



## Beginning Your Self-Assessment

### Getting Started

A self-assessment of your skills is the first step in the process of finding the right job. It provides the foundation for your campaign, preparing you for the process of “selling yourself”. Your resumé is the first thing a recruiter will read about you when selecting a potential employee. In order to accomplish this goal, you must begin the process with a self-assessment. You must reflect back on your life, describing your education, training, skills, achievements, and experience, documenting these in detail. Your self-assessment is virtually a download of what you have learned and accomplished. Your ultimate goal is to show a prospective employer the knowledge, skills and abilities you have acquired and present them in your resumé, proving that you are a “good fit” to meet their job requirements.

Listed below are a number of steps to consider when documenting and describing what you have done, what you know, and what you can do.

### Organizing

- Get organized. Put yourself in a positive attitude and minimize outside distractions.
- Prepare a timetable. Allow yourself a few days to brainstorm and record your experiences.
- Collect your original documents. Locate your Diploma, Certificates, Special Awards, Letters of Recommendation, Record of Marks or Academic Transcripts. These will help you assemble a future Portfolio.
- Use Reverse Chronological Order. Start with the most recent when listing your experiences such as Education and Work Experience. These will be easier to remember.
- Use Strong Action Verbs. These words best describe your achievements such as: aided, built, cared for, designed, established, functioned as, graduated, handled, implemented, liaised, managed, negotiated, operated, planned, recommended, supervised, taught, used verified.

- Begin your Self-Assessment. Use the helpful headings below to help organize your thoughts. Use a separate page for each topic. This will allow you to expand on them as you recall your historical information. Remember, brainstorming on your life includes all details that come to mind.
  - Formal Education
  - Work Placement Experience or Practicum Experience
  - Employment Experience
  - Special Skills and Abilities
  - Volunteer Involvement
  - Awards
  - Certificates, Licences or Memberships
  - Activities, Interests or Hobbies

## **Brainstorming**

When brainstorming, everything counts, so do not exclude any of your accomplishments or achievements. It's easier to list everything that comes to mind and do your editing later.

- Put each experience on a separate page so that you can expand on them later. There is no special order to your random thoughts.
- Everything you have done has taught you a skill. It either provided you with a new skill or improved an old one. You might think that teaching your pet a new trick should not be listed, but unknowingly, you acquired the skills of perseverance and patience. Working, volunteering, or helping someone has taught you communication and organizational skills.
- This is your opportunity to “brag-and-boast” about your accomplishments, achievements, qualifications and knowledge. Don't be modest.
- Ask a close friend or relative to help you identify the skills and abilities that you are good at. It's not easy to identify skills that come naturally.
- Be sure to identify what you enjoy doing that's related to work.
- Identify what you enjoy doing outside of school and work.
- List your natural abilities and what you are good at and identify your successes.
- Identify what qualities are necessary to be successful in your chosen career, or field, once you graduate.
- Identify your dislikes; the things you do not enjoy doing, relating to work.
- List your short term goals and long term goals. Where do you see yourself in five years or twenty years?
- Plan to strengthen your weaknesses.

## **Education**

Begin your self-assessment with Education since this is your most recent achievement. Indicate the school name, program of study, and the major subjects that were included in your program. Also include the month and year you enrolled, and the month and year that you completed your studies or graduated. Be sure to mention your academic achievements such as Dean's Honours, above average grades, or awards received.

- Include courses or programs that you are currently pursuing or enrolled in, or those that you have not yet successfully completed. Keep all information positive by expressing your thoughts as "currently enrolled and expecting to complete the program at a certain date". Do not use negatives, such as: "I have not completed my training", instead say: "I plan on completing this course at such a time".
- List courses taken outside of your normal program, the institution or school name, and the dates.
- List certificates received and the date.

## **Work Placement, Field Placement, Practicum, Internship, or Co-op Work Term Experience**

This section includes your placement while attending high school or college.

- Indicate the company, business, or organization name, city, your job title, the department name, and the dates you started and ended your work term.
- List the various duties and responsibilities of the job, and the new skills gained and learning experiences acquired while on placement.

## **Employment Experience**

List all of the jobs that you have held, whether they were full-time, part-time, contract work, or a summer job. This could include a business that you started on your own, or tutoring, or a non-paying job.

