

# JOB HUNTING

## *Practical Guide*



*During the transition to civilian life, employment is a big concern for veterans and their families. This booklet was designed to ease the transition to civilian employment.*

Military Family Services delivers a variety of career-related programs and services through Military Family Resource Centres and other partnering organizations. To learn more, connect with your closest Military Family Resource Centre.

**[www.CAFconnection.ca](http://www.CAFconnection.ca)**

**Military Family Resource Centre**

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## **WRITING RÉSUMÉS THAT WORK**

Tips on creating résumés that will catch an employer's attention.

## **Aim**

A résumé is a communicative and self-marketing tool. It is used to inform employers of your profile as defined by your work experience and training. It must highlight your skills, accomplishments, experience and acquired knowledge.

## **Some technical points**

- 2 to 3 pages, with no spelling errors;
- Type it on the computer;
- Open phrases with action verbs; maintain this style throughout your résumé;
- Make direct links between your skills and training and those needed for the position sought;
- For released military members, be sure to translate military skills into civilian terms;
- Create different versions of your résumé based on the type of position you are applying for;
- Ensure your contact information is up to date;
- Keep the employer's needs in mind when you are writing your résumé.

## **To be avoided**

- Do not include personal information such as your social insurance number, date of birth or age, birthplace, gender, health, or marital status;
- Do not include a photo of yourself; do not sign your résumé, you should only sign and date your cover letter;
- Do not include references in your résumé. Put them on a separate page to bring with you for your interview. Do not give a reference's name or contact information without first obtaining their permission;
- Do not attach transcripts or marks of courses;
- Do not simply enumerate past positions;
- Do not print your résumé on colour paper;
- Do not use protective (plastic) envelopes. Don't make a cover page. Keep your résumé brief, simple, and to the point;
- Do not mention past or desired salary;
- Do not indicate reasons why you left past positions;
- Do not lie or exaggerate. Be honest about your skills and experience;
- Do not make spelling or grammatical errors. Pay attention to small details— any errors could land your résumé in the reject pile.

# RÉSUMÉ WORKSHEET

Name:	
Address:	
Phone number:	
Email (Use a professional email address):	

## PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

Give a brief and concise overview of your professional experience and specify some qualities and skills relevant to the desired position.


## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE (Relevant experience related to desired position)

Job title:		Year:	
Name of company and city:			
Tasks and responsibilities (use action verbs):			

Job title:		Year:	
Name of company and city:			
Tasks and responsibilities (use action verbs):			

## EDUCATION

Diploma or program of study:		Year:	
Name of school, city:			

Diploma or program of study:		Year:	
Name of school, city:			

## VOLUNTEER WORK

Job title:		Année :	
Name of organization and city:			
Tasks and responsibilities (use action verbs):			

# EXAMPLE OF A RÉSUMÉ

## JOHN JACKSON

123, Larue Street, Quebec (Quebec) G01 2N3  
555-666-8888  
john.jackson@hotmail.com

**Security level: Top Secret**  
**Bilingual: French / English (Government Level EBB)**

### PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

- Candidate with almost 25 years of Canadian Forces experience in the field of instruction and human and materials resources management;
- Strong skills in teaching, planning, and managing schedules;
- Excellent analytical and risk management skills;
- Physically and medically fit;
- Computer skills: Excel, PowerPoint, Word, Outlook, Internet.

### CANADIAN FORCES WORK EXPERIENCE 1988 TO 2016

#### INSTRUCTOR/TRAINER

2010 to 2016

**Canadian Forces, Valcartier Military Base, Quebec**

- Training Reservists (Rangers) in Search and Rescue in remote areas in both English and French;
- Administering theoretical and practical tests and managing applicants' files;
- Managing a \$100K budget and training schedules;
- Supervising a staff of 100 people and following up on requests;
- Establishing special activities to encourage physical activity and self-improvement in 13- to 18-year-old Aboriginal youth (Junior Rangers).

#### MANAGER OF HUMAN AND MATERIAL RESOURCES (SERGEANT)

2006 to 2010

**Canadian Forces, Trenton Military Base, Ontario**

- Organizing calendars and training schedules for a unit of 110 people;
- Training, advising, and evaluating staff;
- Receiving orders from superiors and planning work priorities;
- Implementing and administering codes of conduct and behaviour in the workplace;
- Establishing, on a national scale, training plans for new communication systems within the Reserve;
- Looking after and reporting on inventory and equipment.

