



Apprentice, Trainee & Cadet Handbook



Change Your Outlook





*2016 is a new year,
and offers you
the opportunity to
improve yourself
and get noticed, for
the right jobs, at any
time of year.*



Getting my resume up to date



Your resume isn't simply a list of your job history; it's your opportunity to sell your tangible results achievements and successes. Resume writing is a skill that often needs more mastering than the writer thinks! Whether you've got years of experience under your belt or are newly joining the workforce, your chance of landing an interview is much more likely if you have a killer resume to show off your education, skills and experience.

It's the first impression you get to make, and with a well-written professional resume, it could be one of many more to come.

If you don't follow any other tips for writing a resume, follow these...

- Brief is best. While you may have aced making sundaes at McDonalds during your high school years, it's time to get rid of that clutter if it's not related to the role you want to pursue now. Only go back up to 10 – 15 years, keep it relevant. Give more space to detail about your current or recent jobs and less about the past. If it doesn't fit on one to two pages - it's not worth writing about! Make sure you include specific skills that are relevant to the job you're applying for, even if that means adjusting your resume for each new application.
- Take a pass on unnecessary info. That includes your age, marital status, religion or nationality. This might have been the standard in the past however all of this information is now illegal for an employer to ask you and there's no need to include it. As for an address, a suburb and postcode will suffice. Cover pages on your resume is a big no, no.
- Make it clear and straightforward. Presentation matters. Be consistent in formatting, use clear labels and a footer on every



page. Wow with your experience and not with crazy fonts – unless of course you're in a creative field, where you might use your resume as a tool to demonstrate your skills. As far as fonts go, use sans-serif ones, like Verdana or Arial. Avoid using Times New Roman and Sans. As everything in your resume is about your experiences, avoid writing in first or third person. For example, instead of writing 'I managed a team of three', or 'Cindy managed a team of three' write 'responsible for managing a team of 3' in concise bullet points below headlines where necessary.

Make sure you also run a spell check to pick up any errors. A big mistake that is easy to avoid is don't always trust your computer! Spell check does not always work or pick up grammatical errors. Make sure to double, triple check both your resume and application.

- Be professional and discreet. It's important to keep your personality so avoid using the standard Microsoft Office resume templates available online. If you are still be using the same email address that you set up when Hotmail came about in the 90's get rid of it. It might be worth your while setting up a new one for the purpose of your job applications. Create a new email account with either Gmail or outlook. Make sure that it looks professional avoid using cutesy email addresses like hotchick@hotmail.com or bikerboy@hotmail.com! Avoid using your current work email address, or phone number for that matter, unless you want to get yourself into trouble!

Seemingly obvious however not always the case, be sure to include your contact details at the top of your resume. Email and phone numbers are essential.

Useful Links

- resume.com - <https://www.resume.com/builder>
- WIX online resumes - <http://www.wix.com/website/templates/html/portfolio-cv/1>

NOTES

[Insert Name]

[Insert Address]

[Insert Mobile]

[Insert Email]

CAREER OBJECTIVE

[Insert Career Objective]

EDUCATION

Year Completed:

Education Type:

[Insert Date]

[Insert Education/Course]

[Insert Date]

[Insert Education/Course]

[Insert Date]

[Insert Education/Course]

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

[Insert Organisation/Company]

[Insert Date From] – [Insert Date To]

[Insert Position Title]

Key Responsibilities:

- [Insert dot points about key responsibilities in specific role]
- [Insert dot points about key responsibilities in specific role]
- [Insert dot points about key responsibilities in specific role]

[Insert Organisation/Company]

[Insert Date From] – [Insert Date To]

[Insert Position Title]

Key Responsibilities:

- [Insert dot points about key responsibilities in specific role]
- [Insert dot points about key responsibilities in specific role]
- [Insert dot points about key responsibilities in specific role]

[Insert Organisation/Company]

[Insert Date From] – [Insert Date To]

[Insert Position Title]

Key Responsibilities:

- [Insert dot points about key responsibilities in specific role]
- [Insert dot points about key responsibilities in specific role]
- [Insert dot points about key responsibilities in specific role]

CERTIFICATES, LICENCES & QUALIFICATIONS

Year Completed:

Certificate/Licence/Course Type:

Expiry:

[Insert Date]

[Insert Certificate /Licence/Course]

[Insert Expiry Date]

[Insert Date]

[Insert Certificate /Licence/Course]

[Insert Expiry Date]

[Insert Date]

[Insert Certificate /Licence/Course]

