



## Resume Preparation

There are hundreds of ideas about what the perfect resume should look like. In reality, the perfect resume varies and will be impacted by many factors such as target industry sector, target country and target profession.

Remember that your resume is a selling document and a marketing tool with one purpose- to win an interview.

Whether you are job seeking in a difficult economic climate where positions are scarce or in a buoyant market where making the right move is vital, research proves that employers scan rather than read resumes, potential employers are often looking for reasons to reject a resume rather than accept it. Consider the following points to increase the likelihood that your resume will make an impression for all of the right reasons:

### Structure:

- Be aware of cultural norms in the country that you are applying to. For example, an eight page resume whilst normal in South Africa will not be received gratefully by a US employer whose norm is a 1 page document.
- Ensure that your contact details are on and are correct
- Portray yourself as positively as possible, be truthful and don't be afraid to sell your skills
- Put your employment and education in reverse chronological order with the most recent first
- Your resume is not a static document, adapt your resume to the position that you are applying for
- Focus on your most recent positions, providing the most information about them
- Highlight and if possible quantify achievements (E.g. met 100% of sales targets and grew the division by 25% within the first year of employment)
- If your academic record isn't as strong as your employment record, put your education details after your career on your resume.
- Avoid speaking about yourself in the third person

### Presentation and formatting:

- Avoid coloured paper, fancy fonts and photographs
- Use a sensible, professional font and ensure that is consistent throughout your document
- Use bullet points, be concise and to the point

### Spelling and grammar:

- Always check, double check and check your resume again for typos and grammatical errors
- Show it to family and friends to get their opinion and ensure that it is a true representation of you

### Hobbies and interests:

- Hobbies and interests should be the second last item on your resume, before reference details
- Avoid information in this section that allows a potential employer to make a non-professional judgement on you. Avoid hobbies such as "drinking" "clubbing" "partying" etc
- Employers want to see a well rounded candidate but never lie to make yourself seem more exciting or more of a team player etc



### Online applications:

- When applying online, make sure that you provide a sensible email address such as [johndoe@gmail.com](mailto:johndoe@gmail.com). Email addresses such as [drinkingking@hotmail.com](mailto:drinkingking@hotmail.com) and [supersexylady@yahoo.com](mailto:supersexylady@yahoo.com) will not create a good first impression with a potential employer and could be a reason for immediate disqualification from a role regardless of your relevant qualifications and experience
- Remember that more and more potential employers are using the internet and social networking sites such as Facebook, Bebo etc so be aware of the personal information you have on such sites and how accessible it is to the general public
- When applying for roles by email, use full words, proper sentence structure and grammar. It is easy to use a simplified and abbreviated text, similar to texting but it could cost you an interview
- Always ensure that your spell and grammar check is switched on in your email account

## Interview Tips

### Preparation:

You can never be over prepared for an interview and preparation is the key to success. The better prepared you are, the more confident you will be. Find out as much information as possible about the company you are applying to such as their history, culture, competitors etc. In addition, research your interviewers; know their education, background, length of tenure with the company etc. Ask family, friends and neighbours, read through newspapers and magazines in addition to the internet.

It is important that you understand the role that you are applying for. Ask for a copy of the job description if there is one (there isn't always one). Learn it, know your resume inside out and ensure that you are able to link your experience and qualifications with the job description.

Be prepared to explain any gaps in your resume.

Make sure that you know the exact location of the interview, drive by the location prior to the interview, checking out parking availability etc. Remember to think ahead to the timing of your interview and allow for traffic etc.

Prepare questions to ask the interviewer, remembering that the interview is a two way conversation and should be used to ascertain whether or not the role and the company will provide you with the career that you are looking for.

### Presentation:

First impressions count, look smart. You are not on your way to a disco so dress accordingly. General advice is to dress conservatively, a nice shirt/blouse and a pair of trousers or a skirt (although, it may be better if the boys stick to wearing trousers!) and make sure your shoes look clean and presentable. Never chew gum during an interview; it is very off-putting to a future employer. Keep makeup, perfume/aftershave and jewelry to a minimum. Finally, do not under any circumstances leave your phone on or answer a call on your cell phone during the interview and always remove your sunglasses and hats prior to an interview.



## Timing

Arriving early for interview shows eagerness on your part to the prospective employer. However, do not arrive more than 5 minutes early as this can be inconvenient. Being late for interview is inexcusable and unacceptable.

## What you may need

Having a pen and paper proves useful in case you have any important facts that need to be jotted down.

## The Interview

1. Make sure you know the exact name of the individuals or people who will be interviewing you
2. Arrive a few minutes early and let the receptionist know who you are and who you are meeting with
3. Take a seat and make sure that your cell phone is switched off and you are not chewing gum
4. You want to present an impression of being self assured and quietly confident. When you first meet the interviewer, smile, look them in the eye and give a firm handshake – make a good first impression
5. Wait until you have been offered a chair before sitting
6. During the interview, maintain sensible eye contact but avoid staring
7. If there is more than 1 interviewer make sure that you address your answers to all interviewers and give eye contact to all
8. Allow the interviewer to control the meeting and demonstrate your listening skills as well as your verbal skills
9. Be aware of your body language and avoid tapping your feet, talking excessively with your hands etc
10. Think before you speak!! Listen to the questions and take a moment before you answer. When talking about yourself, be positive and enthusiastic
11. Don't answer questions with a yes or no, explain and describe your answer but don't waffle.
12. Never initiate discussions on salary and/or benefits during the first stage interview and be prepared for questions regarding your salary expectations, making sure they are in line with the salary range for the position.
13. Avoid being critical or making derogatory remarks about your current or previous employer
14. Prepare some questions for your interviewers so that you are prepared when asked at the end of interview
15. Always end the interview on a positive note. Thank the interviewer(s) for his/her time and establish the next stage of the process including timeframes.

## Follow-up

After the interview, it can give you an edge if you write a thank you email/ letter confirming your continued interest in the position and company. Do not pester or harass the interviewer/employer by continually calling or emailing them. Wait for them to contact you.