- Whatever you have done has taught you a skill or improved a previously developed skill. Employers have trusted you and depended on you.
- Indicate the business or company name, city, the department name, the manager's name, your supervisor's name, your position title, and the start and end dates of the job.
- Document all of your responsibilities, and skills acquired, what you accomplished, and what you did.

- If you held more than one job at a particular company, list each position title that you held and include the start and end date for each. Indicate if you were promoted, and why, and the duties of each job. Make it interesting and easy to understand what you actually did. Another person should understand the job.
- List company training courses and professional development sessions that you attended.

## **Special Skills**

- Computer skills include programs, software and hardware applications, programming languages, database applications, and the version of each that you have used in the past. Skill level is not important.
- The languages that you speak and write.

## **Specialized Training**

- CPR, First Aid or WHMIS training. Confined Space Certified. Mention where you received the training and the date.
- Tools or equipment that you have used or operated.

## **Additional Training**

- Identify courses or programs that you have taken which do not relate to your formal training or education. Examples could be public speaking, ball-room dancing, or AutoCAD.
- Another certificate, diploma, or degree you are pursuing. An example could be your CGA.

## **Licenses Held, or Certificates Achieved**

- Your Class G Driver's Licence, indicating your Classification. Deep Sea Diving Licence.

## **Volunteer or Community Involvement**

Volunteering is a great way to find out about the many avenues of jobs. It allows you to get your feet wet and gain some experience.

- List the organization name, your position title and the department name, your duties and responsibilities, and the dates you started and ended.
- Include any unpaid formal positions such as charity work, canvassing, event participation, and tutoring or coaching.

## **Awards Received**

- List awards received, where you received them, and the date you received them.

## **Memberships**

- List organizations you belong to, or were associated with in the past. An example could be a fitness centre.

## **Interests, Activities or Hobbies**

List things you enjoy doing outside of work and school. By mentioning these on your resumé, you are attempting to create a memorable rapport with the interviewer.

- List hobbies or crafts that you enjoy doing or have attempted.
- Include the activities or sports that you participate in, either as an individual or as a team member.
- Include things that you do for relaxation, when not working or going to school.

## References

As well as your academic training and work experience, prospective employers want to know about your track record. They want to know about your work habits. They would like some indication as to whether you are reliable, dependable, a team player, or a dedicated worker. Do you work well with co-workers and do you take the time to become more knowledgeable of the product or service the company offers. Do you offer advice, can you communicate with those in your field by using the proper language, terminology, or buzz words in which business is conducted?

- Prospective employers may pick up some of this information from your resumé but they will also contact your references to confirm your disclosure.
- Choose 3 or 4 references who are willing to speak well of you and your work habits.
- Ask for their permission to use their name as a reference, confirm with them that they will give you a good reference, and spell their name correctly.
- List their name, job title, company name, company address, and company telephone number. Do not include their home phone number; the employer will want to contact them during regular business hours.
- Give them an updated copy of your resumé.
- Ask previous employers for a Letter of Recommendation. This is an excellent resource to include with your resumé and add to your portfolio.

## Summary

Whatever you have done has taught you something. It has either provided you with a new skill or improved an old one. Whether you have helped a friend or performed a job on your own, each has taught you organization, time management, communication, prioritization, planning, multi-tasking, teamwork, or working as an individual.

## Theory

- Your academic skills and training form a basic foundation to acquire, keep, and progress on a job and to achieve the best results. You listen in order to understand and learn. You learn to communicate, to speak and write in the language in which business is conducted. You read to comprehend and use written materials. You think critically and act logically to evaluate situations, solve problems and make decisions.
- Your personal management skills are the combination of skills, attitude, and behaviour required to achieve, keep and move forward on a job.
- Adaptability is a positive attitude toward change.
- Remember that a positive attitude and positive behaviour develop self esteem and self confidence. You will also develop honesty, integrity, and personal ethics. You gain a positive attitude towards learning, growth, and personal health while your energy, motivation and persistence evolve. The ability to plan and manage time, money and other resources to achieve goals is developed. You also become accountable for actions taken.

**Now that you have completely identified and documented your life skills, abilities, and achievements in detail, you are prepared to move on to develop and begin your resumé.**

**Initiative, motivation, determination and a polished professional attitude will promote a positive self image to a prospective employer.**