

BUILD THE CAREER You want.

An employment blog by DIVERSEcity & GetintheKnow.ca

VISIT US AT DCRS.CA | FOLLOW US @DIVERSECITYBC



Build the Career You Want blog is a content collaboration between DIVERSEcity employment specialists and the Get in the Know project to help skilled immigrants with their employment questions.

Get job search tips and labour market information to help you build your career!

Visit dcrs.ca/stories or GetintheKnow.ca.

About DIVERSEcity

At DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society, we help newcomers and other diverse communities build the life they want in Canada.

Our free, multilingual programs and services in settlement, language, employment, community engagement, mental health and violence prevention provide them with information, skills and connections for their journey toward success, wellbeing and belonging.

Our social enterprises — DIVERSEcity Interpretation and Translation Services, DIVERSEcity Skills Training Centre and Language Testing Centre — support this work, too. As a registered charity in Surrey and the Lower Mainland with a 45-year history, we value the strengths found in our differences, and our message is clear — everyone belongs here.

About Get in the Know

Get in the Know is a guide with tools, tips, strategies and resources for employers to hire internationally trained workers, and for skilled immigrants to navigate their way in the Canadian labour market.





Blog #1: How to get your resumé noticed by a Canadian employer

BUILD THE Career <u>You</u> Want.

Resumés are one of the most important tools in landing a job. But, how do you build a resumé that will get you noticed by an employer? Read on for three resumé writing strategies to build a resumé that will get you noticed by employers!

1. Customize your application to the job description

Generic resumés don't work in today's job market. Even though it's an "employee's market" these days, there is still a lot of competition out there for the top jobs. When you send your application off to an employer, chances are they use tools, such as an application tracking system (ATS), to screen your resumé. These technology tools look for matches between the language found in the job description with the language used in your resumé. Therefore, be sure to include specific keywords and phrases from the job posting into your resumé so your skills align with what they are looking for! So, how do you decide what to include and leave out on your resumé?

2. Know what employers are looking for

Pay attention to the language that is used in the job description. Follow these practical steps to determine what information to include and exclude in your resumé:

- 1. Go through the job description and circle everything the employer is looking for.
- 2. The circled items are the things that are most important to the employer.
- 3. Make note of things that the employer mentions more than once. These may be skills or experience that you want to emphasize in the "Highlight of Qualifications" section on your resumé.
- 4. Make a ✓ or **X** beside each circle according to your skills and abilities.
- 5. The items with a \checkmark should be included on your resumé.
- 6. The items with an X will need further examination. Ask yourself if there is similar skill that I can list? Or is there something that I can do to develop this skill?

Remember, a successful candidate doesn't always meet every requirement. But you want to show that you are a good match with transferrable skills and a willingness to develop your skills.

3. Quantify your achievements

Using numbers in your resumé is another opportunity for you to impress the employer. Let the numbers speak for themselves! For example, stating how many products you sold, or the percentage you increased sales by, allows an employer to understand your accomplishments and the depth of your success. Which of these two statements sound more impressive?

- Maintained customer satisfaction as a customer service representative
- Maintained a 97 per cent customer satisfaction rate over a 12-month period as a customer service representative

With these three strategies, you're more likely to get noticed by a Canadian employer!





Blog #2: How to create a Canadian-style resumé

One of the first steps in getting a job in Canada is knowing how to write a resumé in the Canadian style. Let's go through the essential components of a resumé and identify the type of resumé that works best for your career in Canada.

What goes in a resumé?

The main purpose of your resumé is to provide employers a brief snapshot of your experience, skills, abilities and accomplishments. It's your chance to convince an employer that you are the right fit for a job. A typical resumé includes the following six items:

- 1. Contact Information: Include your full name, address, professional email address and phone number. Make sure your voicemail is active with a professional greeting.
- 2. Professional Profile: In a few sentences, provide an overview of your professional experience and abilities that you can bring to the position. Customize this to the specific job you're applying to.
- 3. Key Skills: List several strengths and skills (both hard and soft skills) that are relevant and useful for the position.
- 4. Work Experience: For each position, list your job title, the company, dates of employment, and provide a description of your achievements and responsibilities.
- 5. Education and Certifications: Include the area of study/certification, name and location of school.
- 6. Volunteer and Community Involvement: Include relevant experiences that have a connection to your skillset or the job you're applying for.

