



SECC CAREERTALKS:

# CREATING EFFECTIVE RESUMES & COVER LETTERS



# WHAT ARE JOB SEARCH DOCUMENTS?

Your job search documents are the first opportunity to market yourself to potential employers and to persuade them that you are a strong candidate.

## COVER LETTER

- A one page document that accompanies your resume
- Allows you to highlight your most important qualifications & experiences
- Sometimes used a screening tool

## RESUME

- 2-3 pages maximum (3rd page for references)
- Used to apply to most jobs and internships
- Highlights skills and relevant experience

## CURRICULUM VITAE (CV)

- Multiple pages
- Used to apply medical, teaching, academic, research, and performing and studio art positions
- Includes publications, conferences, research



Studies have shown that recruiters may spend as little as 6 seconds reviewing a resume to determine if a candidate is suitable for a position.

**Your job search documents need to effectively convey your skills, qualifications, and experience to help you land an interview.**

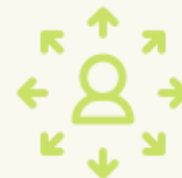
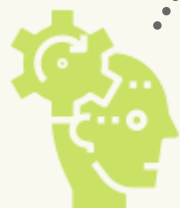
# PREPARATION- TAKE INVENTORY



Spend some time reflecting on your skills, abilities, interests, and experiences; think broadly, beyond work experience.



Transferable skills - you have them!



# PREPARATION- DO YOUR RESEARCH



Know the employer and the industry!

Browse through the company website, and social media (Facebook, LinkedIn) to get a feel for the company culture and work environment.

- Ensure you fully understand the position being advertised!

Stand out by incorporating words from the company mission statement and values into your resume and cover letter - the employer will see that you have taken the time to get to know the company.

Look for connections: do you know anyone who currently works for the company? Does anyone in your network know someone who works for the company?

MOST employers will ask “what do you know about our organization” sometime during the interview process, so show off your knowledge right from the start!

# PREPARATION- REVIEW THE JOB POSTING

## POSTING

Carefully read through the job posting and note the **KEYWORDS** that describe the ideal candidate and the work that they will be doing (abilities, skills and values you should possess).

Include these **KEYWORDS** in your cover letter and resume!



- Skills/Competencies/Abilities
- Characteristics/Personality Traits
- Knowledge/Education
- Experience/Duties/Responsibilities

# WRITING TIPS

- Generic, "one-size-fits-all" documents are an automatic turnoff for employers. You need to **customize** both your cover letter and resume to the specific company and position that you are applying to by including keywords and relevant experience.
- Answer the question: "Why should we hire you?"
- Ensure the language in your documents matches the description of the ideal candidate in the job posting.
- Avoid generic, cliché statements.
- Bullet points for your resume; short paragraphs for your cover letter.
- Proofread to ensure there are no grammatical or spelling errors.



# RESUME

There are many ways to organize a resume, however, the "big 3" formats are:

## CHRONOLOGICAL

- Core components: [Highlights of Qualifications](#), [Detailed Work Experience](#)
- Choose this style if you have a lot of relevant work experience, your work history demonstrates increasing responsibility, and you do not have frequent employment gaps

## FUNCTIONAL

- Core components: [Summary of Skills](#), [Limited Details on Work Experience](#)
- Choose this style if you have little to no work experience, are making a career change or have work experience in a different field than the one you are applying to

## COMBINATION

- Core components: [Summary of Skills](#), [Detailed Work Experience](#)
- Choose this style if you have both the experience and skills necessary to fill the position



# RESUME - FORMAT

- Use a common font style (Calibri, Times New Roman, etc.) & 11 or 12 point size ; ensure consistency with your cover letter.
- Include your LinkedIn URL.
- Put the most relevant information on the first page.
- If you are having trouble keeping your resume to 2 pages, consider using narrower margins or choosing smaller line spacing.
- Present information in reverse chronological order (most recent to oldest).
- Keep job titles on the left and dates on the right.
- Include headers for each section of your resume.

