

New Leaf Resumes' Newsletter

Food for Thought ☒ Inspiration ☒ Practical advice

This newsletter is dedicated to the young people who are applying for their first-ever jobs. Resume writing could be seen as one of the rites of passage into adulthood. Certainly applying for your first job, establishing your first chequing account, having expendable income generated by employment rather than by parental handouts or allowances, are all hallmarks of being “grown up.”

The first resume may be the toughest to write. Some may not have worked at all yet, and others may have earned a few dollars through babysitting, shoveling snow, walking a neighbour's dog, raking leaves and so on. So how does a young person establish credibility with a potential employer?

I've spoken to quite a number of young people in high schools through the Business & Education Partnership of Waterloo Region. It is an excellent resource that connects working adults in the community with young people. I deliver mini-workshops on how to approach resume writing, and wherever I speak, even the young students in Grade 8 astound me with their grasp of what a resume is.

Young people know, for example, that a resume is a marketing document, not a history of work, nor a biography. And they use terms such as “persuasive writing” and “advertising.” So right! Perhaps one concept that is difficult to grasp, and many people struggle with this, is what exactly will reliably interest an employer. Here are some tips geared to students.

In your very first resume you will have to rely on those typical, early teenage part-time occupations listed above, and also on school, extracurricular, and personal examples. These will show dependability, interest, initiative, trustworthiness, ability to learn and being keen to work—all attributes that an employer will be looking for.

1. If you have earned your own money, list that experience. Here are a few ideas:
 - Babysit from 1 to 3 children, aged 6 months to 6 years approximately 4x per month.
 - Earned over \$500 in 2008 from babysitting, 80% of which was generated by referrals.
 - Earned excellent reputation as shown by referrals. Clients appreciated my punctuality, reliability, and my confidence in engaging their children in both task-oriented and fun activities.
2. Do you participate in team sports, music lessons, or other extracurricular activities?
 - Contribute to team achievements: scored 12 goals and 20 assists for my Junior Hockey League team.
 - Recognized 2 years in a row as “Team Player with Team Spirit” for helpful and friendly attitude.
 - Earned half the money (\$200) needed for new hockey equipment by saving gift money and doing chores—hedge trimming, raking leaves, digging gardens—all completed for neighbours and family.
3. Here's a specific idea for someone who would like to work in a car dealership:
 - Assisted uncle, a mechanic, most weekends, and work on family members' vehicles; assist in oil changes, spark plug maintenance and other repairs.
4. And perhaps you cannot think of anything at all; here are some that may apply to you:
 - Achieved top grades in every class, especially math (A+), and science (A); complete homework daily and request extra work. (great for retail, where many must complete day-end tallies)
 - Recognized on report cards for punctuality, good attitude, and eagerness to learn new things.
 - Elected class president; ran an enthusiastic campaign with many supporters.
 - Contributed, over two years, to team of 10 delivering milk to junior grades at each lunch hour.
 - Volunteer at local library, shelving books and reading books to youngsters during weekly drop-in.
 - Volunteered to escort junior grades to school two years in a row.

Write a persuasive one-page resume and then make sure you're ready for interviews!

As always, comments and ideas for future issues are welcome. All the best in your career! Stephanie Clark

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