

**"I was amazed at how many calls I got after I handed out my resume. It was great! My resume was different & fun, yet functional!"** *Becky Zeeman*

# **ALTERNATIVE RESUMES**

## **DEFINITELY NOT YOUR PARENTS' RESUME BOOK**

**140 creative,  
eye-catching resumes  
especially for  
young job seekers!**

**BY MICHAEL HOWARD**

**"A resume is a job seeker's calling card & has the power to open the door to an interview. Michael Howard's resume examples have definitely opened those doors for our clients."**

*Gillian Watters, Director of Programs, KEYS Employment Services*

## PRAISE FOR ALTERNATIVE RESUMES//

" Michael Howard's resume books have been a highly effective resource in the YWCA Vancouver employment resource centres that work with job seekers 15-30 years of age. In fact, the books are so successful that they keep getting stolen! "

*Melanie Hardy, Program Manager  
YWCA Vancouver, Career Zone*

" Alternative Resumes provides samples of highly visual, innovative resumes, providing alternatives to conventional methods. This book is ideal for youth engaged in their quest to land a first job, or youth unsure of how to present their skills & experience. This book is like a breath of fresh air!"

*Denise Young, Manager, Youth Employability Project  
Centre for Entrepreneurship Education & Development*

" Readers will be inspired by the practical advice, case studies & samples that demonstrate how to display assets to best advantage. Alternative Resumes is truly a valuable contribution to the resume writing industry. "

*Sandra Lim, CHRP, CPRW, CECC  
Career Management Specialist  
A Better Impression Resume & Career Counselling Services*

" A treasure for both youths & adults with minimal experience & skills wishing to enter or re-enter the current labour force. I recommend it to employment counsellors who aspire to highlight their clients' resumes with strong, truthful & well-thought anecdotes."

*Gabrielle Musick, Employment Service Advisor  
Community Employment & Resource Centre*

© Writing On Stone Press Incorporated  
and Michael Howard 2009

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form by any means, stored in a data base, or retrieval system without prior written permission of the publisher except in the case of brief quotations embodied in articles or reviews. Making copies of any part of this book for any purpose other than personal use is in violation of copyright law.

The techniques in this book have helped job seekers land interviews, land jobs and supported their job search. We have been careful to provide accurate information, but it is possible that errors and omissions crept in. Your results will vary depending on your qualifications, personal situation, job search strategies, job market fluctuations, economic conditions and other factors.

All the names of individuals and organizations in this book are fictional creations for the purpose of supplying resume samples. There is no intended relation or allusion to actual individuals or organizations, either contemporary or historical.

Howard, Michael G. (Michael Gordon), 1967-  
Alternative resumes : definitely NOT your parents' resume book!  
/by Michael Howard.

ISBN 978-0-9811529-1-2

1. Résumés (Employment). 2. Young adults--Employment. I. Title.

HF5383.H74 2010      650.14'2      C2010-900791-3

WRITING  
ON STONE  
PRESS

Cover Design: Joanne Howard, Small Dog Design  
Editor: Marilyn Inglis  
Interior Design: Talia Cohen

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS//

**Many friends, family members, and colleagues provided personal and valuable contributions to this book.**

Because they have been around since the very beginning, I extend my first appreciation to Fred and Maryelle Howard. Although my unconventional career path was likely a source of concern for many years, they never lost faith and no one has been more thrilled with my achievements. Thank you for trusting my vision.

Several past co-workers played a role in my professional development and ultimately this book, notably Rachel Young and Heidi Gerhart. However, no colleague had a greater impact than Jo-Anne Nadort, a gifted and compassionate mentor who was instrumental in helping me identify my talents and find a new, fulfilling direction for my career.

My thanks to Becky Zeeman, an early patron and supporter, who instilled me with confidence at a critical time by showing me that my work had value to people. My appreciation and respect also go to Deborah Envik Howard and Christine Boudreau, pivotal figures in the shaping of my ideals.

Finally, this book would not be possible if it wasn't for the love, enthusiasm, trust, and cooperation of my wife and partner, Marina Dawson. From day one she has been my proudest supporter and loudest advocate, accompanying me every step of the way on this unpredictable journey.