[Insert Expiry Date]

[Insert Date]

[Insert Certificate /Licence/Course]

[Insert Expiry Date]

[Insert Date]

[Insert Certificate /Licence/Course]

[Insert Expiry Date]

SKILLS

- [Insert Skills, eg. Microsoft Word]
- [Insert Skills, eg. Authority]
- [Insert Skills, eg. TRIM]

REFEREES

[Insert person's name]

[Insert person's title]

[Insert name of organisation]

[Insert person's phone number]

[Insert person's name]

[Insert person's title]

[Insert name of organisation]

[Insert person's phone number]

[Insert person's name]

[Insert person's title]

[Insert name of organisation]

[Insert person's phone number]

Application letters - the good and the bad

Your cover letter is your personal marketing tool that highlights what you've got to offer as a prospective employee. It has a beginning, middle and an end – essentially, it's your story, tailored to the job you're applying for.

Here are some guidelines to get you started...

Beginning

Don't waste precious space by starting your cover letter with, 'I wish to apply for the position of Community Engagement Officer as advertised on Seek on 30 May 2016'.

A good beginning is one that jumps straight in:

'I'm passionate about your Council and have a solid understanding of how Council positions itself in the community, particularly its customer-first focus...'

Middle

Action. Skill. Example. This is the golden rule. Choose an action word, link it to the relevant skill, and follow with an example.

Here's how one paragraph might go:

'My experience includes the end-to-end engagement strategy management for major community events to enhance and publicise the Council's brand. In planning and executing marketing campaigns and promotional events like the 'Building Your Community' campaign to help make Port Stephens a great place to live. I've been successful in attracting and building partnerships across a wide cross section of stakeholders by running workshops and seminars...'

End

Reaffirm your suitability for the position and end with a call-to-action: 'My resume demonstrates that I have the skills and experience to succeed in this position, and I look forward to discussing this exciting opportunity with you further'

And the final rule; your cover letter should be no more than one A4 page – be succinct.

- Make sure that you include all your current contact information, including email and contact number. Preference is to include your mobile phone number with a working voicemail message, so a message can be left. If you don't have a mobile use a landline with an answering machine.

Resumes THE GOOD & THE BAD

THE BAD

- 1 Unprofessional email address
- 2 Only list education that is relevant to the role
- 3 Lack of detail and experience
- 4 Doesn't explain the role in terms of achievements
- 5 Poor formatting. Good structure makes information easy to read and remember for employers
- 6 Avoid shorthand and text language in your CV
- 7 Always check your spelling and grammar
- 8 If including your address, choose activities that relate to the role and showcase your passion
- 9 If listed, references need to be defined by role and organisation they work for

Sarah Johns
124 Berry Street, Bondi Beach, Sydney, 2026
sarahjohns@hotmail.com 0412 345 678

Education
1992-1997 Windsor Primary School
1998-2003 Burley South Secondary
2004 National Certificate in Business Administration and Computing

Employment history
2006 to 2009 Receptionist at Linwood Pharmaceuticals

Responsibilities
• Answering the telephone
• Assisting staff with administrative needs
• Doing the banking

Interests
I enjoy playing online games such as EVE, Minecraft, and Clash of Clans. I also enjoy playing Xbox 360 and PlayStation games. I have been involved in historical re-enactments.

References
Elizabeth Roland - 0411 111 111
Rajesh Patel - 0422 222 222

THE GOOD

Sarah Johns
124 Berry Street
Bondi Beach, NSW 2026
sarah.johns@gmail.com
0412 345 678

PROFESSIONAL PROFILE
I am keen to further my career within the financial sector. In my current role I have built up both knowledge and experience of the industry, and am passionate about bringing this to a new organisation. I am currently studying for my Australian Institute of Finance Certificate, specialising in Financial Administration.

KEY SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

- **Financial administration**
My current role involves supporting the operations team. As I developed my knowledge and experience, the role evolved to include checking multiple financial proposals to ensure the departments were conforming to budgetary requirements.
- **Knowledge of Microsoft Excel**
I established a number of Excel spreadsheets to automate a series of tasks previously carried out manually by the financial advisors.
- **Broad experience in clerical tasks, such as typing, filing and the preparation of documents**
I am highly organised with strong attention to detail, which helps to minimise errors in the financial and accounts reviews process.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE
Administrative Assistant - Westing Finance
January 2010 - Current

Key achievements:
• Implemented a number of general administrative systems and Excel spreadsheets, removing repetitive manual tasks from the financial advisors. I also learned how to manage accounting documents and assist with portfolios. My attention to detail was particularly useful in this team.