#### SIGNAL OPERATOR

1988 to 2006

**Canadian Forces, Valcartier Military Base, Quebec**

- Working with different systems HF, VHF, UHF, satellite and data;
- Operating mobile information and communications systems;
- Sending and receiving voice and data transmissions;
- Choosing the locations for portable transmitter-receiver antennas;
- Using and distributing wiring and equipment for information systems;
- Coordinating the reestablishment of communication networks;
- Performing preventative maintenance and equipment checks.

## ACHIEVEMENTS

- Shift Supervisor of Canadian Command Post, Afghanistan (2004);
- Responsible for the planning of pre-deployment training, Afghanistan (2004);
- Responsible for G8 broadcast stations, Kananaskis, Alberta (2002);
- Communications Operator, Bosnia and Croatia;
- Humanitarian Aid, Montreal Ice Storm and Red River Flood in Manitoba.

## PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

- Instructional Techniques
- Leadership (Warrant Officer course);
- First Aid and CPR;
- Motor Vehicle Driving Instructor/Evaluator course;
- Transportation of Dangerous Goods WHMIS;
- Signal Operator course;
- Protection of Controlled Goods course;
- Training on various vehicles;
- Air Brakes training;
- Harassment and Suicide Prevention;
- Ice Rescue;
- Boat Operator Accredited Training (BOAT);
- Basic Mountain and Avalanche Survival.

## EDUCATION

### High School Studies

Polyvalente Le Beau Soleil, Québec, Québec

1987

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Hockey and soccer coach
- Volunteer at a residence for senior.

**References available on request.**





## **SUCCESSFUL COVER LETTERS**

Some helpful tips for writing letters to potential employers .

## **Aim**

A cover letter's role is to persuade an employer to look at your résumé. It is also used to establish a clear link between your résumé and the position you are applying for. A cover letter is meant to introduce you to an employer and show that you are the right person for the job. It offers information that is not necessarily found on your résumé.

## **Qualities**

It must be :

- Addressed to one person in particular;
- Concise, complete, and clear;
- Written to highlight your talents and relevant work experience;
- Use some of the same wording as the job advertisement and link your experience and skills to the job qualifications.

## **Cover letter: Best practices**

- Maximum one page;
- No spelling errors;
- Short, complete paragraphs;
- Type it on a computer. Use the same font as your résumé;
- Must be signed in blue pen;
- Date written in the upper left-hand corner;
- Save your cover letter and résumé on the computer under your name in pdf format. (ex: johnsmith\_resume.pdf)

## **Cover letter: To avoid**

- Do not send a general letter to all employers— personalize each letter;
- Do not emphasize your limits (lack of experience, dismissal, etc.);
- Do not show doubt with negative sentences;
- Do not be too general;
- Do not write a long text on your professional experiences;
- Do not repeat word by word what you wrote in your résumé.

# COVER LETTER WORKSHEET

City:		Date:	
Name of person in charge of hiring:			
Company name:			
Address:			
City:		Province:	
		Postal Code:	

Dear (name),

1 <sup>st</sup> paragraph: Introduce yourself, mentioning the position you are applying for and your attached résumé.

2 <sup>nd</sup> paragraph: Present the qualifications you possess in relation to the position you are applying for. Highlight your strengths and your career goals. Describe what makes you an ideal candidate. Make a link between your professional experience, your training, your education, relevant courses, your internship or volunteer work. Also explain why you are interested in the company and the reasons for wanting to apply for the job.

3 <sup>rd</sup> paragraph: Showcase yourself by indicating some personal qualities or personality traits that may be useful to the position you are applying for. Often they will be mentioned in the job posting.

Closing paragraph: This is where you request an interview, make known your availability, thank your potential employer, and express your salutations.

Your name:	
Email:	
Phone number:	

# EXAMPLE OF A COVER LETTER

March 15, 2016

Thomas Jones  
Jeffrey Hale Community Services  
1200 Holland Street, Quebec (QC) G08 5S1

Dear Mr Jones,

Enclosed you will find my résumé. I am applying for the part time Registered Nursing position. I have learned about the wide range of health services you provide to a multicultural population, and am extremely excited by the prospect of joining your team.

I graduated with a Nursing Certificate, which has provided me with a rich knowledge base as well as skills directly related to this position. Through my education and work history I have gained experience in community health, acute care nursing, emergency room nursing, medical evacuations and clinical settings. I am very knowledgeable in health promotion and maintenance as central components to nursing.

My experience also emphasizes the importance of professionalism, leadership and critical thinking. Other essential skills I have acquired include flexibility, adaptability, cooperation, public relations, superior organizational skills, as well as supervisory and management skills.

