

HOW TO WRITE A RESUME

What Is A Resume?

A resume is a personal advertisement of yourself. It is a summary of your educational background and training, your business or professional experience and qualifications, your achievements and objective.

Purpose:

The purpose of your resume is to get you an interview. In order to achieve this goal you must interest an employer in wanting to take action, read your resume and call you for an interview. Therefore, it should be attractive and short and most importantly it must answer the needs of an employer.

The employer needs are an employee with the skills needed to perform the job. Therefore, prior to writing a resume you must understand and identify your own special skills as they relate to the type of job you are seeking.

I. Before you attempt to write your resume you must:

- A. Identify the type of position you would like.
- B. Identify the skills needed to do the job.
- C. Identify your skills as they relate to the job or those skills that match B.

CAUTION!!!

Realize that an effective resume takes time to write, rewrite, and rewrite. It should express who you are and be written by you. It must be exact. It must be perfect. So take your time.

A. Identify the type of position you would like.

*If you have not identified what you would like to do – you are not ready to write a resume. Do not be alarmed – you are not alone. Take the time now to do a self-assessment or make an appointment with the Career Counselor as soon as possible.

B. Identify the skills needed to do the job (or kinds of jobs) you are seeking.

To identify the skills needed to do the job requires simple research. Although job requirements may vary from industry to industry or company to company, the basic skills required will remain the same.

The best resources are:

- Dictionary of Occupational Title
- Guide to Occupational Exploration
- Occupational Briefs- Guidance Publication

These resources will give you complete job descriptions, qualifications needed, career outlook. These references are available in Medaille Career Counseling and Placement Office.

C. Identify your skills.

Information Gathering – Utilize the Data Sheet attached

For each job (full-time or part-time), internship, volunteer or officer of an organization, complete a fact sheet for each position. This exercise helps you identify the skills you have developed and it also helps prepare you for the interview.

As they relate to the job.

When you have completed your fact sheets compare the skills needed to do the job, with your skills. Highlight the matching areas. These are the skills you want to highlight on your resume. **These are your strengths because they match the employer needs.** You have just completed the most difficult aspect of resume development. The rest is filling in the blanks with your information!

- II. The second step is to choose the correct format to highlight your information. Most resumes will follow one of these formats. But, it is not absolutely necessary. Your concern should be in presenting your qualifications in the best possible format which focuses on your strengths. (your skills that match the employer's needs)

There are three basic resume styles:

- A. Chronological
- B. Functional
- C. Combination

Which style is best depends upon your background.

Chronological – It is the most common and readily accepted. It starts with your current employment and works backwards. It is used for demonstrating growth and it is ideal for anyone with sufficient work experience who hasn't had too many job changes or long periods of unemployment.

Functional – This style focuses on the skills you have developed rather than when, where, or how you acquired them. It de-emphasizes dates, job titles, and employers. This type is suited for entry level and career changes.

Combination – It is a combination of both Chronological and Functional. If you have a substantial work record and want to pursue this career field, it may be the best format for you.

Some Basic Rules

What goes in...

Name: First and last name only. If your name can be used by either sex include a Mr. or Ms. Females – do not use your maiden name.

Address: Complete with no abbreviations

Telephone: Include area code and email. Do not include your work number. If you wish, include it in your cover letter.

Objective: There are two schools of thought. Without an objective your resume has no focus. It forces a reader to make a decision for you, which may not happen. With an objective you may rule yourself out of other available jobs. The decision is yours. Many jobs seekers include an objective in their cover letter.

Education/Professional Training: Should be listed whenever it helps your cause. If you are a recent graduate with little or no work experience, it is your primary asset and should appear near the beginning of the resume.

GPA: If your grade point average is over a 3.0 list it on your resume. If your GPA is over a 3.0 in major (courses required for your specific major) list that average also.

Course Work: Course should be listed for resume scanning purposes, the courses listed should relate to your objective

Experience:

1. **Company Name and City and State** is all that is required. If the name does not describe the product or service- give a short description. Example:
(manufacturer of specialty steel)
2. **Job Title-** Do not be afraid to change your job title to more accurately reflect your duties and responsibilities.
3. **Responsibilities/Accomplishments/Duties** - List those responsibilities, duties and accomplishments that match the employer's needs (from data sheet).
4. **Dates-** They must absolutely be included. There are various ways to offset unemployment or age. With a steady work history be very specific 1-1-88 to 1-1-90, with employment gaps become less specific or try putting dates at the end of your job description instead of the margins where they are highlighted.
5. **Internships-** Treat them as you would employment. In most cases they should be listed following education. Make sure you note the required hours.
6. **Military History-** Include branch of service, rank, type of discharge (if honorable), dates, special skills or training.
7. **Activities, Co-Curricular Activities, Volunteer, Community Involvement** List all clubs and organizations you belong to and all volunteer and community work you have done.