Key responsibilities:
• Assisted the financial operations team with administrative tasks. Over time I found ways to streamline the work of the team, and improve efficiencies.

Receptionist - Linwood Pharmaceuticals
January 2006 - July 2009

Key achievements:
• Simplified filing and portfolio management systems, which contributed to increased organisational productivity.

Key responsibilities:
• Main responsibilities included welcoming and assisting visitors, as well as answering the switchboard. I also co-ordinated mail and courier deliveries.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING
Australian Institute of Finance February 2013 - Current
Studying for the Australian Institute of Finance Certificate in Financial Administration. I have completed sections 1, 2 and 3, and am studying sections 4 and 5 this year.

CPIT May 2004 - June 2005
National Certificate in Business Administration and Computing

Burley South Secondary 1995-2003

References available upon request.

A FEW EXTRA TIPS!

- Formatting is important. Make sure your resume is clear and easy to read.
- Only relevant information to the role you're applying for should be included.
- Always check spelling and grammar in your resume.

4 List your most recent and relevant position first to showcase skills and knowledge

3 Easy to read with clear formatting, focusing on key information

2 Use this space to briefly introduce and sell yourself

1 A professional email address



- If the position that you are applying for is located in Newcastle however your application letter includes a Sydney address, explain why are interested in relocating. This information doesn't come out in a resume therefore it should be articulated in your application letter. This is your time to knock out any doubts that someone may have about your application

NOTES

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

How to answer application questions

Application questions are tailored to the specific role; they may be text questions or you may just need to select the most appropriate answer from a drop down menu.

When putting together your text responses, to make sure you cover key areas in your response, we suggest you use the STAR technique:

- **Situation:** What was the background? What was your role?
- **Task:** What was the task at hand?
- **Action:** What did you do? What specific action/s did you personally take?
- **Results:** So, what happened next? What was the impact of your actions? How did you measure the impact of your actions?

Examples of how to answer application questions

Please note that the application questions are tailored to the specific role, these are general examples of commonly asked questions and may differ from the questions asked for the role you are interested in applying for.

Example: In my current position of...I interact with people across all levels of the organisation. To ensure that I maintain a high level of communication practices I always ensure that...

Oral Communication

As part of my current position responsibilities, I communicate verbally with...on a daily basis. A recent example of a successful interaction...The outcome was...A second example of my clear and concise oral communication can be demonstrated in my involvement in...As part of this interaction I was responsible for...The outcome was...

Written Communication

As part of my position responsibilities on a daily basis I create...These documents focus on ... My involvement is... A second example of my clear and concise written communication skills can be attributed to my...The outcome was ...

Question: Do you have a current MR Class Licence?

Answer option: Yes/No

Question: Please outline your experience as relevant to the position description.

Example: I have three years' experience working with traffic, and am the holder of a current 'Apply Traffic Control Plans' Certificate. With my current employer I am involved in managing traffic for the following projects... This project required re-routing the traffic from 2-way to 1-Way for... months/ years. The traffic volume was ... My responsibilities during this process included...The traffic management for this project required us to ...

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Interview Preparation

BE FUTURE FIT
YOU DECIDE THE FINISH LINE



If you want to stand out in your interview, it is vital that you do your research. Find out as much as you can about the company, and the job field – this research can be both general, like Port Stephens Councils recent industry awards or like industry trends in your field.

It's a good idea to prepare yourself to answer different types of interview questions because regardless of the type of interview (telephone, face-to-face, assessment centre), you'll most likely experience a range of questions.

Do not to overuse words such as dedicated, motivated, team player, synergy, leverage, ownership, pro-active or reach out. And look out for slang that may make you sound too casual such as kinda, you know and cool. In addition, replace these overused words:

- Obviously - Interviews are usually the first time we meet a candidate so you should not assume that anything is obvious. We are trying to get an understanding of experience and how good a fit you would be for an organisation so steer clear of implying we already know the answer.
- We - The word 'I' is always better. We don't want to hear 'we did XYZ in our team'. We want to know what part 'you' played in the success and how 'you' took ownership.
- Challenge - avoid saying 'I love a challenge'. Rarely do people follow this up with a good explanation of what challenges them or even examples of challenges they have met, their reaction to the challenge at hand and the result of their response.

Far better than throwing out overused buzzwords, fillers, ums, ahs and slang is to give a structured reply using the STAR method just like you did when addressing the selection criteria in your application.