I look forward to the opportunity to speak with you further about my qualifications. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jenny Smith  
1234, Chemin de la Ruchée  
Quebec, Quebec GOA 2C0  
418-841-1277



## **GETTING READY FOR A JOB INTERVIEW**

Take the time to prepare for a job interview.

## **Aim**

An interview allows you to introduce yourself to an employer. You must take advantage of the chance to prove to employers that you are the person they have been looking for. You have to speak in terms of training, work experiences, acquired knowledge and core qualities. Preparing for an interview can be time consuming; however, the more you feel prepared, the more confidence you are likely to demonstrate.

## **Before the interview**

### **Getting information**

- Take good note of the interview's date, time and location;
- Find out the name and company position of the interviewer;
- Gather information on the company: services, philosophy, years of existence, company management, and number of employees, etc.

### **Where to get information**

- Contact someone you know in the company;
- Ask the secretary for pamphlets;
- Consult newspapers, the Internet, company directories, your local centre of employment, and the chamber of commerce, etc.

### **Know yourself**

- Assess your skills, assets, and weak points;
- Know your résumé by heart;
- If the employer asks you for an example of something you could improve, name it briefly and explain how you are overcoming this weakness. Name a flaw which you can transform into a quality in another context, or name a flaw which is not linked to the job;
- Establish links between your training, your qualifications, your working experiences, your realizations, and the job you are now applying for;
- Be sure to have a bank of situations in mind that can be used to respond to common interview questions.

### **Introduce yourself**

Remember that the first 4 or 5 minutes of the interview are decisive. Make a good first impression.

- Pay particular attention to the clothes you wear;
- Bring a copy of your résumé, references, and diplomas, etc.;
- Be there at least 10 minutes in advance;
- Present yourself with a smile to the person who welcomes you, as the employer could ask him or her for his impressions.

## **Make a Good Impression**

### **Non-verbal behaviour**

- Don't act nervous or stressed out;
- Dress accordingly;
- Give a firm handshake;
- Observe how the interviewer acts;
- Do not chew gum;
- Sit down straight and comfortably;
- Avoid nervous hand gestures and other tics;
- Be self-confident at all times.

### **Verbal Behaviour**

- Address the interviewer by his or her name;
- Be ready to answer tricky questions (e.g. "Tell me more about yourself, describe your best friend");
- Let the interviewer take the lead of the interview;
- Express yourself clearly by avoiding answers that are too long or too vague, and avoid slang and overly-familiar language;
- Never criticize your former employer or workplace;
- Give examples of how you've improved your weak points;
- Adopt an attitude which demonstrates your interest for the position;
- Thank the interviewer.

### **Practical advice**

- Prepare mentally;
- Make sure you know how to get to the interview's location;
- Be attentive to the information given to you;
- Remember the names of everyone present at your interview;
- Make eye-contact;
- Be yourself;
- Support what you say with concrete examples;
- Take time to think before answering the question;
- Be dynamic and enthusiastic;
- If you are not certain of the meaning of a question, ask the employer for clarification;
- Prepare a few questions for the interviewer to show your level of interest in the position;
- After the interview, send a thank-you letter.

**After the interview, take the time to congratulate yourself for your performance.**

## Common Interview Questions

- Tell me about yourself.
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- What kind of person would you say you are?
- How do your co-workers see you?
- Why would you like to work for us?
- Why do you think you are the right person for this job?
- What salary are you expecting?
- Why should we hire you?
- How would your former employers describe you?
- What are your long-term goals ?
- How do you handle stress and pressure?
- Would you accept temporary, contractual, or shift work ?
- What's the most important thing you learned in your last job?
- What do you know about our company?
- Tell us about a situation where you needed to show initiative.
- What was your greatest achievement (in this position)?
- How do you deal with criticism ?
- What do you think of working overtime?
- Why did you stay unemployed for such a long time?
- What would be your ideal job?
- What do you expect from a supervisor?
- Where do you see yourself in five years?
- What major professional challenge have you handled?
- Give some examples of teamwork.
- Do you have any questions for us?





## **DYNAMIC AND EFFICIENT JOB HUNTING**

Tricks and tips for establishing a good action plan.

## **An effective job search**

Have you ever wished an employer would call you and say, “I’ve heard so many good things about you, would you please come work for my company?” Sadly, this happens quite rarely. In reality, jobs don’t come out of nowhere— finding a job that suits you is a process.

