



Career Starter Kit

Proven cover letter, resume and interview strategies that get you the job

industry
bootcamp

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read this before moving forward

Keep the cover letter and resume simple.

Keep the resume to 2 pages, at most.

The average resume gets read in 10 seconds.

read this before moving forward

Many people sweat the resume and cover letter writing process because it's the part of the job search journey which they have the most control of.

Rather than picking up the phone and reaching out to prospective employers, they stress about crafting the “perfect” resume and cover letter.

read this before moving forward

There is NO perfect resume or cover letter.

Writing those documents is important. But don't stress too much about it.

What many don't know is that the cover letter leads up to the resume getting read and the resume just serves to lead up to the interview, and that is where you, the human you, come in.

read this before moving forward

So craft your documents and make sure they are professional.

Then head out to network and put yourself out there. Make every effort to build connections because that will put a face to your name, and make you remembered.

tips for the winning cover letter

1. Don't repeat your resume

The cover letter is just the prelude to the resume. Use it to showcase your personality, curiosity and enthusiasm for the job you are applying for.

Mediocre: I am applying for a training position in your organisation because I am looking for a challenging and dynamic career with long-term prospects.

Remarkable:

As part of the Victorian government's initiative to invest \$5 million in the tertiary and international student space for the coming year, I see great potential in the area of training and development. I'm passionate about bringing out the best in others and I would like to be part of your team to make that happen.

tips for the winning cover letter

2. Make it short

Keep it to 3 paragraphs or half a page, at most.

3. Don't state the obvious

There's absolutely no need to mention something like "My name is _____ and I would like to apply for the position of _____." because this is totally obvious.

4. Have a strong closing

Conclude your cover letter by stating how your experience and worldview would add value to the company and help you with the job. And keep it short and sharp.

tips for the winning resume

1. Keep the fonts professional and the layout simple

Stick to fonts used on professional documents (Arial, Times New Roman, Helvetica, Calibri) and keep the layout clean. Avoid using tables if possible.

2. Use a reverse chronological order

In your list, start with the latest item at the top.

3. Avoid fuzzy keywords and jargon

Keep your language simple.

tips for the winning resume

4. Use stories

When talking about your experiences, think: problem-action-outcome.

5. Use numbers

Don't just mention what you did, give details on what you achieved. How big was the team? How much did you increase sales by? What dollar amount did you help the company save?

6. Leave out personal information

You are sending out your resume to get you a job, not a date. So just the minimal information for employers to contact you will suffice.

original resume

DOMINIC SOH

OBJECTIVE

Enthusiastic personality and passionately driven, with an innate desire to succeed. Seeking a casual or part-time role in a challenging and rewarding environment, in the field of retail.

EDUCATION

2013 : St. Bernard's College Year 12– Academic distinctions in English and Japanese
March 2014 - Current : University of Melbourne – Bachelor of Commerce

PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

June / 2011

Sinclair Knight Merz

- Constructed entire layout of defense army base with students, using Google Sketchup
- Involved in regular meetings with senior engineers, active contribution to meetings

Dec - Feb / 2013

Wendy's

- Excellent customer service, with 100% customer retention
- Managed Wendy's store individually, for a number of weeks
- Operating cash manager including summing up money until end of operating hours
- Engaged in inventory control, including order and checkups of stock daily

Aug 2013- Aug 2014

Jade Wok

- Operated in a active environment with a team of 7 food handlers
- Meeting customer satisfaction needs on a consistent basis, attention to detail targeted
- Skills in cash registering, quick problem solving and handling customer complaints

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

- Effective communication skills: Knowledge of a range of developed communication skills that needs to be eloquently expressed to different customers and staff
- Flexible: Proven ability to adapt to change and the demands of separate working environments
- Hard-working and committed: A diligent individual whom always aims to ensure work is completed to the best of ability.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES / ACHIEVEMENTS

