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Unit 3: Winning Résumés
Writing résumés and applications that win jobs

After completing this unit you will:

i) understand that your résumé is an advertising document

ii) know the importance of grabbing the employer's interest with virtually the first line

iii) know the importance of research and how to set about doing it

iv) be able to write an effective résumé and cover letter

v) be able to analyse a position description and address the selection criteria

The Job Winners® Guide for
Young Adults

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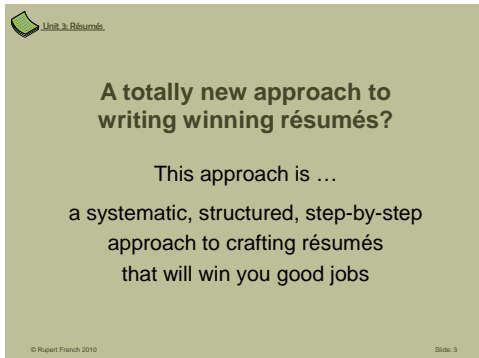www.jobwinners.com.au

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PART 1: Winning Résumés

Introduction

Your résumé is your sales pitch. To convince an employer to choose you, the résumé needs to focus on how you meet their needs. From the first line, it needs to inspire them with confidence in your ability to do the job and, more importantly, your motivation to do it well.

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Unit 3: Résumé.

A totally new approach to writing winning résumés?

This approach is …

a systematic, structured, step-by-step approach to crafting résumés that will win you good jobs
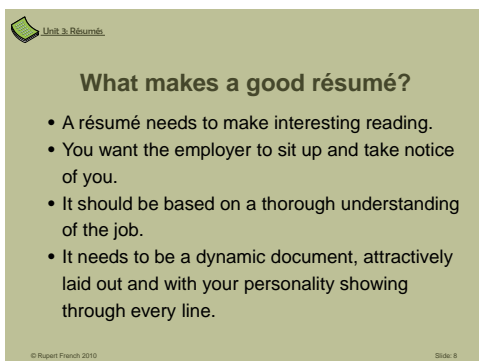
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This unit will take you step-by-step through one way of creating an effective job application. There are others but, unless you have unlimited time, it is better to focus on the one method that is based on sound marketing practices.

The aim is to produce a résumé that will grab the employer's interest with virtually the first line and market you effectively for that position.

What is a résumé?

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Unit 3: Résumé.

What makes a good résumé?

• A résumé needs to make interesting reading.
• You want the employer to sit up and take notice of you.
• It should be based on a thorough understanding of the job.
• It needs to be a dynamic document, attractively laid out and with your personality showing through every line.

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A good résumé is a marketing document, a brochure demonstrating how you will perform in the position.

It is *not* a dull, form-filling exercise.

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Wendy Enelow, a leading US authority on writing effective résumés, wrote that a résumé is not so much about the applicant as it is about the job and how well the applicant will do it.

The first example is what some people would describe as a traditional résumé; it is *not* recommended. The format makes it difficult for a prospective employer to envisage the applicant in the job – in fact the résumé doesn't address the needs of the job at all – and it doesn't say anything about Annabel's motivation.

Annabel's second résumé takes a marketing approach in that it tells employers what they want to know, in the order they want it, so as to best allow them to envisage her in the job. To a restaurant owner, this résumé makes interesting reading.

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Unit 3: Résumé

Purposes of résumé & brochure

- Purpose of a **brochure** is to inform a customer how a product or service meets their needs.
- Purpose of a **résumé** is to inform an employer how the applicant meets their needs.
- An employer is a job seeker's customer.

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A résumé is a brochure for the job seeker's services. It is a marketing document.

To be effective, it needs to show how the job seeker meets the employer's needs.

Compiling a job winning résumé

Compiling an effective résumé, one that will win you the sort of job your really want, is a big task. To make it easier to see the progress you are making as you go through the process, I will use the analogy of 'rebuilding a fish'.

Fish diagrams appear throughout these notes to show how your résumé is progressing.

Creating the masthead

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Unit 3: Résumé

Step 1:
First step is to create the masthead – the fish head of the analogy.

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The first step is to create the masthead of your résumé – the top bit that has your name and contact details.

This is represented in the diagrams by the head of the fish.

The 'masthead' of your résumé needs to be brief. We want to grab the employer's interest with virtually the first line – and the masthead comes before that first line.

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Masthead

Dale Knight
413 Redlands Street
Corby's Bay 8476
0412 347 985 (m)   8354 9832 (h)
daleknight413@hotmail.com

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Your name: there is no need to put your full name. Preferred name and surname is all that is necessary – and if that preferred name happens to be a diminutive such as Chris or Col or Sue or Bill, that's fine. It's the name you want to be known by.

And your name wants to be in large lettering and perhaps in bold so that it really stands out. It is your 'trade mark'. Be proud of it.

To start preparing your own résumé, look through the specimen résumés 'First Pages' and select the one that you most like the look of to use as a template. The sort of job the résumé is applying for is not important; base your choice just on the look of the résumé.

