CO-OP + CAREER

MAKING YOUR RÉSUMÉ OR CV LOOK GOOD

The average employer spends about eight seconds looking at a single résumé, and a few minutes glancing at a CV. Make your document easy to skim so that the most important information stands out by following these guidelines.

Use white space

Don't cram too much information into the page. Keep your résumé to no more than two pages in length and make sure it's pleasing to look at with a good balance of text and white space. If you're writing a CV, you won't need to adhere to a specific page limit, but you should still be concise.

Balance and organize the information

Solid text won't cut it. Think about ways to break up the text by using columns, bullets, lists and centering, and by grouping relevant information into sections—this demonstrates to the reader that you're able to deliver professional looking documents.

Limit your use of borders and lines

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Use simple fonts

In most cases, use Arial or Times New Roman. Stick with a font size of 11 or 12 point for the basic text. Section headers can be in 14 point and your name can be even larger (16 to 18 point). Use the same font throughout your document.

Use clear and concise language

Your document will be scanned rather than read, so craft your statements carefully and clearly. Use relevant terminology for your field, but avoid overuse of jargon. Use bulleted statements rather than blocks of prose to describe your competencies (skills, knowledge and attributes) as well as your accomplishments.

Make the most important information stand out

Make sure your most important information is towards the top of your document. Use bolding or underlining sparingly but strategically to draw the reader's eye. Consider using subheadings to break up large sections of text and draw attention to the key themes of your statements. Use tabs and bullets to help separate information and make your document easier to scan.

Keep it free from mistakes

Your document must have NO MISTAKES. This means no spelling or grammar errors, no typos and no sloppy use of formatting functions such as tabs or bullets.

Submit your document in the format requested

You may be asked to provide an electronic version of your document. In this case, convert it to a PDF so it won't distort when downloaded. Sometimes an organization will ask you to apply through their own online application form. Though it is becoming rare to submit a hard copy in person or through the mail, sometimes this is an option. For hard copies, use a neutral coloured paper (white or off white).

University of Victoria