- Proactive volunteer member of Vietnamese Student Society and Student Appeal:
- Unimelb. Flare Dance Ensemble –assistant in choreographing dances
- Competency in spoken languages: Cantonese, English, Japanese

Referees provided upon request

original resume with areas for improvement

- Address is not required
- Telephone number is optional, since your mobile is already provided
- If you have a LinkedIn account, put the link there as well

Dominic Soh
 MOBILE: 0444 123 456
 EMAIL: Dominic.Soh@email.com

- “Customer Service Rep in F&B and Retail” is your desired job title [Feel free to change as you deem fit]
- The job title and professional summary should sum up what you are about and what you can do for the employer.
- In other words, if the employer only sees the first one-third of the first page of your resume, he should know what you are about and what you can offer.

Customer Service Representative in F&B and Retail

Having achieved 100% customer retention and excellent customer service in Wendy's and managed staff, inventory and customer complaints in fast-paced F&B environments, I am a passionate customer-focused individual with the drive to succeed and I'm looking for my next challenge in the field of retail.

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Commerce

University of Melbourne, March 2014 – Current

Year 12

St. Bernard's College, 2013 – Academic distinctions in English and Japanese

- listings in the resume should be sorted in a reverse chronological order

PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

Customer Service Rep and Food Handler

Jade Wok, Aug 2013 - Aug 2014

- Operated in a fast-paced environment (with over XXX customers per day) with a team of 7 food handlers.
- Met customer satisfaction needs on a consistent basis, with a strong attention to detail.
- Exercised competency in cash registering, quick problem solving and handling customer complaints.

I've reset the indentations to prevent issues when your resume is being fed into scanning software.

Cash Manager and Customer Service Member

Wendy's, Dec - Feb / 2013

- Achieved excellent customer service, with 100% customer retention.
- Managed a Wendy's store individually, for XXX weeks.
- Assumed the role of Cash Manager to sum up the day's earnings until end of operating hours.
- Engaged in inventory control, including order and checkups of stock daily.

Replace XXX with a rough number or estimate based on your past experience.

Design Consultant

Sinclair Knight Merz, June / 2013

Constructed entire layout of defense army base with XXX students, using Google

What did you discuss with the senior engineers? How many were there? The more details, numbers and tangible evidence you can provide, the better.

- Sketchup over the span of **XXX days/weeks/months**.
- Conducted regular meetings with **XXX** senior engineers to **discuss and brainstorm logistical issues and project specifications**.

EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES / ACHIEVEMENTS

Proactive Member

Vietnamese Student Society and Student Appeal, Aug 2013 – Feb 2014

Assistant Choreographer

The University of Melbourne Flare Dance Ensemble, Aug 2013 – Feb 2014

Competency in spoken languages: Cantonese, English, Japanese

Don't forget about the dates and duration for your participation in clubs and societies.

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

Effective Communication Skills

Knowledge of a range of developed communication skills that needs to be eloquently expressed to different customers and staff.

Flexibility

Proven ability to adapt to change and the demands of separate working environments

Diligence and Commitment

A diligent individual whom always aims to ensure work is completed to the best of ability.

Great to highlight your personal attributes. Are there concrete examples you can use to better support your attributes?

EXAMPLES:

Confident Public Speaker

Addressed more than 50 students in The University of Melbourne, RMIT and Swinburne during their respective orientation days.

Diligence and Commitment

Stayed overtime with supervisor at Wendy's for 2 months to install and implement a new point of sales system.

Flexibility

Obtained the feedback from customers, passed them on to the supervisor and successfully rolled out a new menu within 3 weeks that can better cater to customers with specific dietary requirements.

improved resume

Dominic Soh

MOBILE: 0444 123 456

EMAIL: Dominic.Soh@email.com

Customer Service Representative in F&B and Retail

Having achieved 100% customer retention and excellent customer service in Wendy's and managed staff, inventory and customer complaints in fast-paced F&B environments, I am a passionate customer-focused individual with the drive to succeed and I'm looking for my next challenge in the field of hospitality.

