

Career Development Services

Hours: Monday-Thursday 8am-5pm

Fridays: 8am-noon (closed Fridays June & July)

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RESUME WRITING GUIDELINES

PURPOSE

A resume is your personal marketing tool, similar to a brochure designed to promote a business's products or services. It should highlight the skills and qualifications that the reader – the employer – is seeking so that he/she responds by calling you for an interview. That's the bottom line. The more your resume targets the needs of the employer, the greater your chances of being selected for an interview.

Your resume should illustrate that you possess a unique combination of skills and background focusing on how you meet the employer's needs. Describe your experiences in your own terms. Keep in mind that employers will generally spend less than 20 seconds skimming your resume to determine if your candidacy is worth further consideration. To effectively pass this screening, be certain your resume is well-organized, attractive, and easily identifies:

1. How to contact you,
2. What you have accomplished
3. What strengths you possess.

BASIC ELEMENTS OF A RESUME

(See resume samples on pages 4)

- * Heading/Contact Information
- * Objective
- * Qualifications Summary
- * Education
- * Experience
- * Accomplishments

RESUME FORMATS

CHRONOLOGICAL – This is the most commonly used format. It works well for people who have a stable work history and show consistent growth. With this type of resume, you list your jobs starting with your most current one and work backward from there. With each job listing you'll need to include the company name along with city and state, your job title, dates of employment, and a brief description of your responsibilities.

Although popular with employers, this format isn't for

everyone. If you are just entering the workforce from school, this resume might highlight your lack of experience or show that your recent jobs aren't relevant to the position you're applying for. If you're re-entering the workforce after a substantial absence, a chronological resume will draw attention to your inactivity. Gaps in your work history will be more evident, which may raise questions.

FUNCTIONAL/SKILLS – This style can work well for people who have changed jobs frequently, have been unemployed for long periods or who may not have much of a work history. Instead of focusing on company names and employment dates, you highlight your skills and responsibilities. Your work history is de-emphasized or avoided and dates of employment are not shown. Employers tend to be wary of resumes that do not contain dates of employment; therefore, the combination resume (below) is a good alternative to a purely functional resume.

COMBINATION – A combination resume blends features of both the chronological and functional resume. It lists your experience in reverse chronological order, but divides them into 2-3 sections with functional headers. This allows you to lead with your most relevant experience, even if more recent work is less relevant. Combination resumes are also well received by most employers.

TARGETED - Regardless of the format you choose, all resumes should be targeted for a specific position whenever possible. This means that you focus on skills and qualifications that would be valuable to a specific employer or industry, and you de-emphasize past experiences that are not related.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Analyze the job description to determine skills and abilities that employers are seeking. Read through the descriptions and highlight the required skills, attributes and qualifications. Use these words in your resume.

FEATURES OF A TARGETED RESUME

OBJECTIVE – this tells the reader the type of work you seek. Don't be vague or use meaningless phrases such as "seek challenging job." If applying for a specific job, use the job title given in the job announcement. Don't mention work that's unrelated to your targeted goal. Don't list several different objectives as you may appear unfocused. Limit the objective statement to 5-6 words.

HIGHLIGHTS OF QUALIFICATIONS

Provide a summary of 4-5 of your main skills, knowledge, and abilities for a particular job. Use bullets in this section.

USE ACCOMPLISHMENT STATEMENTS – Your accomplishments are what set you apart from other candidates. Do not be humble; this is your chance to promote your skills and abilities. Describe what you did and how the outcome was successful.

Examples:

- Redesigned filing system for greater efficiency
- Created a database of 5000 customers

Be consistent in the use of tense when describing accomplishments. Review the list of “action verbs” on page 3 to create your own statements.

USE KEYWORDS – Many employment agencies and large companies today use databases to quickly and efficiently match job openings with qualified applicants. It is extremely important to incorporate keywords and phrases related to the specific position to which you apply. The general rule is to have a resume containing 25-35 keywords that relate to the job or industry. They can be job-specific skills, technical expertise, job titles, certifications, names of products and services, industry buzzwords and jargon, types of degrees, names of colleges, and company names. Keywords for your industry/job goal can be found by reviewing job announcements or resume samples for those in your field or doing a “Google” search.

EDUCATION – This section can be placed either below the objective (for recent graduates) or at the end of the resume. Generally, include the highest level of education and any education relevant to the career field you seek. Do not list every college you attended; only those where you have achieved a degree or certificate and the date of completion. Listing your high school education is not necessary and is not recommended if you have completed any college coursework. Recent seminars, workshops, and classes to upgrade your skills are relevant and may be included.

EXPERIENCE - List employers, job titles, dates of employment, a brief description of responsibilities, and accomplishments. Remember to start with the most recent experience. Do not limit your experience to paid employment. Include relevant extracurricular, volunteer and intern positions.