8. **Interests-** Include team or endurance sports and brain activities (bridge, chess). Your interests or hobbies should be well developed and you must prepare to speak about them during the interview.
9. **Awards/Scholarships/Honors-** Should be listed with dates.
10. **Languages- Fluent, Speak, Read**
11. **Travel-** Extensive, North/South America, Europe
12. **References-** Do not list the names and addresses of your references. Employers are required by law to have your consent. This would never happen prior to completing an application or interview.
13. **Relocation-** State that you are willing to relocate, if not, leave it off.

What does not...

Titles: Resume, Fact sheet, Vitae, Etc.
Availability
Reason for Leaving Other Employment
Salary (unless asked)
Abbreviations
Jargon
Charts & Graphs
Photographs
Health/Physical descriptions
Early background

SIT DOWN AND WRITE

A. Collect:

1. Paper, Pencil, Computer
2. Dictionary
3. Fact Sheets

B. Chooses a Format- keep in mind your objective and background

1. Chronological
2. Functional
3. Combination

C. Begin by filling in the obvious information: name, address, employers name, educational background, extramural activities, etc...

D. Filling in the body:

Objective: keep it short- not too specific

Company Role: and Job Title(s):

Chronological Format

Responsibilities- Start with general statement that reflects your overall responsibilities. From Fact Sheet- list or state those functions that best display your achievements and problem solving ability.

Example

Provide support to sales department (overall responsibilities)

- Researched potential clients

- Developed multi-media sales presentation

- Hired part-time after completion of internship (accomplishment)

Functional

This format focuses on skills, reviewing your data sheet you should note repeated skills, they will be used as you headings such as Management, Financial, Communication. Under each heading list in short statements the duties from the fact sheet that relates to the skill

Editing

Now is the time to remember the purpose of the resume – to get an interview. You want to create an interest, move the reader into action by wanting to find out more about you. Keep statements short and to the point, and full of action words.

- Keep your sentences under twenty words

- Vary our sentence structure

- Vary your techniques- a short phrase followed with bullet statements

Proofread – Ask at least two people to review your resume before final print.

The Final Product

Resumes should be printed on a laser quality printer. Print on quality paper- a little heavier than typing paper, white, off-white or cream colored paper, 8 1/2 x 11. If more then one page, staple

Scannable Resumes

What is an electronically scannable resume?

An electronically scannable resume is specifically designed to be entered into a computerized database using an optical scanner. The scanner “reads” the resume and stores it in text form, as a computer file. For best results, follow these guidelines.

What makes a scannable resume different from a conventional resume?

Although the general content of both resumes may be similar, a resume which is read and selected by a computer does not have the benefit of having a human’s subjective input and interpretation.

The computer searches for specific key words or phrases when selecting or “screening” for qualified candidates. Conventional resumes often use more flowery and descriptive terms, along with fancy type fonts and layouts. But electronic resumes are best when language is clear, concise and in a format that highlights key points simply.

Scannable Resume Guidelines:

Ultimately, with an electronic resume, one must consider two aspects of the technology:

1. The physical scanning of the resume, and
2. How the text will be searched for key words matches.

To increase the chances of being electronically retrieved, the electronic resume should be written especially for the computer. Here’s how:

- ◆ Use Sans Serif fonts. These are fonts that do not have little diagonal “slash marks” at the end of horizontal lines to make the letters fancy. The following fonts are best to use: Helvetica, Futura, Univers, Optima, ITC Avante Garde Gothic, Times, New Century Schoolbook, ITC Bookman, Palatino & Courier.
- ◆ Font Size Should Be between 10-14 points.
- ◆ Avoid italics, script and underlining words.
- ◆ Boldface type is usually okay, but avoid it if you want to be safe.
- ◆ Avoid and graphics and shading.
- ◆ Use horizontal or vertical lines sparingly. It is best to avoid them entirely, but if you do choose to include a line, make sure there is plenty of room on either side of it.
- ◆ Do not compress your resume to make it fit on one page. More white space means a more scannable resume.
- ◆ NEVER use a dot-matrix printer. Use an ink jet or laser printer to insure a good quality print job.
- ◆ ALWAYS send originals. Photocopied resumes lose clarity in the process.
- ◆ Avoid abbreviations, even for degree titles. When in doubt, write it out!
- ◆ DO use industry jargon and abbreviations (like MIS for Management Information Systems) whenever possible. Scanners are programmable to search for certain *keywords* in a resume, so make sure you use as many as possible!
- ◆ Use traditional resume formats.
- ◆ Use light colored (white or ivory) 8 ½” x 11” paper. Print on one side only!
- ◆ Your name should stand alone on the first line of your resume. Put your address **below** your name, not next to or above it
- ◆ Explain any unfamiliar job titles.
- ◆ No staples!
- ◆ Do not fold your resume! Send it in a large envelope (make sure it has enough postage!)
- ◆ When faxing your resume; put the fax machine setting on “detailed mode” rather than on “standard mode.” This takes a little longer and may cost a little more but your resume will be easier to read.