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Commerce

University of Melbourne, March 2014 – Current

Year 12

St. Bernard's College, 2013 – Academic distinctions in English and Japanese

PROFESSIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

Customer Service Representative and Food Handling

Jade Wok, Aug 2013 - Aug 2014

- Operated in a fast-paced environment (with over 30 customers per day) with a team of 7 food handlers.
- Met customer satisfaction needs on a consistent basis, with a strong attention to detail.
- Exercised competency in cash registering, quick problem solving and handling customer complaints.

Cash Manager and Customer Service Member

Wendy's, Dec - Feb / 2013

- Achieved excellent customer service, with 100% customer retention.
- Managed a Wendy's store individually, for 3 weeks.
- Assumed the role of Cash Manager to sum up the day's earnings until end of operating hours.
- Engaged in inventory control, including order and checkups of stock daily.

Design Consultant

Sinclair Knight Merz, June / 2013

- Constructed entire layout of defense army base with 6 students, using Google Sketchup over the span of 5 days.
- Conducted regular meetings with 4 senior engineers to discuss and brainstorm logistical issues and project specifications.
- Presented project to a crowd of 50 senior engineers and managers for 2 hours to conclude the project

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES / ACHIEVEMENTS

Committee member

Vietnamese Student Society (VSA), Mar 2014 - Current

- Participation in the Moon festival (Federation square) and fundraising events that included working with children and elderly

Proactive Volunteer

University of Melbourne Student Appeal, June 2014 - Current

- Frequently engaged with the public to encourage donations
- Raised over \$22,000 with the Student Appeal team to help financially disadvantaged students, exceeding planned target by \$6000

Assistant Choreographer

The University of Melbourne Flare Dance Ensemble, Mar 2014 - Current

- Provided valuable feedback to members regarding choreography
- Helped out with creation of outfits for 30 members

Qualifications in Responsible Service of Alcohol provided by KOOPS Training and Employment Solutions

Competency in spoken languages: Cantonese, English, Japanese

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

Effective Communication Skills

Addressed more than 100 students in The University of Melbourne during the semester as a member of the Student Appeal to raise funds for disadvantaged students in need.

Diligence and Commitment

Stayed overtime at Wendy's for 2 months to ensure stock reports were up to date and money flow was generated correctly. Reported instances of stock loss to manager where observed.

Flexible

Quickly adjusted to the roles and requirements of both Wendy's and Jade Wok simultaneously and the different demands each job offered.

tips for the winning interview

before the interview

1. Do your homework

Research the company. Find out about their projects, developments, values, mission, vision and culture.

2. Give someone in the organisation a call

Ideally, it's with someone in the role you are applying for. This would allow you to find out more about the job and to create a stronger impression of yourself.

For this, you can ask the professional what the job is about, the various highlights and challenges, as well as some of the projects he is working on.

tips for the winning interview

before the interview

3. Figure out how to get there

Calculate the travel time to your interview location and give some buffer for delays. Even better, make a trip in advance to know exactly where the place is.

4. Prepare your relevant documents

Have copies of your academic transcripts, certificates, resumes and any other documents handy.

tips for the winning interview

during the interview

1. Ready your “story statement”

This encapsulates what you are about, what drives you and why the employer should hire you. It answers the “Tell me more about yourself” and “Why should we hire you?” question.

Weak: I recently graduated from University X with a Bachelor of Y and I really want to make a difference in this industry.

Strong:

As a former international student myself, I understand how tough getting a job can be. I sent out 526 resumes over 561 days, and this was featured on various news outlets. Because of this, I’m on a personal mission to bring out the best in others and to help them professionally, because I believe that everyone deserves to succeed in their lives and careers. Thus, I’m applying to be part of your team to help make that happen.

tips for the winning interview

during the interview

2. Prepare for “What is your weakness?”

It’s important to be honest about your weakness, but don’t just end there. Turn it into a positive.

