

RESUME WRITING

Employers hate hiring. For the hiring manager, posting a job means receiving a deluge of resumes and cover letters to sift through. In fact, an employer spends an average of only 30 seconds looking at each resume.

To stand out from the competition, it's essential that your resume be the best possible representation of who you are and what you have to offer an employer.

A resume is a concise summary of your skills and qualifications. Its purpose is to organize the relevant facts about you in a written presentation, which will serve as your personal advertisement. Think of yourself as a product that you're selling to prospective employers. How you package yourself allows a hiring manager to determine how closely you align to the company's needs. So your resume must indicate WHO you are, WHAT kind of work you can do, and HOW you are qualified. It must sell as well as tell!

The resumes that you use should be well-planned, distinctive, and professional in appearance. Good format and well-written text greatly improve readership. Above all, each statement needs to be accurate and not overly inflated. Avoid either revealing potentially negative information unnecessarily, or selling short your accomplishments. Consistency in date, punctuation, indentation, style and tense is very important.

It used to be a rule of thumb that a resume should never go over one page. This is not the case any more. While you should still be extremely concise, the general rule is that your resume should contain enough information to entice the hiring manager to call you for an interview. If a second page is needed, repeat your name at the top. Refer to the sample resumes *at the end of this handout* as a springboard to develop effective ideas and approaches for your own resume.

Planning Your Resume

Before you can write a persuasive resume, you need to answer the following questions:

- What is the employer looking for in a potential candidate?
- What skills/qualities can you offer an employer?
- What resume format will best highlight your skills and accomplishments?

Contents of a Resume

- Identifying Information – your name, address, phone number and e-mail address are typically included; however you may want to just include a telephone number and e-mail address, to keep your identity safe, especially if you're applying for jobs online. You can add your home address if it's to your advantage, i.e. local to a company to which you're applying. Consider including your personal website, if it's professional.
- Job Objective – a brief statement indicating the type of opportunity by title and/or function. Make sure your objective fits the type of job you want. If you're applying for co-op jobs, add your availability.
- Educational Background – list of colleges and universities attended, dates, degrees, diplomas, and certificates with emphasis on highest-level achieved and special training pertinent to your job objective. List your major(s) and any concentration. You may also include your GPA and any academic honors received at each school. (*Do not include high school information*)
- Skills Section – a list of specific skills and abilities most useful in your career field, separated by subcategory. Examples include computer, technical, laboratory, design, foreign languages.
- Projects/Labs – elaborate on several team or individual class projects or labs that demonstrate how you have used your classroom knowledge and skills in a team or work setting. Emphasize team leader roles.
- Experience or Work History – indicate dates of employment, name of employer, city and state, title of each position. Describe your major duties and responsibilities and relate any notable achievements (e.g. promotion) and/or skills developed. Use action words to attract attention to your skills and accomplishments (*refer to the action verb list in this handout*). You may want to have one section for *related* work experience and a separate section for other experience. Employment relevant to your stated job objective should be elaborated on; that which is unrelated, including part-time, should be mentioned briefly.
- Activities or Interests – at least a brief mention of extracurricular activities, professional memberships and affiliations, community activities, or hobbies. Be sure to mention any offices held.
- Optional Categories – Military record, licenses/certifications, publications, major projects (e.g. research), other experiences (e.g. volunteer, travel).

Resume Formats

The two most frequently used resume formats are reverse chronological or functional. Choose the resume format that most effectively markets *your* skills and experiences. (*Sample resumes can be found at the end of this handout*)

1. Reverse Chronological Format

This format typifies about 80% of all resumes. It is most appropriate for the typical student, new graduate, or someone with a very logical career path. Education and job history are described in descending order, with the most recent events first. It tends to emphasize job titles and organizations, as well as a job history related to field of study.

2. Functional Format

This format goes beyond simply outlining experience and education. It is appropriate for a more seasoned individual or career changer. The focus is on what is termed "transferable skills." The key element of this type of resume is the section on skills. The skills clusters chosen should support the stated job objective. Group your work accomplishments, responsibilities, and duties according to functional skill areas such as "Computer Skills", "Technical Skills", "Project Planning Skills", "Managerial Skills", "Sales", "Communication". Choose your skill headings according to your job objective and briefly describe, using action statements, the work you did in each of the broad categories you identify. Work history and job titles take a subordinate position in this format. In fact, you may draw upon volunteer positions, education and other life experiences for many of the skills you wish to note.