Thank you for all that you do.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS//

## **0. INTRODUCTION // pg 13**

## **1. RETAIL // pg 15**

Thirty-one resumes targeting businesses in the retail industry: department stores, clothing stores, home improvement warehouses, convenience stores, supermarkets, video stores, florists, sporting goods stores, office supply stores, gas stations, and more.

## **2. HOSPITALITY // pg 53**

Twenty-six resumes for entry-level positions in the hospitality industry including food and beverage service, travel and tourism, entertainment, and lodging/accommodations.

## **3. LABOUR & TRADES // pg 83**

Twenty-three resumes for teens and young adults seeking labour-oriented employment in construction, roofing, mechanics, warehouses, maintenance, landscaping, painting, truck driving, and more.

## **4. OFFICE & TECHNICAL // pg 115**

Sixteen resumes for entry-level office jobs: filing, reception, administration, accounting, and more. This chapter includes computer and technical positions in web design and information technology.

## **5. COMMUNITY SERVICE // pg 137**

Sixteen resumes targeting non-profit and community service organizations involved in education, career services, child care, youth recreation, senior services, animal welfare, and emergency services.

## **6. MISCELLANEOUS // pg 159**

Twenty-eight resumes covering occupations not found in the previous chapters. This includes sports-related positions (such as referee or coach), artistic positions in music and photography, and work in real estate and sales.

## **7. APPENDIX: RESUME WORKSHEETS // pg 195**

A comprehensive, step-by-step guide to help you identify job qualifications from your education, interests, employment history, and volunteer experience. An easy way to create your own alternative resume and impress employers!

## FAQ LISTINGS//

**Alternative Resumes provides one-page answers to the most frequently asked questions about resumes and resume design. Here's a quick reference list for all the FAQ's in the book.**

---

What is the purpose of a resume? // pg 24

What are the desired qualifications for retail & hospitality? // pg 30

What do I put for an objective? // pg 38

What sections should I include? // pg 44

How should I format my resume? // pg 62

Is it acceptable to use graphics on a resume? // pg 68

How should I handle references? // pg 76

Should I include interests & hobbies on my resume? // pg 94

What qualifications are desired for manual labour jobs? // pg 100

Should I include a job from which I was fired? // pg 106

What should I include about my work experience? // pg 122

What should I include about my education? // pg 128

How much history should I include on my resume? // pg 144

What can I include besides experience & education? // pg 150

Can I include soft skills on my resume? // pg 168

Should I include short-term jobs? // pg 174

What is wrong with using a resume template? // pg 180

What is a plain text resume? // pg 186



# INTRODUCTION//

**This is definitely NOT your parents' resume book. Good thing too. Their book uses only a few conventional resume formats such as chronological, functional, and hybrid. It recommends using only standard resume sections such as objective, summary of qualifications, employment history, education, and interests and hobbies. Your parents' book would show you how to make a resume focused mainly on work experience, and offer limited options for your resume's appearance. Their book would help you make a resume that looks like everyone else's.**

**But you are not your parents.**

As a teenager or young adult, your job search is very different from theirs. With less training and experience, fewer skills and achievements, more competition, and different job targets, your job search faces unique obstacles and requires a unique approach. Using your parents' resume book will result in frustration. You are different from your parents, and you deserve a resume book that understands your needs and circumstances.

Alternative Resumes is your resume book. This book ignores conventional resume formats and encourages you to design your own. It proves that you don't have to use the standard sections found on everyone else's resume. This book helps you uncover and highlight many

qualifications besides work experience such as your availability, personal projects, or travel history. It provides you with countless ideas for your resume's appearance to help you stand out from the crowd. Most importantly, this book will help you get job interviews.

Whether you're a middle or high school student learning how to create your first resume, or a twenty-something with a few years of career experience, Alternative Resumes has something for you. Each chapter contains sample resumes from a job sector that hires youth, such as retail, hospitality, trades/labour, office/technical, and community service. The final chapter has miscellaneous jobs that don't fit into the other categories. Each chapter begins with "Designing My Alternative Resume," a case study for a resume in that job sector. Each chapter includes resume writing tips in "Frequently Asked Questions" style. There is also an eleven-page worksheet to help you design your alternative resume.

