**Principles for an Effective Résumé or CV**

1. Keep it brief. Except for any addenda (publications, speaking engagements etc) it should not exceed 3-4 pages if you’re at a senior or very senior level; otherwise, 2 pages. If applying in the US or Canada, restrict it to 2-3 pages if you’re at a senior or very senior level; otherwise, 1 page
2. Use the ‘inverted pyramid’ style (emphasise your greatest assets by putting them at the beginning)
3. Use a simple format with plenty of white space – people “see” text before they “read” it. Too much text indicates lack of discipline
4. Use the following sections (see Resume Format Example for suggested layout and section headings):
   1. Contact information (your name, phone, email address and LinkedIn address)
   2. Headline (a statement of your major specialty)
   3. Experience summary (2-3 columns generally with around 6 to 8 hard, transferable skills and possibly, industries)
   4. Your work history (generally, only the last 10-15 years; use bold only for job titles). Leave responsibilities out if applying in the US or Canada; elsewhere, summarise them. Focus on and quantify your achievements. Start with action words e.g. Achieved, Overcame, Produced, Developed, Reduced, Enhanced, Transformed, etc.
   5. Education
   6. Other relevant information including additional experience, volunteering, awards etc
5. Delete words wherever possible. Keep phrases **short**.
6. Be objective; hard skills, no adjectives or self-assessment. If you can’t substantiate it, leave it out.
7. Use **bold** only for your name, your headline and your section headings, and for employers, job titles and dates
8. Use italics and bullets sparingly. Bulleted lists should never exceed 5-7. Use these only for achievements, not responsibilities. Intersperse them with brief narrative passages e.g. to outline the overall nature of your role. Your résumé should flow easily for the reader.
9. Focus on Achievements, not responsibilities. Quantify them, using digits e.g. 123,456, not words. Start with action words e.g. Achieved, Overcame, Produced, Developed, Reduced, Enhanced, Transformed, etc.
10. If applying for advertised jobs, use key words/phrases from the ad to increase your chances that the recruiter’s Applicant Tracking Software will advance your résumé for evaluation. Use a word cloud generator such as worditout.com to assess whether you have enough of the right keywords.

**Presentation**

* Include your name and contact details on Page 1
* Number all pages and include your name on the header or footer of them all
* Spell check AND proofread your résumé before sending it – and get someone else with an eye for detail to do so as well
* Check to be sure the formatting appears professional – and again, get someone else with an eye for detail to check it as well
* Avoid jargon, as it potentially separates the recipient from you. Your résumé should be understandable to a person NOT from your industry. This is not ‘dumbing down’; it helps ensure you are seen as an adept communicator.

**Don’ts**

* Don’t include reasons for leaving past positions
* Don’t include your physical address if it could disadvantage you (e.g. through a long commute)
* Don’t mention your age, referees or salary, either current or expected
* Don’t lie, embellish or exaggerate. The truth well told will always place you in the best possible light. Note though that this does not mean you should pour out your every detail. Be discerning about this.

**Achievements**

Use the STAR format when developing achievement statements and include a condensed/partial version of these in your resume:

1. **S:** The **Situation** as it was before your involvement
2. **T:** The **Task** you had to accomplish
3. **A:** The **Action/s** you took
4. **R:** The **Result/s** you achieved

Remember, the only real rule for your resume is to do what works, as far as possible. You can’t know for certain what will work in any specific instance since it will vary between recipients; they will have their own ideas as to what constitutes a good resume. The principles outlined above are based on deep experience of what works most often.