

# Resume Preparation

## Hot Tips:

1. Make sure your objective fits the type of job you want.
2. Choose the resume format that most effectively markets your skills and experiences.
3. When developing the employment history section on your resume, strike a balance between job duties, skills you possess and accomplishments.
4. Use action words to attract attention to your skills and accomplishments.
5. Use specific examples in your skills or experience section to support and strengthen your objective.
6. Your resume should be concise, neat and well organized, not overcrowded; it should be attractive to the eye.
7. Make sure your resume is faxable and able to be scanned.
8. It must be 100% free of errors and be printed / copied on high-quality paper.
9. Don't sell yourself short—make sure you describe your experience and transferable skills effectively; emphasize your areas of professional growth.
10. Consistency in dates, punctuation, indentation, style and tense is very important.
11. Do not put the following information in your resume: your photo, sex, age, race, or health.
12. If a second page is needed, repeat your name at the top.

## What Is a Resume?

A resume is a synopsis of what you have to offer an employer for a particular type of job. Its purpose is to organize the relevant facts about you in a written presentation which will serve as your personal advertisement. 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!

## Contents of a Resume

The following items are found in one form or another in most resumes. You are encouraged to consider them as you prepare yours.

- **Identifying Information**—your name, address, and telephone number. Usually both local and permanent data should be indicated. Consider including your email address, plus a personal URL (if you have one).
- **Job Objective**—a brief statement indicating the type of opportunity (title and/or functions) you are seeking and possibly mentioning your preferred geographical location(s) and/or employment sector. If you are applying for more than one type of job, it is a good practice to vary the Objective and prepare a resume styled specifically for each one, or, you may use the *cover letter* accompanying your resume to state your objective. Bear in mind an Objective can

strengthen a resume by providing focus, but including one is not “required.” Rather than being too narrow or too vague/general, you may choose to *omit* the Objective.

- **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. You may also include your GPA and any academic honors received at each school.
- **Experience or Work History**—a summary of your work experience. Indicate dates of employment, name of employer, city and state, title of each position. Also describe your major duties and responsibilities and relate any notable achievements (e.g., promotion) and/or skills developed. You may want to have one section for *related* work experience and a separate section for other experience. Employment which is relevant to your stated job objective should be elaborated on; that which is unrelated, including part-time, should be mentioned at least briefly.
- **Skill Section**—a list of specific skills and abilities most useful in your career field. For example: computer, technical, laboratory, foreign languages, or certifications.
- **Activities or Interests**—at least a brief mention of extracurricular activities, professional memberships and affiliations, community activities, and hobbies or pastimes. 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).

## Format of a Resume

There are basically three types of resume formats—reverse chronological, functional and combined.

### Reverse Chronological Format

This format typifies 80% of all resumes. Education and job history are described in descending order, with the most recent events first. It tends to emphasize job titles and organizations.

This has **advantages** for people who:

- Wish to emphasize the most recent employer.
- Have prior job titles that are impressive.
- Have job history related to field of study.

The **disadvantages** exist for those who:

- Have a spotty work history.
- Are changing career goals.
- Have changed employers frequently.

### Functional Format

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. The skill clusters chosen should support the stated job objective. Group your work accomplishments, responsibilities, and duties according to functional skill areas such as “Project Planning Skills,” “Managerial Skills,” “Sales,” and “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. For example, if you did financial analysis and planning in previous positions, describe these responsibilities

under the heading “Financial Planning” and treat your experience in this area as one complete unit. 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.

This type of format has **advantages** for those who:

- Are changing careers.
- Have had a variety of relatively unconnected work experiences.
- Want to emphasize capabilities developed in non-paid experiences or those of a freelance nature.
- Want to work in fields not directly related to their education.

The **disadvantages** in using this format exist for those who:

- Want to highlight specific employers, especially prestigious ones.
- Have performed only a limited number of functions in past jobs or other experiences.
- Wish to emphasize a growth pattern in past jobs.

It is possible to develop a combined approach to resume preparation using elements of both formats.

### Combined Resume Format

This style combines the “best” elements of the chronological and functional resume. Accomplishments/skills are presented in a section or sections as is a brief work history. This format is designed to highlight the qualifications of the applicant with much less emphasis on specific work titles and dates. Therefore, this format is suggested for those who have a diverse work history or who are making a career change.

The **strong points** of this resume format are:

- Allows you to highlight skills that are relevant to your job objective.
- Minimizes gaps in time.
- Can be varied to emphasize or de-emphasize work history and job titles, as appropriate.