Using your parents' resume book might be easier – all you have to do is follow a standard format and slot your qualifications into predetermined sections. But you will end up with a resume that looks similar in content and appearance to everyone else's. And seriously, do you want to look like your parents?

# RETAIL

---

## Chapter 1

**One of the largest employers of teens and young adults, the retail industry provides jobs in several areas working with countless products.**

Common entry-level positions include Greeter, Stock Clerk, Cashier, Sales Associate, and Visual Merchandiser. Advanced positions can be found as Key Holder, Department Supervisor, Assistant Manager, and Store Manager. This chapter begins with an analysis of a Visual Merchandiser resume, and continues with 30 more resumes and four FAQ tips.







# DESIGNING MY ALTERNATIVE RESUME//

MELANIE LANE : VISUAL MERCHANDISER

**Melanie Lane is a college student in a fashion marketing and merchandising program. She is seeking a visual merchandiser position with a ladies' fashion chain.**

She has over a year of retail employment as a cashier and sales associate, but no actual experience in visual presentation. Since both her training and experience are in retail, she can prioritize her qualifications in a few different ways. Melanie's resume can be viewed on the following page.

Most applicants with her background would list either education or experience at the top of their resume. Those opting for education would argue it's directly related to the job she is targeting, while those preferring experience would say her employment is in retail, she hasn't yet earned her diploma, and actual experience is generally regarded more highly than training by employers. Rather than choosing a normal Employment History or Education and Training section as the focal point of her resume, Melanie chooses to showcase one particular element of her diploma program.

---

## 1. Visual Merchandising Project

Melanie's greatest achievement to date at Bradshaw Community College is earning the top grade on a two-month project where she compared the visual presentation methods and standards of a group of ladies' fashion retailers. This project thrust Melanie into the world of ladies' apparel merchandising, much more than her coursework or previous experience had done. She gained significant knowledge of her chosen field while meeting with store managers and visual merchandisers and analyzing their methods and achievements. Although other aspects of her background will also interest employers, Melanie feels her success on this project is the best way to distinguish herself from her competitors. She highlights it prominently on her resume and makes the report available for employers to view.

## 2. Retail Training

Melanie separates her project from the rest of her diploma program so she can use the eye-catching title of Visual Merchandising Project, which is sure to attract the reader's attention. She then lists the supplementary details of her college program under the heading Retail Training, a title that will pique more interest than one simply labelled Education. Here she outlines the overall program and includes her course listing and academic success.

## 3. Retail Employment

Melanie lists both her retail jobs but doesn't go into great detail because they were not related to visual presentation and, since she is staying in the same industry, employers will know what she did in those positions. She includes the fact that she sold ladies' fashions because that is the commodity she wants to work with as a merchandiser and some employers may not be familiar with the small specialty boutique where she worked.

**MELANIE LANE**  
**Visual Merchandiser, Ladies Fashion Retail**

---

MAILING ADDRESS • HOME PHONE • CELL PHONE • EMAIL ADDRESS

**❶ VISUAL MERCHANDISING PROJECT**  
**Fashion Marketing Program, Bradshaw Community College**

- Conducted a comprehensive comparative analysis of the visual presentation techniques and standards and in-store marketing systems for 5 competing ladies' apparel retailers. Met with all contributors in advance to obtain authorization and discuss the project with store managers and visual presentation specialists.
- Visited the same 5 locations every Saturday for 6 weeks. Photographed in-store visual displays and window presentations, including mannequins and promotional signage. Noted current themes, the visual impact of each display, the overall cleanliness and organization, the location of clearance items, and changes from the previous week.
- Studied the effective and efficient use of a variety of merchandising fixtures including circle racks, 4-way racks, 2-way racks, tables, showcases, benches, waterfalls, faceouts, slat wall panels, shelving, pegboards, mannequins, and bust forms.
- Evaluated all elements of a successful merchandise presentation including story-telling, product selection, price points, signage, fabric coordination, colour blocking and linking, folding, hanging, balance, symmetry, sizing, tag placement, adjacencies, cleanliness, lighting, and overall attention to detail.
- Received 93% on the final project submission, earning the highest mark in the class. Full report available for viewing upon request.