**ANITA CAREER**  
Prosperity, SK • 306-555-1211 • abc123@mail.usask.ca • ca.linkedin.com/in/anitacareer

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**EDUCATION**

**Bachelor of Commerce – Management** 2018  
Edwards School of Business, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, SK

- Group project – Analyzing a local art dealer's business plan in order to develop a new customer database

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**SUMMARY OF SKILLS**

**Project Management**

- Effectively engage with company stakeholders to pitch and execute a project management plan that showcases well defined oral, written communication and presentation skills; including the scope, costs and schedule
- Implement, plan, manage and measure projects and tasks in a timely, directed manner according to well-defined goals and outcomes
- Show commitment to the team's purpose and goals by being able to change work priorities and workplace practices to guarantee the project completion date
- Decreased employee turnover by 10%, through the effective coordination of four competing contracting crews in addition to ordering equipment and material resources ahead of crew arrivals

**Collaboration**

- Analyze and balance the customers' needs and expectations with the nature of the contracted work by managing costs, time, quality of work, and employee safety
- Execute the project plan by assigning resources, setting up tracking systems, determining how to update the project schedule and modifying the project plan in collaboration with multiple stakeholders
- Ensure that all project plans outline a communication strategy with goals, objectives, roles, methods and tools; recognize that different personalities and communication styles impact a team-based work environment
- Maintain positive and productive relationships by sustaining mutually beneficial partnerships with internal and external stakeholders

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**RELATED WORK EXPERIENCE**

**Head Sales Representative** May 2018 – present  
SaskAdco, Saskatoon, SK

- Overseeing, supporting and monitoring a team of eight sales representatives along with a sales budget of \$40,000
- Appointed to be the first point of contact for bulk contracting; managing both service and maintenance contracts
- Supervising and evaluating performance and account expenses while providing mentorship and sales training opportunities for new employees

**Assistant Sales and Contract Manager** May – Aug. 2017  
CGL Industries, Grande Prairie, AB

- Drafted, issued and finalized industrial proposals for maintenance contract services
- Provided support during sales and contract negotiations of CGL field maintenance and construction services
- Collaborated with the General Manager of Sales and Contracts to define and review CGL Industries' service packages to suit the specific needs of each client

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**VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE**

**Member, Board of Directors** Oct. 2017 – present  
Sarah's House – Services for Sexual Abuse Survivors Inc., Saskatoon, SK

- Guiding a staff of four in running the daily activities and programs for survivors and their families
- Handling the administration and accounting of the annual budget to secure funds for agency projects

**Big Sister** Sept. 2015 – April 2017  
Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Saskatoon, Saskatoon, SK

- Matched with an 11 year old girl to engage in meaningful social activities with others of similar age and participated in one-on-one relationship-building activities

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**ACTIVITIES AND INTERESTS**

- Enjoy playing recreational softball
- Captain of a co-ed volleyball team, Campus Rec, University of Saskatchewan
- Active participation in the University of Saskatchewan Mentorship Program

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**REFERENCES**

<b>Carlo Pivetta</b> Art Dealer Collectors Gallery Saskatoon, SK Bus: 306-555-1234 Res: 306-555-1235 cpivetta@collectorsgallery.ca	<b>Jamie Freespirit</b> Buddy Match Coordinator Big Brothers and Big Sisters Saskatoon, SK Bus: 306-555-1236 Res: 306-555-1237 freespirit@bigbrobigsis.ca	<b>Clara Jordan</b> Sales and Contract Manager CGL Industries Grande Prairie, AB Bus: 306-555-1238 Cell: 306-555-1239 clara@cgl.com
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# RESUME - POTENTIAL HEADINGS

Education/Academic Credentials

Summary of Skills/Highlights of Qualifications

(Related) Work Experience

Supplementary Work Experience

Volunteer Experience/Community Involvement

Memberships and Professional Associations

University Involvement/Campus Activities

Scholarships and Awards

Extracurricular Activities

Professional Development/Training

References

- Typically want to have 3 references
- References go beyond past employers; they can include professors, colleagues from volunteer experience, etc
- References can be on 3rd page of your resume
- If not requested, you can write:  
"References Available Upon Request"



# RESUME - STATEMENTS

Write accomplishment statements to highlight your skills, experience, and achievements. Avoid duty statements, where you simply state your responsibilities or duties for a position.