The **limitations** of this resume are:

- Takes longer to prepare.
- Can be difficult to read unless it is well written.

### Resume Review

Before you finalize your decision on which format to use, you may wish to consult with your Program Coordinator to determine which style is appropriate for your particular circumstances. We strongly encourage you to utilize on-campus computer systems and laser printers when developing and printing your resume. Not only is it more cost-effective, but it allows for easy updates and changes. Alternatively, you may have your resume printed or duplicated on campus at the Copy Center located in Bldg. #99.

### Scannable Resume

Many large employers have been investing in 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. As needed, 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 new systems search by using “keywords” (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.

Also, the format you use can have a critical impact on your resume’s “scannability.”

## Action Words

The following list of action words should be used to succinctly accentuate tasks, functions and achievements when describing work and other experiences:

accomplished	formulated
achieved	guided
adapted	implemented
administered	improved
alleviated	increased
analyzed	initiated
appraised	insured
assisted	integrated
audited	invented
chaired	investigated
completed	led
communicated	managed
computed	modeled
conceptualized	modified
conducted	motivated
constructed	negotiated
controlled	organized
coordinated	originated
corrected	performed
created	persuaded
designed	planned
demonstrated	produced
developed	projected
devised	promoted
diagnosed	qualified
directed	rated
edited	recommended
employed	reported
enabled	researched
enforced	resolved
enhanced	revised
enlarged	selected
equipped	solved
established	strengthened
estimated	supervised
evaluated	trained
expanded	translated
facilitated	updated
forecasted	wrote

## Tips for Making Your Resume “Scanner-Friendly”

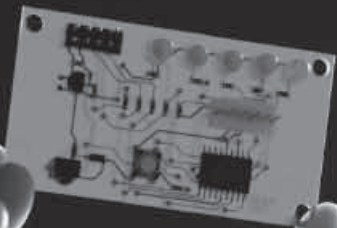
- Font—Standard Serif and Sans Serif fonts work best. Others acceptable: Helvetica, Futura, Optima, Universe, Times, Palatino, and Courier. Avoid ornate fonts.
- Font size is also important; sizes between 10 - 14 pt. work best.
- Italics and underlining may cause problems for the scanner, especially if combined. Avoid reverse type. Use **boldface** for emphasis.
- Vertical or horizontal lines should be used sparingly. When used, leave at least a quarter of an inch of space around the line.
- Avoid graphics, shading, shadowing, and boxes.
- Do not compress or expand the space between letters or lines. Do not double space within sections.
- The resume you submit should be an original, printed with a laser printer on white or light-colored 8.5” x 11” paper.

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- Position your name at the top of the page on its own line; use standard address format and place each phone number on its own line.
- Do not fold or staple the resume.

### Emailing Your Resume—Do's and Don'ts

Increasingly employers are requesting, sometimes requiring, that resumes be sent by email. Again, the format choices you make can have an important impact on your ability to do so effectively. Follow these guidelines for an email version of your resume:

- Do prepare several different file format versions of your resume. For example, save one in plain text (ASCII) format, save another in Rich Text Format and another as a Word document. Employers may request that resumes be submitted in a certain file format for email purposes. Adobe PDF format resumes are also widely used and readily accessible by employers.
- Do not use postscript files—they do not email well.
- 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 email as a Rich Text Format document, also. RTF formatted documents are easily interpreted by most modern word processors and support bold characters, underlining, italics and other formatting.
- Don't use boldface, underlining, or bullets in your resume when it is included as part of the email text. You can use asterisks (\*) or plus signs (+) instead of bullets and do consider using CAPITAL letters as a highlighting technique.
- Do email your resume to yourself or a friend, as a test, before emailing it to employers, to be sure the format transfers as desired.
- Do mail, if possible, an original resume to the employer as a follow up to your email.
- Always include a cover letter as part of your email message text. Follow the same guidelines for cover letter development as you would if you were mailing a cover letter to an employer by U.S. mail. See section on Correspondence.

### Concluding Notes

The resumes that you use should be well-planned, distinctive, and professional in appearance. Good format, high-quality paper, and well-written text will greatly improve your readership. Above all, the contents of your resume must be factual. Each statement needs to be accurate and not overly inflated. On the other hand, avoid either revealing potentially negative information unnecessarily, or selling short your accomplishments. Refer to the sample resumes which follow as springboards to develop effective ideas and approaches for your own.