**❷ RETAIL TRAINING**

- BRADSHAW COMMUNITY COLLEGE, City 20XX – Present  
Recently finished the first year of a 2-year program leading to a Diploma in Fashion Marketing and Merchandising. Averaged 90% in courses such as Introduction to the Retail Industry, History of Art Design, Colour Management, Business Communications, Advertising, Fundamentals of In-Store Marketing, Design and Fabrication, Promotional Marketing, Design Illustration, and Digital Imaging.

**❸ RETAIL EMPLOYMENT**

- SHOPCO FOODS, Cashier, City Feb 20XX – Present  
Process customer transactions for a high-volume discount retailer. Maintain a high level of accuracy with no variances greater than \$1. Earned "Employee of the Month" twice.
- MELISSA, Seasonal Sales Associate, City Nov 20XX – Jan 20XX  
Sold women's junior apparel and accessories in a specialty boutique during a very busy Christmas season. Declined manager's request to stay on afterwards due to relocation.

**MALIK YUEN**

**Retail Sales and Service Associate • Fluent in English and Mandarin**

Mailing Address • Email Address • Home Telephone • Cell Telephone



## **RETAIL SALES SKILLS**

- **Greeting** customers to make them feel welcome and to aid in loss prevention.
- **Approaching** customers in a friendly manner, avoiding pressure or intimidation.
- **Identifying wants or needs** by asking relevant and open-ended questions.
- **Showing and demonstrating products** that meet the needs or wants of the customer.
- **Overcoming objections** with strong product knowledge and problem-solving skills.
- **Adding on additional products** that are on promotion or complement their purchase.
- **Closing the sale** and thanking them for their business.

## **EMPLOYMENT HISTORY**

### **Sales Associate – The Sophisticated Man, City**

February 20XX – Present

Promoted from shipper/receiver after 1 month. Earned “Top Monthly Sales” award twice and “Top Units per Transaction” award once, on a team of over 20 associates. Trained 2 new employees on the cash desk and the retail sales cycle. Complimented by the district manager for creative visual merchandising skills.

### **Server – Antonio’s Pasta Experience, City**

June 20XX – October 20XX

Promoted from bus person to server after 2 months. Awarded “Employee of the Month” twice. Scored “exceeds” or “meets” expectations on all categories on September 20XX performance evaluation. Received letter of appreciation from a customer for delivering outstanding guest service. Trained 2 new servers.

## **EDUCATION**

### **Atlantic Business and Technical Institute, City**

20XX – Present

Enrolled in general business courses including Marketing, Business Communications, Accounting, Economics, Business Applications, and Information Technology.

## **COMPUTER SKILLS**

Proficient with Windows systems; limited knowledge of Mac. Trained in MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook. Skilled in online research and Web 2.0 technologies.



# ALTERNATIVE RESUMES FAQ//

## WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF A RESUME?

**Why do companies put flyers in your mailbox?  
To advertise their products and services. In  
other words, to persuade you to contact them  
with potential business.**

They design convincing brochures and e-newsletters that show how they can solve your problem, why they can be trusted with your hard-earned money, and where they can be contacted for more information.

Is this any different from a resume? Why do you send it to places you want to work? To persuade the hiring manager to contact you for an interview. That's why, just like in advertising, your resume needs to show how you can solve their problem, why you should be trusted with their hard-earned money, and how you can be contacted for an interview.

As a job-seeker, you are a product that can fill a need for a company, whether it's to pump gas, sell electronics, or serve food. To advertise that product, you use marketing materials such as resumes, cover letters, reference letters, and portfolios.