Text

Language: Use nouns more than verbs (e.g. say “project manager” instead of “implemented project”). The computer will look for matches on key nouns from different functional areas. Minimize use of abbreviations where possible.

Key Words: To increase your résumé's chances of being electronically retrieved, use key words or short phrases to describe your qualifications and abilities. Some examples of key words that a database search might seek in your resume are: MBA, writer, computer science, fluent, marketing, supervised, production accounting, and so on. Bear in mind that the more matches a database search makes with your resume, the better. It will also help to list the computer software with which you are skilled. Also, use synonyms or variations of words in your descriptions and keep the words simple rather than esoteric.

To become familiar with good key words to use, check newspaper recruitment ads, review job descriptions if available, and talk with professional recruiters and/or professional associations in your field.

List of Skills

Communication

Persuading (selling products/ideas)
Public Speaking
Dramatic Ability
Oral Clarity
Effective Writing Skills
Promotional Writing
Technical Writing
Historical Writing
Letter Writing
Speech Writing
Foreign language
Listening skills

Creativity

Inventing new ideas
Conceptual
Creating works of arts (music, painting, novels,
etc.)
Applied – drawing charts, diagrams, performing
music, editing written works

People Contact

Teaching
Helping Others
Interviewing
Negotiating
Coaching for performance
Supervising
Managing
Training
Establishing Rapport
Counseling
Confronting
Entertaining
Working on Committees
Meeting the Public
Taking directions from Others
Leading Others
Gathering information in a systematic way
Synthesizing information
Intellectual curiosity

Managerial

Coordinating administrative tasks/events
Making decisions
Attending to details
Financial transactions
Scheduling
Working under pressure
Budgeting
Formulating policies and procedures
Problem solving
Orderly record keeping
Ability to establish priorities
Planning program
Organizing people
Arranging social events

Manual/Physical

Building or constructing
Stamina
Outdoor work
Eye/hand coordination

Technical/Computing

Data Processing
Working with scientific equipment
Computing quantitative data
Synthesizing data
Quantitative data
Computer programming
Computer operations

Research

Scientific investigation
Library
Laboratory

Action Verbs

Accomplished	Cut	Indoctrinated	Reconciled
Achieved	Decreased	Influenced	Recorded
Adapted	Delegated	Initiated	Recruited
Addressed	Demonstrated	Innovated	Reduced
Administered	Designed	Inspected	Referred
Advanced	Directed	Installed	Regulated
Advised	Developed	Instituted	Rehabilitated
Allocated	Devised	Instructed	Remodeled
Analyzed	Diagnosed	Integrated	Repaired
Appraised	Directed	Interpreted	Represented
Approved	Dispatched	Interviewed	Researched
Arranged	Distinguished	Introduced	Restored
Assembled	Diversified	Invented	Restructured
Assigned	Drafted	Investigated	Retrieved
Assisted	Edited	Launched	Reversed
Attained	Educated	Lectured	Reviewed
Audited	Eliminated	Led	Revitalized
Authored	Enabled	Maintained	Saved
Automated	Encouraged	Managed	Scheduled
Balanced	Engineered	Marketed	Schooled
Budgeted	Enlisted	Meditated	Screened
Built	Established	Moderated	Set
Calculated	Evaluated	Monitored	Shaped
Catalogued	Examined	Motivated	Skilled
Chaired	Executed	Negotiated	Solidified
Clarified	Expanded	Operated	Solved
Classified	Expedited	Organized	Specified
Coached	Explained	Originated	Stimulated
Collected	Extracted	Overhauled	Streamlined
Complied	Fabricated	Oversaw	Strengthened
Completed	Facilitated	Performed	Summarized
Composed	Familiarized	Persuaded	Supervised
Computed	Fashioned	Planned	Surveyed
Conceptualized	Focused	Prepared	Systemized
Conducted	Forecast	Presented	Tabulated
Consolidated	Formulated	Prioritized	Taught
Contained	Founded	Processed	Trained
Contracted	Generated	Produced	Translated
Contributed	Guided	Programmed	Traveled
Controlled	Headed up	Projected	Trimmed
Coordinated	Identified	Promoted	Upgraded
Corresponded	Illustrated	Provided	Validated
Counseled	Implemented	Publicized	Worked
Created	Improved	Purchased	Wrote
Critiqued	Increased	Recommended	