Weak: I’m prone to burn-out’s because I tend to push myself too hard.

Strong:

I’m prone to burn-out’s because I tend to push myself too hard. I don’t really see that as a hindrance because this allows me to get things done and to go the extra mile for my team and my customers. I just need to pace myself so that things can be sustainable over the long-term.

tips for the winning interview

during the interview

3. Think PAR – Problem, Action, Result

You might be asked to describe a situation – where you encountered a crisis, faced conflicting work demands, dealt with uncooperative team members, managed tight deadlines, etc. This is how you can present your response.

Problem: What was the issue at hand?

Action: What did you (and your team) do about it?

Results: What was the outcome? What lessons did you learn?

tips for the winning interview

during the interview

4. Build up confidence by adopting confident postures

Your physical posture affects your level of confidence. Find a private space (your car or the bathroom) and adopt a posture of confidence, like standing up with your shoulders straight. And stay in that posture for 1-2 minutes.

5. Be aware of the body language in the room

A great way to build trust and rapport is to mirror the other person's body language. If you notice the interviewer leaning forward at the table, follow suit. If he is leaning back in the chair, you can do the same as well.

tips for the winning interview

during the interview

6. Adopt a positive and solutions-focused stance

When the interviewer has found something unsavoury about you or your application, always put it in a positive light.

Interviewer: When I called one of your job references, who happened to be your former manager, he said that you were made redundant from your position. Could you tell me more about it?

Strong response: While it's true that I was let go by the company, I didn't see that as a stumbling block to my career, but a learning opportunity. It's true that I was underperforming in my sales figures in that role, but for the past few months, I've attended several sales and marketing workshops to brush up my skills, so I don't think this would be an issue down the road.

tips for the winning interview

during the interview

7. Ask good questions

There will be an opportunity for you to ask questions. This is how you can further showcase your interest in the role and the company.

Some questions you could ask:

- If one is hired, what happens in the next 90 days?
- What are the top 3 characteristics of high performers in your team?
- What is the company's strategic goals and direction for the next few years and how would this role fit into the bigger picture?

tips for the winning interview

during the interview

8. Ask for the interviewer's business card

Before you head off after the interview, do ask for the interviewer's card as a way for you to keep in touch with her.

tips for the winning interview

after the interview

Email a personalised thank you note

After the interview and within a 24 hour timeframe, email the interviewer a personalised thank you note.

Dear Sam,

Thank you for taking the time to interview me today. I really enjoyed hearing about the great things XYZ company is spearheading, especially the pro-bono marketing projects which your team is doing for not-for-profits.

All the best and let's stay in touch as well.

*Regards,
Dominic*

bonus content: what if you get rejected?

To give you a brief snapshot of my job search journey, I sent 526 resumes over 561 days before landing a permanent, full-time position as a business trainer in November 2014.

Thus, I had my fair share of rejection letters and emails for job applications.

From this, I learnt 2 important lessons.

bonus content: what if you get rejected?

Lesson 1: You can't control what life throws at you, but you can control how you respond to it.

If you get rejected for your job application, do you see that as a stumbling block or a stepping stone to something greater?

Is that going to stop you from pursuing your dream job or does that make you want to pursue your dream job even more?

bonus content: what if you get rejected?

Lesson 2: If you want a different result, you'd have to do things differently.

If you want to get to where you have never been before, then you would need to do things you have never done before.

bonus content: what if you get rejected?

One of my favourite quotes is from Einstein which says “Insanity: doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.”

Are you happy with the results of your job search?

What would you need to do differently to improve your outcome?

bonus content: what if you get rejected?

If things don't work out, that's fine. Put that behind you, learn from it and move on.

Change. Adapt. Innovate. Reinvent.

Keep networking. Keep learning. Keep growing. Keep giving.

All the best! The world is yours for the taking!



Let's keep in touch!



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