### **Tips and hints**

- Start searching today! Even if you don’t need a job right now, nothing is keeping you from learning about the job market;
- Know what you have to offer to an employer, as well as the positions you could fill within a company;
- Visualize your desired position. See yourself in the company, within the physical environment, the workplace ambiance, etc.;
- Trust your potential. Believe that you are qualified;
- Know your strengths, your relevant work experience and what distinguishes you from other people when you apply for a position;
- Be yourself, and smile. A pleasant personality and attitude are highly impressive;
- Think positively. Take it as a fact that the perfect job for you exists somewhere!

### **Action plan**

There are many ways to make a job search more efficient. The more methods you combine, the greater your chances of reaching your goal.

1. Be sure that all your acquaintances know that you are searching for a job. Ask for names of contacts or ideas to pursue;
2. Start building a network in the field of work that interests you (go to conferences, breakfast meets, etc). Let yourself be known! Did you know that 80% of all jobs available are never advertised? They are filled through networking;
3. Sign-up with different candidate banks, recruiting or placement agencies;
4. Read the papers to learn about investments within companies, and to read job offers. There are also numerous web sites to explore;
5. Target the companies you wish to work for the most. Gather information and documentation on these companies to know them as well as possible;
6. Contact the person in charge of human resources to request an interview, during which you will present your services and ask for further information. (Who does what, future investments, etc);
7. If an employer tells you that there are no positions available, ask when they think they may be hiring. Take note and contact them at this time;

8. After a few weeks, send a thank-you letter following the meeting, underlining a few of your strong points that could be useful to them and reaffirming your availability;
9. If you cannot obtain an interview, send your résumé, with a cover letter, indicating that you will contact them soon.

### **To be avoided**

- Do not search jobs without having a plan;
- Do not apply for jobs that do not correspond to your profile;
- Do not use an unprofessional email address;
- Not being specific about the position you are applying for (writing “Any” on job applications);
- Do not have a negative attitude (repeating to yourself that there are no jobs available and no one wants to hire you);
- Do not have too many constraints (schedule, salary, etc.);
- Do not wait for the phone to ring (without following up);
- Not doing enough networking;
- Do not expect the job search to yield instant results;
- Do not distribute 50 résumés per week to the front desk of organizations.



## **ACADEMIC AND VOCATIONAL COUNSELLING**

Take an in-depth look at your educational plan or discuss your career objectives.

Do you have questions about your professional future? Have you been searching for a while and gotten nowhere? Maybe you're thinking about going back to school, but don't know what program is best for you. Or you're already employed, but think there's a better job out there for you. It's time to act! Contact your MFRC.

## **Career development process**

With the help of a guidance counsellor, you will:

- Analyze your goals and discover your strengths through discussions, tests and exercises;
- Take an in-depth look at your skills, experience, and interests, and come up with a career plan;
- Identify transferable skills and expectations regarding the job market.

## **Things to consider when going back to school**

- It is possible that you will have to reorganize your schedule, you may be less available to your family and social network.
- If you are used to a certain standard of living, you will probably have to adapt and find strategies to do more with less for the duration of your studies;
- Look for financing possibilities (Government Loans and Bursaries Program, withdrawing money from RRSPs for studies, etc.).
- Many training programs may not be available in your area and therefore require travel or relocation.

## Interesting websites

red-seal.ca	Interprovincial Standards on trades in Canada.
schoolfinder.com	Information on universities and colleges in Canada, including admission, costs and programs.
workopolis.com	Job search website and various information about job searching.
indeed.ca	Job search site.
monster.ca	Job search site.
jobbank.gc.ca	Canadian Government job offers.
jobsetc.gc.ca	Training, career information, job search and workers' rights in Canada. A number of links are available on the site.
Write here job search sites in your area.	

## Red Seal Trades

Some trades are recognized between provinces, which means that skilled workers can work in more than one province or territory. Persons who qualify for a journeyperson certificate for one of the trades in question and who pass the interprovincial examination will see a “Red Seal” on their certificates of qualification and apprenticeship. They are permitted to practice their trade in all provinces and territories in Canada where the trade is designated as a Red Seal without further examinations.

More than 50 trades are currently designated as Red Seal, although some are not designated for all provinces and territories. Visit the website [http://www.red-seal.ca/trades/tr.1d.2s\\_l.3st-eng.html](http://www.red-seal.ca/trades/tr.1d.2s_l.3st-eng.html) for a list of designated Red Seal trades and to learn more about how to obtain your certification.





## **RECOGNITION OF ACQUIRED COMPETENCIES**

Formal recognition of your professional skills.