---

**Your resume is an advertising tool** and its purpose is to convince the employer, through these steps, to contact you for an interview:

### 1. Get Their Attention

When managers have a large list or stack of resumes to go through, they typically skim each one for a few seconds before deciding whether it will go in an A folder to examine in more detail, a B folder as a backup, or a C folder for rejections. Your resume has to get their attention to make the A folder. How will it stand out from the hundreds of others they receive? Appearance plays a big part.

### 2. Generate Interest

Once your resume has caught their attention, something about it needs to convince them to read through to the end because most hiring managers don't have time to read every resume they receive. While the appearance may grab their attention, the structure and content will determine their level of interest. Is it targeted to their industry? Does it have applicable section headings? A relevant job title? Are your key qualifications near the top?

### 3. Elevate Their Interest To Desire

As they read your resume, you want their casual interest to escalate to desire so that they feel a strong need to meet you. To do this, your resume has to give the reader some reason to think you can benefit their business. They won't call you just because they get the impression you're a nice person, but they will if they think you could be a valuable addition to their team.

### 4. Promote Action

Once they have an enthusiastic desire to meet you, they will take action by contacting you for an interview. At that point, your resume has worked.

In almost all cases, your resume alone will not get you a job. Contrary to popular opinion, that's not its intent. The intent is to get an interview. Whether it's a twenty-second screening or a lengthy series of in-depth panel interviews, most employers will want to get more information from you and possibly check references before making a hiring decision. Rather than designing your resume with the goal of answering every question they may have for you in an eventual interview, concentrate on getting their attention, generating interest, elevating desire, and promoting action. Then WOW them in the actual interview!

### Chapter 1: Knowledge of Books and Literature

- Favourite genres include classics, drama, historical fiction and poetry. Personal collection includes over 150 books, mostly in these categories.
- Favourite authors include Jane Austen, the Brontë sisters, Margaret Mitchell, Tennessee Williams, T.S. Eliot, Diana Gabaldon, and William Wordsworth.
- Advanced knowledge of classic literature. Intermediate knowledge of travel, mythology, art, history, geography, theatre, film, TV, computers, and cooking.
- Completed such university courses as Shakespeare, Women in Literature, English Literature and Composition, Creative Writing in Prose, Poetic History, and Drama and the Novel.
- Earned a literature award for a 3<sup>rd</sup> year university essay.
- Attended the 20XX and 20XX Downtown Writers' Conference.

### Chapter 2: Retail Skills and Experience

- 4 years' experience in retail customer service. Employed as a cashier with Super Save Foods since 20XX. Worked as a Sales Associate with Henry & Sons from 20XX to 20XX.
- Highly skilled in face-to-face customer service and sales.
- Strong cash handling abilities, including the use of computer systems and bank terminals.
- Experienced with reconciling cash trays and bank receipts.
- Earned a rating of "exceeding expectations" on almost all categories on September 20XX performance evaluation with Super Save Foods. Copy available upon request.

### Chapter 3: Education and Training

- Currently enrolled in 3<sup>rd</sup> year university courses at Chadwick University. Majoring in English Literature with a minor in European History.
- Graduated with a high school diploma from Culver Senior Secondary School in 20XX.
- Earned a Customer Service Skills Certificate in high school.

### Chapter 4: Additional Qualifications

- Fluent in English; conversant in verbal and written French.
- Excellent availability for scheduling: Monday to Wednesday, 1:00pm to close; Thursday and Friday, 3:00 to close; weekends and holidays, anytime.
- Live within a 5 minute drive from your location. Able to work on short notice when needed.

*"The best of a book is not the thought which it contains, but the thought which it suggests; just as the charm of music dwells not in the tones but in the echoes of our hearts."* - JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

## GWEN ARNOLD Bookseller

4 Years' Retail Experience  
English Literature Major  
Customer Service Certificate  
Excellent Scheduling Availability

PHONE • EMAIL • MAILING ADDRESS







# ROGER KING

## personal profile

Mechanically inclined Grade 11 student with labour and service experience seeks an entry-level position in a gas station. Developed skills in minor auto mechanics and maintenance through personal study and high school shop courses. Excellent references and scheduling availability. Able to start immediately and work full-time or part-time!