Once you have selected the résumé you would like, go to the individual specimen résumés in MS Word and download it to use as your template.

To create your masthead, select the name on the specimen and key in your own name. Then proceed to do the same for the contact details.

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> **GROUP PRACTICAL EXERCISE 1**
>
> The aim of this exercise is to start producing a résumé that will market one member of the group for a specific job.
>
> In your groups, look through the specimen résumés and select one that you most like the look of. Don't worry about the sort of job the résumé is applying for, or the sort of person writing the résumé: it is just the appearance, the style that you are selecting.
>
> Use that style to create the 'masthead' of the résumé on a sheet of butcher's paper.

How many of you *enjoy* reading other people's résumés? If you are bored reading just one or two, imagine an employer with a pile of 20 or 30 to go through.

To be effective, the résumé must interest the employer. It must be attractive and written in a clear and easy-to-read style and it must talk about the thing that the employer is primarily interested in – the job itself.

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Unit 3: Résumé

SMT = Skills, Motivation & Team

There are just 3 things that every employer is looking for in every applicant for every position:

• First and *least important*
              the **Skills** to do the job

• Second and *far more important*
              the **Motivation** to do it well

• Third and *equally far more important*
              the ability to fit well into their **Team**

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There are just 3 things that every employer is looking for in every applicant for every position: **Skills**, **Motivations**, and ability to fit well into their **Team**.

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Unit 3: Résumé

8 seconds …

• An employer may spend just 8 seconds to decide whether or not a résumé is worth further consideration.
• In 8 seconds you can read almost halfway down the first page.
• If you're not talking about your motivation for the job in the top half of page 1,
              you may have missed the boat.

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And a survey in Sydney some years ago suggested that an employer spends on average just 8 seconds to decide whether or not an application is worth further consideration. In 8 seconds, most people can read not quite halfway down page 1.
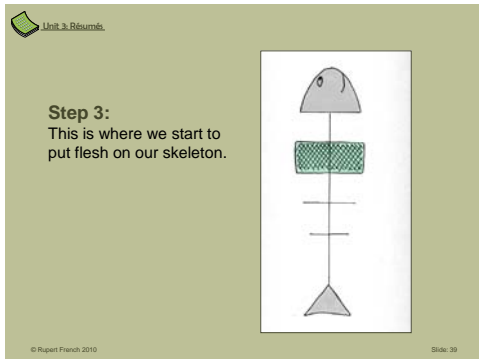
If employers don't see what they want to see in the first 8 seconds, they probably won't read any further.

Grab the employer's interest with the first few lines and then keep it through to the end

Just as you won't bother reading an article in a magazine unless it grabs your interest with the first line, so employers won't bother reading an application if it fails to grab their interest in the top half of the first page.

The career history section

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This is where we start to put flesh on our skeleton. It is usually advisable to start with the easier sections so as to get as much of the résumé completed before tackling the more challenging sections.

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Employers want to know what you can do and your motivation for doing it well. It is important therefore to show what you can do through relevant work history, however short it may be. You should consider including:

- Casual work

- Voluntary work (eg Red Cross doorknock)

- Work related roles at school / college (library or canteen monitor, helping to run a stall at the school fair, leading on a camp or excursion)

- Membership of sports teams, school societies or participation in school productions may also be useful here

This is how Annabel did it:

> ### *Employment record*
> **Front-of-house and kitchen hand** (casual)
> Macdonald's, West Cotteringham, February-November 2009
> Won the branch prize for most consistent quality in hamburger production.
>
> **Sales assistant** (casual)
> Kalingula Fish Markets, April 2007 - September 2008

What is important is what you did, not the company you worked for nor the dates when you were employed there. Put the position or job title first. The employer organisation and dates can be put on the second line.

Notice how Annabel has strengthened this section, not with a list of all her tasks and responsibilities but by an achievement statement. Winning the branch prize for consistent hamburger production may not be world shattering but it does show that she takes pride in her work.

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Unit 3: Résumés

Employment History

Employment History

Sales Assistant (casual)
Dick Smith Electronics, Follerton, March 2007 - present

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To recap, put the position first – usually in bold – and then, on the second line, the employer organisation and the dates.

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But this is my first job – I don't have any work history

If you are in this situation, you have two options. Choose the option that you believe will best convince the employer that you are the right person for the job. The options are: (1) omit the employment history section altogether (see Megan Chamber's résumé in *Specimen Résumés and Applications*) – be aware that this is only practical in a functional résumé, or (2) include in the employment history all the voluntary work that you have done, such as library monitor, sports coaching, helping with a stall at the school fair etc. (see Sophie Barnes). If you choose option (2), you are still encouraged to use the functional type of résumé. In fact, the functional type is particularly recommended for young people because it allows them to show how they meet the selection criteria for the job.

GROUP PRACTICAL EXERCISE 3

On a second piece of butcher's paper, write the applicant's employment record.

This will leave room on the first sheet for the Career Objective and Skills and Achievements sections.