required

Required qualifications:

- Working knowledge of Microsoft Office suite, including strong working knowledge of Excel
- Familiarity with accounting software with working knowledge being a benefit
- Detail and deadline oriented and able to work in a fast paced environment
- Demonstrate a strong attention to detail with a high level of accuracy
- Possess excellent time management skills with the ability to prioritize multiple tasks
- Ability to solve problems and practice good decision-making
- Strong communication skills, both oral and written, accompanied by solid interpersonal skills

JOB DESCRIPTION ANALYSIS

Administrative Assistant | Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada

The Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada is an international **leader** in providing innovative services for people with MS and their families and advancing research into the cause and cure of multiple sclerosis. Reporting to the Finance Department, the successful candidate will be involved in the regular **processing of financial transactions** at the chapter, division, and national office level as well as a number of Finance projects supporting different business units. We are looking for an **enthusiastic** individual to fill an Administrative Assistant position with us.

Specific job responsibilities:

- Enter bank deposits from regional locations into accounting system
- Processing of **accounts payable and accounts receivable** transactions
- Review financial statements and maintain cash flow schedules for all locations on a monthly basis
- Complete **financial analysis** for various projects
- Assist with **budget analysis** and preparation of budget templates for next fiscal year
- Generate **tax receipts** for donations to fundraising events, process credit cards and encode cheques for fundraising events
- Assist with formatting and distribution of financial statements as required and other finance members with filing as required

Required qualifications:

- Working knowledge of **Microsoft Office suite**, including strong working knowledge of **Excel**
- Familiarity with **accounting software** with working knowledge being a benefit
- Detail and **deadline oriented** and able to work in a fast paced environment
- Demonstrate a strong **attention to detail** with a high level of accuracy
- Possess excellent **time management** skills with the ability to prioritize multiple tasks
- Ability to **solve problems** and practice good decision-making
- Strong **communication** skills, both oral and written, accompanied by solid **interpersonal** skills

DRAWING CONNECTIONS

Draw connections between what employers want and what you have.

What employer wants	Evidence I have it
Time management	Effectively balanced role as high school club President with 4 courses; maintained top 2% academic standing.
Verbal communication	Prepared and delivered a 15-minute presentation to a panel of judges; received feedback that ideas were clearly communicated and convincing.
Microsoft Excel	Created functional Excel spreadsheet to track club meetings; increased efficiency of scheduling process.

STEPS TOWARDS BUILDING A GREAT RESUME



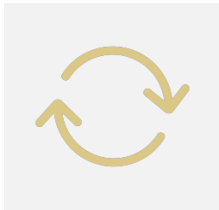
IDENTIFY your skills, interests, experience, values and work search goals.



ANALYZE job description(s) and **IDENTIFY** what employers are looking for in a successful candidate.



DESIGN & CREATE a document that showcases how you could contribute via your skills/experience.



REFINE your document to ensure it is making the right impression, highlighting your strengths, and speaking to employers.

SECTIONS OF A RESUME

Contact Information

(Name, Location, Phone, Email, LinkedIn, websites)

Summary of Qualifications

Education

Work Experience

Volunteer Experience

Projects

Awards and Certificates

Activities and Interests

Other sections: objective statement, technical skills, languages, relevant courses, publications.

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

A “highlight reel” of 4-6 points that demonstrate your fit for the job.

- Relevant experience/accomplishments related to your field/industry.
- Relevant knowledge/skills/expertise (language, technical, transferrable).
- Education/awards that complement practical experience.
- Relevant personal characteristics and attributes.
- Specialized training/education relevant to the objective.

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Current First-aid and CPR certification.
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills.
- Familiar with Microsoft Office Suite.
- Fluent in French.
- 2 years of office work experience.
- Enthusiastic individual with an academic background in accounting and finance.

VS

THE EMPLOYER PERSPECTIVE

“Imagine a doctor's résumé... do you want the doctor's résumé to say, **“has worked with patients”** or **“familiarity with medical practices”** or do you want her to say **“successfully performed 20 surgeries”** and leave all that other stuff off? [Use] the highest value points and leave the other stuff to be implied.”

Director of Product Management, Primal

WRITING 'EXPERIENCE' BULLET POINTS

- **Paint a picture with words** (help the employer envision you doing those jobs).



WHAT

(Did X)



HOW

By/Using Y



WHY

To Achieve Z

- Accomplishments > duties (E.g., “Received best customer service award” vs. “waited on tables”)
- Use similar industry terms (you can often find these in the job posting).

DESCRIBING YOUR SKILLS / EXPERIENCE



VS

Sales Associate, Campus Bookstore | Ottawa, ON

- Helped customers at the store cash register.
- Used Microsoft Excel to enter data.
- Answered questions and provided customer service.

QUALIFIERS & SPECIFIC WORDING



DESCRIBING YOUR SKILLS / EXPERIENCE



VS

Communications Coordinator, University of Waterloo | Waterloo, ON

- Managed social media accounts.
- Drafted and sent out bi-weekly email newsletter.
- Assisted in office management tasks as needed.

QUALIFIERS & SPECIFIC WORDING



STEPS TOWARDS BUILDING A GREAT RESUME



IDENTIFY your skills, interests, experience, values and work search goals.



ANALYZE job description(s) and **IDENTIFY** what employers are looking for in a successful candidate.



DESIGN & CREATE a document that showcases how you could contribute via your skills/experience.