## Recognition of acquired competencies

### What is it?

Recognition of acquired competencies allows for the formal recognition of competencies acquired through life and work experiences based on standards such as academic programs. Depending on your objectives, such an approach can help you identify your acquired skills and target the missing training that you should acquire. The process of recognition of acquired competencies leads to the obtaining of an official document (report, certificate, diploma, etc.) attesting to all the competencies specific to a given title (academic program) or part of the components of this title (training units or credits, etc.).<sup>1</sup>

### Why?

- To obtain formal recognition (report, transcript, diploma) of acquired competencies.
- To identify skills that are mastered and to acquire the missing ones.
- To point out needs for training or professional development.
- To reduce the duration of a training course.
- To obtain prerequisites for other courses.
- To facilitate career reorientation.
- To increase your chances of getting a promotion.
- To improve your qualifications and keep your job.
- To increase your chances of getting a job.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/adultes/obtenir-un-premier-diplome/bilan-et-reconnaissance-des-acquis/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://reconnaissancedesacquis.ca/en/rplc-in-brief/about/>



## **Military Civilian Training Accreditation Program (MCTAP)**

The aim of the program is to assist CAF members in career transition by providing, if possible, some form of civilian equivalency by the accreditation of all military occupations.<sup>3</sup>

### **Accreditation**

Accreditation is the formal evaluation by a competent civilian professional body of military education, training, experience, course documentation, instructional staff qualifications and facilities, for the purpose of establishing civilian academic, professional or occupational equivalencies.

### **Equivalencies**

- Can result in CAF members obtaining advanced standing at academic institutions;
- Can assist CAF members in some cases to take civilian certification exams and, once certification is obtained, to practice in a given civilian occupation.

### **Where to get information?**

For information about the Military Civilian Training Accreditation Program, contact the **Personnel Selection Officers** of your base/wing.

To find out about the educational institutions in your area where you can apply for recognition of acquired competencies, contact the **Military Family Resource Centre** (MFRC) Employment Assistance Service in your area.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.forces.gc.ca/fr/a-propos-politiques-normes-directives-ordonnances-administrativesdefense-5000/5031-6.page>



## **NETWORKING**

How to expand your list of contacts in order to help you find a job.

## **Making Contact**

Many positions are only advertised within the organization or filled by candidates referred by people who are already working for the company. Knowing someone “on the inside” can yield impressive results. You will be astonished at what the people around you will do to facilitate your search.

### **Approach family, friends, and acquaintances**

Tell your family, friends, neighbours, and anyone else you know that you’re looking for a job. Tell them what field you are in and ask them to give you a hand in your efforts. They can provide you with information about hiring opportunities in their own place of work or in that of someone they know. Don’t forget your ex-employers, your former co-workers, your insurance agent, your bank manager, your hairdresser, the cashier at the bookstore... The more people are aware that you are looking for a job, the greater your chances of identifying job opportunities and obtaining an interview. This is what is known as the *snowball effect*.

Once you have contacted the people in your own network (or have been referred to one of their contacts), tell them what kind of job you are looking for and mention your strengths. Make it clear that you are not necessarily expecting a job offer, but tell them that you would like any advice, ideas or useful hints they can offer.

A positive attitude is your best asset: it attracts people’s interest, stimulates productivity and enables you to derive full benefit from your personality.

## **Expanding your Network**

### **Objectives for meeting with a contact**

- Exchange information (you are looking for a job, you are asking them for some kind of assistance, they will tell you what they can or cannot do);
- Describe yourself (tell them about your experience, your achievements and your skills);
- Generate new contacts (ask them for the name of two people they know who might be able to help you in your search).

Since many employers trust each other and refer each other to their in-house pool of applicants, it is by no means a waste of time to take your résumé to the employer for whom you would like to work. There is a possibility that your résumé will be added to their own database, or passed on to someone who is looking for an employee just like you.

## **Your Online Network**

### **Networking and the Internet**

Social networking is also a great resource. LinkedIn is a social network used mainly by businesses and job seekers. It is a great way to make contacts with employers and people in the fields you are interested in. Many companies are also turning to Facebook and Twitter to post jobs and other news. Be sure to put your résumé on Jobboom, Monster.ca, Workopolis, and other employment websites.

### **Manage your profile**

If an employer looked you up on Google, what would they find? Make sure it's nothing incriminating by managing your online persona. Run a search on your own name, and do your best to remove anything an employer may find questionable. That includes photos, status updates, posts, and blog entries, etc. It's also a good idea to have a professional email account that uses your real name (or business name, if you're an entrepreneur), and not a pseudonym or online handle.