By following the STAR method your answer will be succinct and will outline the Situation, identify the Task that you set out to achieve, describe your own personal Actions and recount the Results. It's a way of telling your story in way it will impress your interviewer.

Practice telling STAR stories about your past experiences that demonstrate the skills needed in the key criteria. A STAR story is far better than simply saying I've got this or that quality or skill.

Q: Tell me about a time you had a conflict with a team member.

Situation/Task

Briefly describe the context for the conflict that arose. Provide just enough background information for context.

Example Situation/Task

- I was managing the crew up at Nelson Bay and we were working on a very tight deadline because we had to finish a large job for an RMS project.
- I was in charge of delivering on time and was also responsible of managing the crew assigned to the project.
- Andy, one of the Works Hand that I assigned a specific task to was very talented however failed to complete the task that I assigned to him on time. When I approached him about it, he had a go at me.





**PRACTICE
MAKES
PERFECT**

Actions

Talk about the key actions that you took. In the case of a conflict story, the focus should be on how you resolved the disagreement in a professional and productive way.

Example Actions

- I was taken aback by his response however I remained calm. I acknowledged that the deadlines were tight and explained again the reasoning and the importance of having the task completed. By not completing the task on time the project would be delayed therefore would cost Council money.
- Andy relaxed a little when he saw that I wasn't attacking him. He told me about all of his other competing tasks and how overwhelmed he felt. I asked him if there was any way that I could help him come up with a solution.
- Eventually, we agreed that it would help if the team had a better understanding of how important and time-consuming this task that I assigned to him was. We decided we would have regular team meetings to keep everyone updated on their weekly commitments.
- As a result of having regular team meetings we were able to reassign tasks to other team members that had capacity, which took some of the pressure off of Andy.

Example Results

- As a result, Andy was able to focus on the task that I assigned to him and therefore able to meet the project deadline.
- Andy apologised for his blow-up and thanked me for my help.
- We successfully completed the project on time and received numerous compliments from management and the community.

Q: Please provide an example of how you've demonstrated leadership skills

Example Situation/Task

- In my previous role, when I worked for a manufacturing company, due to the drop in the mining industry there were redundancies taking place on a weekly basis.
- My team had to absorb the duties of other employees that had been let go, while still facing the possibility of losing their job themselves.
- As a result we were working around the clock and morale was low.
- Since the members of my team were wearing many hats and working overtime, mistakes were being made.
- As the team leader, I was responsible for maintaining optimal performance and rebuilding morale during this difficult time.

NOTES

- [illegible]

- Involving the entire team in the process we were able to immediately address the challenges we faced and finding a solution made them feel empowered. Instead of running around worried, they focused their energies on finding a solution.
- The ideas shared were immediate and of high quality. The team members worked together, as one, trying to find a solution that would benefit the entire team and the company. Within one hour we had come up with several good and original ideas for addressing the problems we faced. Best of all, there was complete buy in from all team members.
- A great idea offered by one of the newest members of our team (and company) was to allow newer employees to take on responsibilities usually only tackled by more experienced and seasoned managers. The results were surprising. Many of our younger employees accepted the challenge and performed at levels above and beyond.
- As a result of the success of our brainstorming meeting, we decided to incorporate a similar brainstorming session in each of our monthly employee meetings.



PRACTICE
MAKES
PERFECT

- Be honest, enthusiastic and passionate – it's OK to be excited, this could be your next career move and a new chapter of your life.
- Prepare to sell your abilities without hesitation or bragging.
- Prepare to talk about why you're the right person for the job.

- Note the date, time and location of the interview and plan your route so that you're not late.
- Note the name of the interviewer and address them by their name when you first meet.
- Dress the part – suffice to say, no denim or thongs, you should look sharp and professional. No sunglasses on top of your head.
- If you're asked to bring in your identification, it's a good idea to pack it in your bag the night before.
- Turn off your phone.

The way you present yourself is more than just your words. People draw meaning from your behaviours, like your facial expression, posture, gestures, tone of voice and eye contact.

- Male or female - a solid handshake is essential! It expresses confidence.
- Keep eye contact with the interviewer and if there's more than one on the panel, ensure that you shift your glance between them.
- Be aware of your body language, don't shift in your seat or fidget.
- Sit up straight. Pronounce your words clearly and in an audible voice and tone.
- Crossed arms and legs denote defensiveness.

Most importantly, be authentic. Your facial expressions will highlight your degree of interest and involvement in the situation. They're a true clue to your emotions.