# 244 HANDOUT
# WRITING YOUR RÉSUMÉ

## A RÉSUMÉ SERVES ONE PURPOSE: TO GET YOU AN INTERVIEW

An effective résumé should:

- **be easy to read and error-free** — or you're in the recycling pile;
- **be believable and true** — it's OK to crow or embellish, but not to lie;
- **be tailored** — every employer wants to believe it's the only job you want;
- **establish fit** — why you are perfectly suited the company and the role;
- **demonstrate skills** — show you have the talent, knowledge and experience required;
- **establish strengths** — tell them what can you bring to an organization;
- **communicate your USP** — why are you unique and worth taking a risk on;
- **communicate three things** — **portfolio** (you have the talent), **professional** (you're reliable), **personality** (you're likeable and a good fit).

## DECIDE ON AN APPROACH

**Your résumé can take either of the forms below, or any combination of them:**

- **chronological/tombstone:** the traditional date-based format—easy to scan and works well with an extensive, continuous career path.;
- **functional/accomplishment statements:** a series of paragraphs telling what you achieved in previous positions, with a focus on your strengths, and what you have to offer (not where you've worked)—better overview of skill-sets, harder to scan. Good for juniors with few previous positions.

## MANDATORY INFORMATION

**Personal statement**: short paragraph describing what you can bring to the role and why you're interesting. Don't tell them how this job will benefit you, include a sentence that tells them how hiring you will benefit them;

**Contact info:** name, e-mail, phone number, URL, not street address (unless it is relevant);

**Relevant experience:** include a short summary of roles (e.g. observed and  assisted in various studio tasks; participated in brainstorming meetings). Consider including accomplishment statements, e.g. I used my strong organisational skills to...;

**Education:** generally don't include high school or before, unless it has particular relevance;

**Achievements:** Relevant qualifications, merits and awards (honour roll, scholarships and contests, etc.). Less relevant achievements can be helpful if they contribute to fit;

**Creative skills**: e.g. concept development, brand identity, illustration, photography (can be listed under role descriptions, or as a separate category);

**Technical skills:** e.g. CS (list programs), Microsoft Office, coding programs, etc.

**Professional affiliations:** e.g. Student member, GDC (Society of Graphic Designers of Canada), Student member, CAPIC (Canadian Association of Professional Image Creators), etc.

## OPTIONAL INFORMATION:

- the descriptor "résumé";
- a self-attributed title: e.g. "Graphic Designer",  "Illustrator", etc.;
- recent volunteer activities and community involvement (may include roles at school);

- experience gained in IDEA, e.g. Capilano University, Reflections Student Fundraiser, Public Relations Team Leader—worked as part of a five-member team of students developing and implementing PR strategies;
- unique interests, experiences and interesting/quirky unrelated skills (cheese rolling counts, reading, or movies does not), sports or travel IF they are remarkable in some way;
- languages spoken;
- published work and exhibits, speaking engagements, conferences attended, etc.;
- previous unrelated employment (list without description, or make the description feel relevant);
- hyperlinks/links to online portfolios, or attach a **small** PDF with 3-5 pieces of work;
- Clickable icons/links to social media sites (Instagram, Twitter, Linkedin, etc.), if relevant, not incriminating, and up to date;

## BEST LEFT OUT:

- anything that could hinder your chances of getting an interview: omission is not a crime;
- anything repetitive (copy), pointless flourishes (design).
- "references on request."

## WATCH OUT FOR:

- **use Canadian spelling and use spell check;**
- **stationery is spelled with an "e", like envelope;**
- make sure names are spelled correctly: companies, people, software, etc.;
- use consistent capitalization and punctuation;
- **print it to proofread and get someone else to proofread it too—**you cannot effectively proofread something you wrote yourself;
- refer to this course as Bachelor of Design in Visual Communication, IDEA School of Design, Capilano University, North Vancouver.

## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

- read job descriptions carefully. Make sure you address as many of the required skills and requirements as possible;
- accompanying cover letter, or email intro—make sure you capture some key points in both places, as they may not stay together;
- once you send a résumé, don't be afraid to follow up. Be persistent—the squeaky wheel really does get the grease. Learn to sense the difference between persistent and annoying;
- be wary of HR departments—bypass them and contact decision-maker directly whenever possible;
- integrate your résumé into your website in some form and remember to keep both places updated, along with Linkedin;
- a traditional résumé is just one tool in your toolbox. As a creative professional, you may want to consider supplementing this with other more memorable self-promotion pieces, such as video, tailored packages, etc. You may also want to consider a series of pieces that work together as a campaign.