## mechanical skills

Check engine **oil** level  
Confirm **transmission fluid** level  
Fill windshield **wiper fluid**  
Ensure sufficient **battery** water

Verify proper level of **brake fluid**  
Check coolant level in **radiator**  
Ensure proper **tire** pressure  
Visually check wear & tear on **belts**

## education & training

**ServicePlus** – received a customer service skills certificate in April 20XX  
**First Aid** – earned certificate in Standard First Aid and CPR in May 20XX  
**High School** – currently completing Grade 11 courses on a part-time basis

## work availability

Currently attending Westside Learning Academy, with much better work availability than a typical high school student. Westside is an alternate school that encourages students to have a job while they complete high school part-time. Classes can either be completed in the mornings (8:30 to 11:30), afternoons (1:00 to 4:00) or evenings (6:00 to 9:00) to work around a job schedule. No other commitments that would interfere with availability.

## work experience

**Lawn Care.** Landscaped lawns and gardens during summer/fall of 20XX, including mowing, weeding, planting, and pruning. Also helped design and install a backyard pond and bridge, and assisted with paving a driveway.

**Flyer Delivery.** During the summer of 20XX, placed brochures and other advertising flyers on car windows for restaurants, dry cleaners, grocery stores, fitness studios, and carpet cleaners. Worked independently and met strict deadlines and quotas for delivery.

## contact

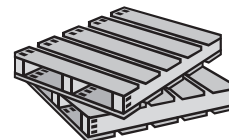
Roger King • Mailing Address • Home Phone • Cell Phone • Email Address



**LISA BUTLER****Retail Replenishment Supervisor**

Home Phone • Cell Phone • Email Address

Mailing Address

**REPLENISHMENT COORDINATOR****20XX–Present****Heartland Home & Garden, City**

- Promoted from an entry-level position on the merchandising team to Replenishment Coordinator after 2 months. Lead the overnight stock team in the transfer of merchandise from the warehouse to 12 departments on a 75,000 square foot sales floor. Supervise up to 15 employees at a time, including all training, coaching, and progressive discipline. Accountable for inventory integrity and visual presentation at store opening.
- Selected by management to receive specialized training on a new operating system. Created and facilitated a 2-hour training workshop with a PowerPoint presentation for all employees. Selected by the Regional Manager of Operations to supervise the 6-week setup of the entire warehouse racking system for a new 90,000 square foot store in Fairfield.
- Co-chair of the Occupational Health & Safety Committee; lead and participate in risk assessments, accident investigations, and monthly safety inspections throughout the store. Member of the Equal Partners Action Team, a new committee that aims to bring staff concerns and ideas to upper management to help promote a better work environment.

**MERCHANDISE ASSOCIATE****20XX–20XX****Shop-Easy Superstore, City**

- Moved from an entry-level position on the maintenance team to a challenging role on the overnight stock crew after 2 months. Worked with a team of 20+ associates on the accurate and timely placement of a wide variety of soft and hard goods on a 120,000 square foot sales floor. Consistently met strict morning deadlines while complying with very detail-oriented planograms for visual presentation.
- Trained 12 new merchandise associates in 4 departments. One trainee was quickly promoted to Merchandise Coordinator at an out-of-town store.

**PITA SHACK****20XX–20XX****Cashier / Prep Cook, City***High School Graduate ~ MW Lancaster Senior Secondary ~ 20XX***CERTIFICATES**

Level 2 First Aid  
Forklift Driver  
Workplace Safety  
Hazardous Materials

**COMMODITIES**

Bath & Beauty  
Bed & Bath Linens  
Children's Apparel  
Cosmetics/Fragrances  
Electronics  
Fabric & Sewing  
Fashion Accessories  
Fast Food  
Footwear  
Furniture  
Garden Supplies  
Giftware  
Greeting Cards  
Grocery/Confectionary  
Hardware  
Home Décor  
Housewares  
Jewellery  
Junior Apparel  
Kitchen  
Ladies Apparel  
Men's Apparel  
Music & Video  
Office Supplies  
Pet Products  
Photo/Camera  
Sporting Goods  
Toys & Games