ELECTRONIC RESUMES

In today's electronic world, job seekers need to have both hard-copy and electronic versions of their resume. Submitting a resume online or via e-mail is common and, for an increasing number of employers, it is the only way they will accept a resume. It is recommended that you send e-resumes in both PDF and Word formats. PDF retains formatting, although not every computer can open a PDF file. Sending both versions will increase the likelihood that your resume can be opened. Be sure to follow whatever instructions you are given by an employer! The use of keywords, referenced above, is crucial for e-resume success.

ADDITIONAL CATEGORIES (OPTIONAL)

You may include awards/distinctions/honors, professional affiliations, exhibitions, publications, military service, travel experience, or other areas significant to the objective or intended use of the resume.

RESUME DO'S

- Always target your resume for the position to which you are applying.
- Be clear and concise in describing your responsibilities. Be original – give the employer a reason to want to meet you.
- Include accomplishments, awards, recognitions, and associations that are job-related.
- Keep it to one page, if possible; 2 pages maximum.
- First year students: It is okay to include work experience, leadership or highlights of activities and accomplishments from high school.
- Make it inviting to read. Proofread your resume. Several times! Have others review it and offer constructive criticism. NO grammatical/spelling errors.
- Use direct, expressive, and clear language.

RESUME DON'TS

- Don't add interests or hobbies, unless somehow relevant to the job you seek.
- If you have been in the work force a long time, don't list each and every job you have held since high school. List only what is relevant to your current job search. In most cases, you should include only 10 years of employment history.
- Don't state salary information, supervisor names or reason for leaving past jobs.
- Never falsify or exaggerate information.
- Don't begin sentences with “I” or “my.”
- Don't mention controversial activities or associations, including political or religious activities.

Resume samples are
available at the
Career Center.

ACTION VERBS

- | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> accomplished | <input type="checkbox"/> created | <input type="checkbox"/> instructed | <input type="checkbox"/> provided | <input type="checkbox"/> translated | <input type="checkbox"/> gained |
| <input type="checkbox"/> consulted | <input type="checkbox"/> innovated | <input type="checkbox"/> processed | <input type="checkbox"/> trained | <input type="checkbox"/> authored | <input type="checkbox"/> merchandised |
| <input type="checkbox"/> guided | <input type="checkbox"/> operated | <input type="checkbox"/> supplied | <input type="checkbox"/> assessed | <input type="checkbox"/> examined | <input type="checkbox"/> reported |
| <input type="checkbox"/> motivated | <input type="checkbox"/> strengthened | <input type="checkbox"/> approved | <input type="checkbox"/> educated | <input type="checkbox"/> led | <input type="checkbox"/> chaired |
| <input type="checkbox"/> revamped | <input type="checkbox"/> administered | <input type="checkbox"/> devised | <input type="checkbox"/> introduced | <input type="checkbox"/> recruited | <input type="checkbox"/> gathered |
| <input type="checkbox"/> acted as | <input type="checkbox"/> defined | <input type="checkbox"/> interacted | <input type="checkbox"/> received | <input type="checkbox"/> utilized | <input type="checkbox"/> modified |
| <input type="checkbox"/> controlled | <input type="checkbox"/> influenced | <input type="checkbox"/> programmed | <input type="checkbox"/> transcribed | <input type="checkbox"/> built | <input type="checkbox"/> researched |
| <input type="checkbox"/> handled | <input type="checkbox"/> ordered | <input type="checkbox"/> surveyed | <input type="checkbox"/> assigned | <input type="checkbox"/> expanded | <input type="checkbox"/> clarified |
| <input type="checkbox"/> negotiated | <input type="checkbox"/> summarized | <input type="checkbox"/> arranged | <input type="checkbox"/> eliminated | <input type="checkbox"/> managed | <input type="checkbox"/> generated |
| <input type="checkbox"/> scheduled | <input type="checkbox"/> advised | <input type="checkbox"/> directed | <input type="checkbox"/> investigated | <input type="checkbox"/> reduced | <input type="checkbox"/> monitored |
| <input type="checkbox"/> adapted | <input type="checkbox"/> determined | <input type="checkbox"/> interpreted | <input type="checkbox"/> recognized | <input type="checkbox"/> wrote | <input type="checkbox"/> restored |
| <input type="checkbox"/> coordinated | <input type="checkbox"/> installed | <input type="checkbox"/> proposed | <input type="checkbox"/> transmitted | <input type="checkbox"/> calculated | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> identified | <input type="checkbox"/> organized | <input type="checkbox"/> taught | <input type="checkbox"/> assisted | <input type="checkbox"/> facilitated | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> obtained | <input type="checkbox"/> supervised | <input type="checkbox"/> assembled | <input type="checkbox"/> evaluated | <input type="checkbox"/> marketed | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> solved | <input type="checkbox"/> analyzed | <input type="checkbox"/> edited | <input type="checkbox"/> launched | <input type="checkbox"/> reorganized | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> adjusted | <input type="checkbox"/> developed | <input type="checkbox"/> interviewed | <input type="checkbox"/> recorded | <input type="checkbox"/> catalogued | |