Resume Review

After you have written a draft of your resume, have someone (preferably more than one person) give you feedback on it. Your program coordinator in the Office of Cooperative Education and Career Services is available to look over your resume with you. You should also try to get someone in your field to review it, if possible, for an industry perspective.

Resumes and Technology

E-mailing Your Resume

- Prepare several different file format versions of your resume. For example, text version comes in handy when you need to paste your resume into text fields provided by job sites. Word documents and Adobe PDF format resumes are also most widely used by employers. Employers may request that resumes be submitted in a certain file format for e-mail purposes
- Do not include your resume as an attachment only. Instead, include your resume as part of your email message, perhaps separated by something like the following: [begin resume] and [end resume] and indicate that it is attached to the e-mail as a Word or PDF document. By doing this, employers are sure to receive your resume even if your attachment does not reach them.
- E-mail your resume to yourself or a friend, as a test, before e-mailing it to employers, to be sure the format transfers as desired.
- You can mail an original resume to the employer as a follow up to your e-mail.
- Always include a cover letter as part of your e-mail message text. Follow the same guidelines for cover letter development as you would if you were mailing a cover letter to an employer by regular mail.
- Do try to keep your file size small; around 500kb is a good size to aim for.

The Scannable Resume

Many large employers use scanning technologies as a productivity aid in human resources. Resume images are entered into a system using an optical scanner, thereby building a database of applicant information. The employer then accesses candidates by searching this database for those with desired qualifications. You may choose to develop a separate version of your resume in scannable format.

These systems search by using "key words" (particularly *nouns*) or phrases. So, in order for your resume to have appeal to those in your chosen field, explicitly and extensively use the jargon of that field! Caution: when including acronyms alone be sure they are widely recognized; otherwise spell the words out.

Tips for Designing Your Resume

- Standard Serif and Sans Serif fonts work best – Arial, Times New Roman, Helvetica, Futura, and Palatino. Avoid ornate fonts. You can use two fonts – one for the headings and one for the rest of your text.
- Font size is also important; sizes between 9 - 10 pt. work best.
- Avoid using italics and underlining. Use **bold** for emphasis.

- Use vertical or horizontal lines sparingly, leave at least a quarter of an inch of space around the line.
- Avoid shading, shadowing, and boxes.
- If you are using bullets to organize information --- use bullets, not cute symbols, like check marks or dashes.
- The print version of your resume should be printed on light-colored paper (easily Xeroxed)
- Position your name at the top of the page on its own line; followed by your contact information; followed by your site URL (if applicable)
- Play up your name – a little larger, bolded
- Can add subtle color
- Don't overdo it – italics, bold, caps, four different font sizes, etc.

Action Words

Use action verbs, not “duties included” or “I was responsible for”. Verbs should be in the past tense for a job that is over and present tense for a current job. The following list of action words should be used to succinctly accentuate tasks, functions and achievements, especially when describing work and other experiences.

Accomplished	Conducted	Enforced	Installed	Originated	Resolved
Achieved	Constructed	Enhanced	Instructed	Oversaw	Reviewed
Adapted	Consulted	Enlarged	Integrated	Performed	Revised
Administered	Contributed	Equipped	Invented	Persuaded	Selected
Alleviated	Controlled	Established	Investigated	Planned	Sold
Analyzed	Coordinated	Estimated	Launched	Presented	Solved
Appraised	Corrected	Evaluated	Led	Produced	Strengthened
Arranged	Counseled	Expanded	Managed	Programmed	Studied
Assisted	Created	Facilitated	Marketed	Projected	Supervised
Audited	Demonstrated	Forecasted	Maximized	Promoted	Tested
Authored	Designed	Formulated	Modeled	Published	Trained
Balanced	Developed	Guided	Modified	Qualified	Translated
Built	Diagnosed	Handled	Monitored	Rated	Updated
Chaired	Directed	Identified	Motivated	Recommended	Wrote
Communicated	Documented	Implemented	Negotiated	Reconciled	
Completed	Edited	Improved	Offered	Repaired	
Computed	Employed	Increased	Operated	Reported	
Conceptualized	Enabled	Initiated	Organized	Researched	

R·I·T

Office of Cooperative Education and Career Services
 57 Lomb Memorial Drive · Rochester, NY 14623 · (585) 475-2301
www.rit.edu/co-op/careers

Sample Resume-Functional This format goes beyond simply outlining experience and education. The focus is on what is termed "transferable skills." The key element of this type of resume is the section on skills.