Things to avoid in a resumé

There are also a few things to leave off your resumé if you want to attract Canadian employers. They include:

- Photos
- Private information such as your age, gender, marital status or identification
- Information that's not relevant to the position you're applying for
- References

How should I format my resumé?

In Canada, the basic resumé types we use are chronological, functional or a combination/ hybrid style.

- 1. Chronological resumé: This type of resumé lists your work experience in reverse chronological order, from your most recent to the least recent position. Suitable for: jobseekers with a stable and consistent employment history in the same industry as your job objective.
- 2. Functional resumé: This type of resumé focuses on skills, accomplishments and education rather than employment history. Suitable for: jobseekers with an inconsistent work history, such as a recent graduate with no work experience or someone who has worked mostly as a freelancer.
- 3. Combination/hybrid resumé: This type of resumé lists your skills and experience first, followed by your employment history. Suitable for: jobseekers seeking a career change using their transferrable skills, as well as skilled immigrants who may have little or no Canadian experience.





Blog #2: How to create a Canadian-style resumé

Other considerations when writing your resumé

Beyond format, there are other things to consider when building your resumé, such as industry-specific expectations. For example, if you are a graphic designer, it will be expected that you are slightly more creative in your presentation.

Beyond format, there are other things to consider when building your resumé, such as industry-specific expectations. For example, if you are a graphic designer, it will be expected that you are slightly more creative in your presentation.

If certifications are important in your sector, make that information easy for employers to find. For example, if you are applying to a warehouse position, First Aid and forklift certifications should be jumping off the page.

Putting in a little extra effort to write your resumé well will make a huge difference in the response you get from employers. We've all heard those stories of newcomers who send out 100 resumés upon immigrating with no response. A Canadian-style format is the first impression that helps get you through that first barrier.

To keep an employer's attention beyond first impressions, make sure your resumé is customized to the job you're applying for, with keywords and skills listed to match the job description. For more detailed information on building a well-written resumé, check out our article on resumé writing strategies to get your resumé noticed by an employer.

Next steps to employment

Resumés are an essential first step in your job search process, but it is not the only part of a successful job search. DIVERSEcity is here to help you build the career you want. Read on for more articles.





Blog #3: Learn about the tool employers use to screen candidates

BUILD THE Career <u>You</u> Want.

Today, when you send your job application off to an employer, chances are they use an application tracking system (ATS) to screen your resumé.

How does ATS work?

ATS is a tool that employers use to make the recruiting process easier by screening, organizing and filtering the most qualified candidates for the job. It looks for specific keywords used from the job posting in the language on your resumé. The more your resumé matches the skills and qualification requirements of the job description, the higher you will rank in the system.

Why should I know about ATS?

Companies can receive hundreds of applications from a single job posting. It would be too time consuming for recruiters to manually go through every resumé, which is why ATS is used to automate the process to find qualified candidates. While this streamlines the process for recruiters, this means that before your resumé is seen by a pair of human eyes, it must pass the initial ATS screening first.

How can I create an ATS-optimized resumé?

Fortunately, there are ways you can format your resumé to make sure it ranks high within an ATS. Here are seven tips:

- 1. Include keywords and phrases found in the job description throughout your resumé.
- 2. Use both acronyms and long-form versions of keywords.
- 3. Use a traditional font, in 10.5 or 11 point font size.
- 4. Do not use text boxes, columns, tables or pictures.
- 5. Submit your file as a Microsoft Word document (.docx).
- 6. Use standard resumé headings such as "Work Experience" and "Education."
- 7. Customize your resumé for each job posting.





Blog #4: How to create a compelling cover letter: A step-by-step guide BUILD THE Career <u>You</u> Want.

Did you know that a great cover letter is often just as important as having a strong resumé for a job? Discover how to write a cover letter that captures your key skills and qualifications.