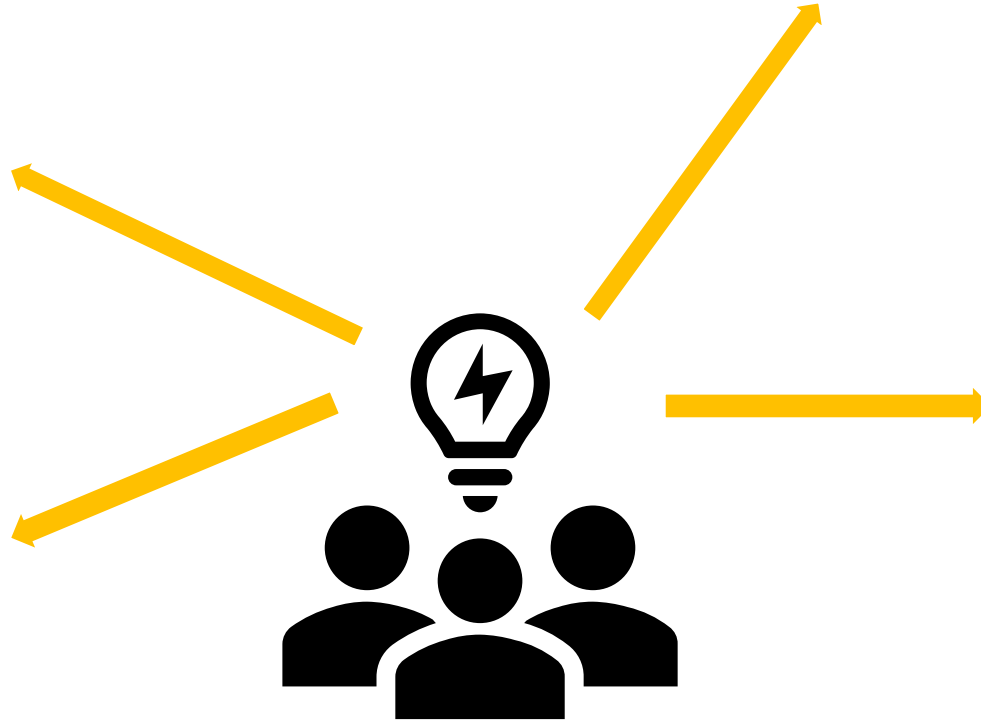
REFINE your document to ensure it is making the right impression, highlighting your strengths, and speaking to employers.



REFINE

Collect feedback from **trusted** friends, peers, mentors.

Check out other people's resumes.



Visit the Centre for Career Action (CCA).

Ask past supervisors you trust.

LET'S RECAP

Identify relevant skills, experiences, values, interests.

Understand the **employer perspective**.

Analyze job descriptions to assess employer needs.

Draw connections between what employers want.

Prioritize sections of your resume based on **relevance**.

Be **specific** about skills and accomplishments.

LAURYN'S TIPS

1. Save job descriptions.
 2. Create a 'master resume.'
-

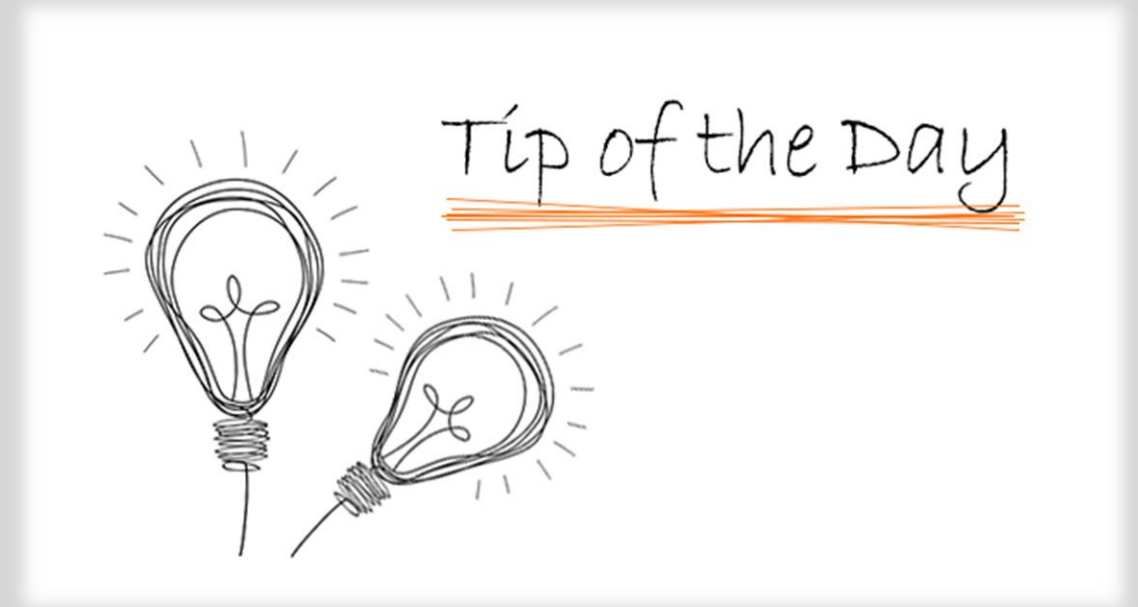


Image from <https://centralinnovation.com/technical-resources/tips-and-tricks/system-specs/>

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT?

- One or two pages?
- Can I make it colourful or black and white?
- What font size should I use?
- Can/should I add pronouns on my resume?
- How do I customize resumes when I plan to submit a lot?
- What if I don't have any skills?

Resources: CCA Appointments and Workshops/Events



Job Search Tactics
Résumé
Cover Letter
Interview Prep
Career Exploration



Individual Appointments
15 Min Drop-ins
Workshops
Online Resources

uwaterloo.ca/career-action

HOW DID WE DO?

We are always looking for ways to improve and your feedback is important. Complete the feedback survey delivered to your inbox at the end of this week.

Our mission is to educate and motivate all members of the University of Waterloo community to develop and take action to achieve current and future career goals.