JOHN A. SMITH

57 Memorial Drive • Rochester, NY 14623 • (585) 475-2301 • E-Mail: JAS1234@rit.edu

OBJECTIVE: To obtain a full-time position in Market Research and Product Development

EDUCATION: **Rochester Institute of Technology**, Rochester NY
Master of Business Administration, Expected May 20XX
Concentration: Marketing and Information Systems
GPA: 3.67 Dean's List: 20XX – 20XX

Kent State University, Kent OH
Bachelor of Science in Business Management, May 20XX
Honors: James Madison Scholarship Recipient

PROFESSIONAL SKILLS:

Marketing/Market Research

- Identified market trends for food products
- Monitored competition in other regional stores
- Conducted advertising and promotion campaigns
- Developed corporate sales flyers and proposals
- Created, implemented and analyzed customer satisfaction surveys

Product Development

- Provided information and recommendations on price of product in cooperation with Marketing Research Department
- Identified channels of distribution, such as wholesalers, retailers or direct sales to the public
- Worked with Marketing Research Department and advertising agency to position product

Communication

- Provided academic and personal counseling to undergraduate students
- Conducted group presentations for 30-40 undergraduate students related to college life skills
- Completed weekly incident and emergency reports
- Collaborated with Residence Hall Staff at monthly planning meetings

Computer

- Windows 3.1, Windows 95, IBM Compatible and MAC PC proficiency
- MS Word, MS Excel, MS Access, MS PowerPoint, Word Perfect 6.1, Minitab
- Director, HyperCard 2.2, Adobe Photoshop, HTML, Dreamweaver, Visual Basic

MEMBERSHIPS/ACTIVITIES:

- American Marketing Association, Student Member (12/XX - present)
- Lowenthal Group, Ambassador, RIT (12/XX - present)
- Enjoy reading, hiking and rock climbing

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY:

Curtice Burns Food, Inc. 5/XX - 9/XX	Rochester, NY	Marketing Assistant
Rochester Institute of Technology 9/XX - 5/XX	Rochester, NY	Resident Assistant
Kent State University 8/XX – 5/XX	Kent, OH	Food Service Staff

REFERENCES: Available upon request

Sample Resume-Reverse Chronological This is the most commonly used format.

Josie P. Heintz

Email: JPH0000@rit.edu
Cell: 914.462.4321
Site: www.jph_rit.edu

OBJECTIVE A cooperative education position that will provide practical work experience in the field of industrial engineering. Available March – August xxxx.

EDUCATION **Rochester Institute of Technology**, Rochester, NY
Major: Industrial Engineering
Degree: Bachelor of Science expected May xxxx

Ball State University, Muncie, IN
Honors College Summer Program xxxx
Area of Study: AutoCAD – 80 hours

RELEVANT COURSEWORK

Operations Research	Ergonomics
Systems and Facilities Planning	Human Factors
Engineering Design	Management Theory
Applied Statistics	Materials Science
C Programming	Probability & Statistics
Dynamics	Simulation

COMPUTER SKILLS MS Office, MS Word, MS Excel, MS Access, MS-DOS, Mathematica, VAX, ProModel

PROJECTS Failure Analysis: Applied skills related to materials science and mechanics to determine the composition of a part that failed and find a solution for the problem.

PCB Life Cycle Assessment: Performed a qualitative streamlined analysis of printed circuit board of a cordless phone and evaluated the environmental impacts of the materials used in the printed circuit board.

As part of a team of four, designed a miniature golf course using simple and multiple linear regression.

EMPLOYMENT Getinge/Castle, Inc., Rochester, NY
June – August xxxx
Worked in a union environment to establish various cells on the floor to streamline and customize the production of medical sterilizers.

Building Construction, Esopus, NY
Summer xxxx
General construction of buildings, landscaping, and other tasks located at private residence. Learned and utilized surveying and general carpentry skills.

HONORS/ ACTIVITIES Dean's List, RIT Alumni Scholarship
Society of Plastics Engineers, IE student chapter, Mid-Hudson Section Scholarship Award
Rock climbing, mountain biking, guitar,

REFERENCES Available upon request