1. Header: Contact information

This section includes your personal information such as name, address, phone number and email address. The second half of this section should include the recipient's name, position, company name and address with the date of when the document was created below. Having clear information at the top of your cover letter makes it easier for employers to follow up with applicants.

2. Greetings

This section includes the name and position of the human resource professional or hiring manager mentioned on the job posting. Always use a professional greeting such as "Dear" when addressing them, followed by their full name or position title. An example is "Dear [first and last name]" or "Dear [position title]." If unsure, use "Dear Hiring Manager."

3. First paragraph: Introduce yourself

Start your first paragraph with a sentence that will grab the reader's attention. This can be a qualification that is mentioned in the posting and connect it back to your past experience or skills. Focus on the key skills and your that demonstrate why you are an ideal applicant for the position, and how you can contribute to the company.

4. Body paragraph: Highlight your skills and achievements

In this section, expand on the skills you have mentioned above and discuss how your experience will benefit you in the position. Focus on your skills that align with the job posting and explain how it led to positive outcomes in your past experience. If applicable, quantify your achievements to make it more eye-catching. Here is an example:

- Increased overall sales by 20%.
- Coordinated a project that exceeded the fundraiser goal by 50%.

5. Another body paragraph: Connect to the company

Further emphasize the skills required for the position and show how you can contribute to the company's success. It is a good idea to research the company beforehand and state how your goals align with their mission.

6. Signing off

Conclude your cover letter by highlighting how you are a great fit for the position. Thank the recruiter in advance for considering your application and show your interest in getting to know more about the company and the position during an interview. At the bottom of the document, write your full name, signature and contact information.





BUILD THE Career You want.

Blog #5: Acing the reference check

So, you've made it through a successful job interview and the employer has asked you to provide references. Now is the time to push this job opportunity to an official offer by properly preparing your list of references.

How to create a reference list

A list of references can be typed up in a simple Word document. Put your name at the top of the page. Then list your references, including their:

- First and last name
- Job title and company
- Contact information including phone number and email.

You may also want to put a line about their relationship to you, in case it's not obvious. Then, put a space in between each reference you list. Employers generally expect a list of three references but the number may vary from employer to employer. Ensure to list the number they ask for and follow their instructions on how the list should be delivered, for example via email or bringing a printout to a second in-person interview.

Prepare your references well

One of the most important parts of providing references is to warn and prepare your references before the employer contacts them. Here are four tips to follow:

- 1. Don't assume. Always ask before putting a person's name down on your reference list. Even if you asked them previously, ask again in relation to this job application.
- 2. Inform them. Provide your reference with background information on the job you're applying for and why you're asking them to be a reference.
- 3. Help them help you. Even if your reference knows you well, be sure to provide them with your updated resumé and any other related materials to update them about your most recent skills and experience.
- 4. Say thank you. By writing a reference letter or speaking on your behalf, that person is taking extra time from their busy schedule to help you with your job search. Expressing your gratitude tells your professor, manager, coworker or mentor that you appreciate their time and efforts. You can send a thank you email, or even a thank you card by mail or delivered in person. This gesture is not just good manners, it can also help build strong connections.





Blog #6: Small talk for building connections

Small talk is polite and casual conversation that is typically used in an informal setting. This includes workplace, social events and public places such as cafés or public transportation. It usually involves topics that are not personal or controversial, often between people who do not know each other very well.

Why is small talk important?

Although small talk may sound like an unimportant part of social interaction, it is a great way to "break the ice" and build rapport, especially with colleagues at work, peers in your field at networking events, or even during job interviews. It is especially helpful with strangers or new acquaintances, as it helps to build a level of comfort with someone. Furthermore, it can lead to making more meaningful relationships with others.

How to make small talk

Although small talk can be hard for many the first few times, it is a social skill that can be developed with practice. Keep reading to learn several strategies that will help you improve your casual communication skills.

1.Acknowledge the other person's presence

When you first see a person, make eye contact with them and acknowledge their presence with a nod or smile. You can also greet them by saying "Hello," "Hi," or "Good (morning/afternoon/evening)." When meeting an acquaintance, you can also address the other person by name while greeting them and ask, "How are you?" When they respond back and ask how you are doing, politely respond back.