Use the framework below to help you craft a strong accomplishment statement:

**Action Verb** + **Task (skills)** + **How you demonstrated or developed it**

Ex) **Maintained** positive collaborative relationships with internal and external stakeholders to effectively coordinate a two-day conference on environmental engineering

Ex) **Organized** staffing schedules and managed production capacity for 50 employees at McDonalds

Tip: Quantify (#, %, \$) wherever possible



# COVER

# LETTER

#DontPlagiarize  
#BeUnique

## Opening Paragraph

Align yourself with the position by answering these questions.

- Why do you want to work for this company?
- What skills can you offer?
- How can you contribute to the company?

## Closing Paragraph

- Summarize your core competencies as they relate to the position in one line.
- Express interest in an interview and how you can be contacted.

ANITA CAREER  
Broke, SK  
306-555-1234  
abc123@mail.usask.ca

September 3, 2018

Debbie Reynolds  
Human Resources Manager  
Engineering Plus  
1000 – 100 Street East  
Saskatoon, SK S2P 9S1

Re: **Project Engineer #A875**

Dear Ms. Reynolds:

Engineering Plus is at the forefront of the manufacturing industry in Canada and prides itself on being a top leader of design in the automobile sector. Currently, I am in my final year of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Saskatchewan and would welcome the opportunity to work for your company full time, beginning May 20 19, to further develop my skills in the areas of product design and development. I pride myself on being detailed oriented, which is imperative to meeting quality assurance standards and testing procedures.

I recently completed a 16 month Engineering Internship with an engineering firm in southern Saskatchewan, specializing in farm machinery. My role was to manage and oversee the design of an automated hay baler. Throughout this experience, I acted as a liaison between plant engineering personnel and equipment suppliers, preparing quotes and technical documents, gathering operational data for design purposes and coordinating production with a team of 15 employees. My strong leadership competencies, mathematical skills, and ability to meet deadlines and complete tasks unsupervised would be a valuable asset to Engineering Plus.

In my final year of university, not only will I be focused on my academic work, including a Capstone Design Project, I will also play an instrumental role on the University of Saskatchewan Space Design Team (USST). Our team of 25 students, representing three colleges, will go on to compete in both the University and European Rover Challenges.

You will find that I am a committed individual who takes pride in producing quality work, providing innovative solutions and communicating effectively with multiple stakeholders. I look forward to meeting you and your team to further discuss how my education and experience would be beneficial to Engineering Plus. You may reach me at the above telephone number or email address to arrange an interview.

Thank you for considering my application.

Sincerely,



Anita Career

## Main Body

- Usually 2 paragraphs.
- Choose 2 experiences to talk about (e.g. work, volunteer, projects).

# COVER LETTER

Your contact information



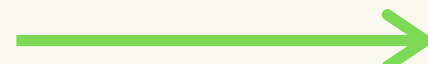
Date cover letter is sent



Company contact information



Use a "Re:"  
line



Salutation:

- Use "Dear Mr./ Ms.[last name]:"
- If you cannot find a contact name use:

"Dear Hiring Manager:" or

"Dear Hiring Committee:"

- DO NOT USE:

"To whom it may concern:" or

"Dear sir/madam:"

End with "Sincerely," and type out your full name



Use an e-signature for online submissions

#DontPlagiarize  
#BeUnique

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Broke, SK  
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abc123@mail.usask.ca

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Engineering Plus  
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# CareerMeetUp

## Multi-Government Summit

**Date:** March 18, 2021

**Time:** 1:30pm-6:00pm

**Location:** Veertly Online Platform

**Representatives will be in attendance from federal, provincial, municipal, and Indigenous public service sector, as well as the non-profit sector.**

**To register visit [careerlink.usask.ca](https://careerlink.usask.ca)!**

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**JOHNSON  
SHOYAMA**  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY  
UREGINA USASK

Canadian Council of Rehabilitation and Work

CPA SASK

Egadz

Friends Saskatoon Afforestation Areas

Government of Canada, PSC

Government of Saskatchewan

Indigenous Services of Canada

Mitacs

National Resources of Canada

RCMP

St. Andrew's College

Think Pacific

Western Economic Diversification Canada / Government of Canada

# Thank You!

Sign up for a ResumeTalk  
appointment to sit down with  
one of the SECC staff and  
make your documents work for  
you:

Visit [CareerLink!](#)