2.Introduce yourself

When meeting a person for the first time at a social or networking event, introduce yourself by saying who you are and ask their name back. An example of this would be "Hi, my name is [name]. What is yours?" When the person responds, repeat their name back and say, "Nice to meet you, [name]." After hearing their name, include it throughout your conversation and show that you remember their name. This helps to build the rapport as it shows that you acknowledge them as individuals and personalizes the interaction. In addition to just stating your name, you can also add in a short description of yourself, such as "Hi, I'm [name] and I'm a marketing professional who specialized in events."

3.Use your body language

Body language plays an important role in small talk just like any other social interactions. It can help to express your emotions and further help to build a connection with the person involved in the conversation. Effective body language such as smiling, shaking hands and maintaining eye contacts will help others to feel more comfortable during small talk.

4. Show interest in their topics

Avoid using your phone when making small talk with another person. This can be viewed as you not being interested in having a conversation with them. Instead, ask questions about the other person. Ask for their thoughts, opinions or advice on a topic. To start the conversation, ask the person "How's it going?" It is short for asking "How are things going in your work and life?" and is a good way for others to talk about themselves.





Blog #6: Small talk for building connections

5. Ask open-ended, follow up questions

Try to ask open-ended questions that will encourage them to say more than just a few words. For example, you can ask "How was your week?" or "What do you like to do in your free time?" Once they answer the question, ask a follow-up question. For example, if they answered "It was good" to your first question, ask what they did or what the best part of their week was.

Some more examples of follow up questions are: "What do you do?" followed by "Why did you choose that type of work? How did you enter that profession?"

6.Share about yourself

In addition to asking questions, make sure to share some information about yourself and your interests. For example, you may say "I'm just packing up for a trip to Europe with my two kids." This tells the other person some great details on which the other person can base follow-up questions. Avoid giving one-word answers when you comment or reply to a question, such as a simple "yes" or "no." Try to provide your small talk partner with more information, where they can make a comment or pose a question that can keep the conversation going. Check below for an example:

Question: "Where are you from?" Short response: "Seattle." Better response: "I'm from Seattle. It doesn't rain all the time and there are Starbucks on every corner."

7.Be a good listener

When making small talk, listening is just as important as speaking. Try to put yourself in the other person's shoes and see their point of view. As you are listening, maintain open-mindedness as well as withhold your judgment and stereotypes. Do not interrupt when the person is speaking, but feel free to ask questions during pauses to clarify what is said.

8.End the conversation politely

Leaving the conversation abruptly without notice is considered impolite. But it is important to recognize the cue of when the other person wants to stop the conversation. For example, if the other person starts giving short answers, keeps angling their body away from you, or has folded arms and crossed legs, you may politely conclude the conversation. Here are some lines you may use to politely end the conversation:

"It was nice talking to you. Have a good day." "That was an interesting talk. It was nice catching up with you."





Blog #6: Small talk for building connections

What can I ask?

When making small talk, it is important to remember that the goal is to establish a connection and avoid deep topics that may seem too personal. Below are some topics that are appropriate and safe.

- 1. Your location or surroundings
- 2. Entertainment
- 3. Food
- 4. Hobbies
- 5. Work
- 6. Sports
- 7. Weather
- 8. Travel
- 9. Local favourites
- 10. Current events

What topics should I avoid

While there are many topics that are appropriate for small talk, there are some topics to avoid as it can be seen as controversial, personal and make a person uncomfortable. Below are the topics that are best to avoid when making a small talk:

BUILD THE

YOU WANT.

CAREER

- 1. Age
- 2. Religion
- 3. Politics
- 4. Sex/gender
- 5. Salary
- 6. Personal gossip
- 7. Relationship problems
- 8. Health problems
- 9. Weight
- 10. Death

Have more questions about the job search process? DIVERSEcity is here to help you build the life and career you want. To learn more about the programs we offer, visit dcrs.ca.







VISIT US AT DCRS.CA | FOLLOW US @DIVERSECITYBC