



## RESUME WRITING

### TAILOR-MADE

Resume writing is a fine art. It is not an exact science. There is no one right way to write a resume. There are no rigid rules for designing or composing a resume. Resume writers have a lot of flexibility regarding layout, format and content. A good resume is the one that is tailor-made to meet your current job-seeking needs, one that fits your specific background, your unique contributions and your personal and professional goals.

Moreover, your resume should be targeted to the needs of the employer. It should be written from the employer's perspective. It must speak the language of the employer.

### SELLING YOURSELF

Your resume functions as an advertisement of yourself. It is one of your key sales tools. You are the product and your resume is the advertisement that sells that product. It is meant to be an effective way of marketing and packaging your product. Your resume presents, promotes and publicizes you to the job market.

Your resume must spark interest and grab attention. It must arouse the curiosity of the reader. It must make the reader want to meet you. It must clearly differentiate you from your competition. It must make you stand out.

### RESUME PURPOSE

What is the purpose of a resume? Your resume does not get you a job. Your resume gets you an interview. Your resume is not some obligatory piece of paperwork or some kind of administrative chore. It should be written with intention and a great amount of strategy.

Your resume is not a job application. A job application form is an official document that demands specific clerical data. Your resume, on the other hand, is an unofficial document that includes only relevant and positive information presented on your terms. A resume writer has the option of leaving off any item or piece of information that might not put the candidate in the best light.

### EVIDENCE

A good resume will enable you to affirm in writing your positive and relevant qualities, skills and characteristics. A good resume presents supportive information that justifies your job objective. By stating your work-related accomplishments, duties, responsibilities, experience and qualifications, you effectively document your capabilities and provide evidence of your suitability to the job.

### CONTENT

Your resume generally includes highlights and information drawn from your professional work experience, educational background, extracurricular activities and community service. It may also mention memberships, internships, awards, honors and distinctions. Experience and activities may be official or unofficial employment, fulltime or part time, paid or unpaid.



## **CHOICE CUTS**

The information on your resume should be positive, selective and relevant. Keep your presentation short and full of spark. Your resume should be a concise statement of what you've learned from past experiences and how they will help a future employer. Your resume must project a positive image. It must fit both you and the circumstances.

## **FIRST IMPRESSION**

Your resume represents you. It acts as an ambassador in your behalf. It is a calling card. It is used to initiate contact. In many cases, the employer will meet your resume before he or she meets you. Your resume, therefore, is oftentimes the first impression an employer has of you. It is up to you to make this first impression count. Your resume is also a reminder. After an initial meeting or after an interview, your resume serves as a record, and provides positive support for your personal impression. It helps the interviewer remember you.

## **CONCISE**

Your resume is not a lengthy, detailed, official, historical document of every area of your life. It is not your life story or your job history. It should be brief, concise and full of spark. It should be targeted to a specific job or career field. The information on your resume should be positive, selective and relevant. A resume is an individually designed document that summarizes your background. It is intended to demonstrate your fitness for a particular position. It focuses on the most attractive and applicable aspects of your background. Every element of your resume must present you as a perfect match for the job you are seeking. Keep the reader in mind. Make sure your resume conveys what you have to offer. Tell what contributions you can make. Emphasize transferable skills. Write clearly and simply. Use active, positive language. Use short, direct, succinct phrases.

"A resume is the best way and largely the only way to disseminate important information about yourself. It is a personal advertisement. A portrait of you in writing. Just as a picture is worth a thousand words, so a résumé speaks eloquently in your behalf."

-BURDETTE BOSTWICK

## **SPECIAL & UNIQUE**

Your resume should present information that clearly differentiates you from everyone else. What makes you special and unique? What makes you stand out? What separates you from the rest? What are your distinct attributes? In what ways are you better than your competition?

## **RESUME DETAILS**

Resumes generally should be only one page in length. Resumes should not be detailed. It is not necessary to list every job. Resumes need not include a complete job history. Do not tell everything, only what is relevant to the job being sought.

The resume header should indicate your name in large, bold type. Use the name by which you are commonly addressed. Include only one mailing address. Include telephone number with area code (home and/or cellphone). You may also include your e-mail address (Be sure your address doesn't contain immature or unprofessional language).

Do not devote undue space to company's address (city and state only). Do not devote undue space to dates of employment (years only). Keep company name and job title simple. Do not include supervisor's name. Do not include company's telephone number or zip code. Do not include references on your resume. Emphasize your job description, functions, responsibilities, and skills instead of the company's logistical information.



## RESUME RULES

Every entry on your resume should include a description of the duties, responsibilities, activities and skills associated with the experience. There is no need to differentiate between paid and non-paid experiences. All descriptions should be stated in terms of their transferability and relevance to the job being sought. Avoid technical or job-specific jargon unless it is related to the job you are seeking. Otherwise, use generic or general terms.

Arrange information on resume so that the most current (reverse chronological order), most important, most impressive or most relevant information is presented first. Information should be presented in list format, not paragraph format. Do not use narrative language. Avoid using full sentences or excessive wordiness. Don't use any personal pronouns (I, me, my, his, her, their). Short phrases, beginning with action verbs, stated in single lines, work best. Language patterns, information groupings, verb usage and tense should be consistent.

## RESUME ADVICE

Format, layout and organization should be consistent, easy-to-read and appropriate to the specific occupational field. Make your resume visually appealing. Presentation should be clean and clear. Balance blocks of text with white space. Margins should be wide and even. Avoid using font or type style that is too fancy or exotic. Utilize emphasizing techniques for impact and easy reading: bold letters, capital letters, italics, bullets, dashes, indenting and font size variations. Do not use underlining. Use indenting sparingly and consistently.



Do not include personal data that is irrelevant or meaningless: age, gender, weight, height, health, marital status, social security number and hobbies. Be careful with references to race, ethnicity, nationality, politics, religion and lifestyle. Do not include a photograph unless requested. Do not include grade point average unless it is very good. Do not include any details that are negative or that might otherwise minimize your experience (Avoid words like *parttime*, *temporary*, *seasonal*, *pending*, *expected*).

## RESUME FOCUS

You can typically arrange and organize the information on your resume into three categories: Profile (General qualifications, knowledge, experience, skills, and personality traits), Education (Schools you attended and related degrees, courses, awards, honors, memberships, and extracurricular activities), Experience (Jobs and employment, including fulltime or part time, paid or unpaid, temporary or long term, along with descriptions of responsibilities and accomplishments).

The tone of your resume should be about what you have to offer, not about what you are trying to obtain.

Your resume should not be about the companies you have worked for or the schools you have attended. Instead, your resume should be about you. It should be about what you did for these companies and what you accomplished at these schools. You are the star and central focus of your resume.



Your job descriptions should include accomplishments as well as responsibilities. Indicate achievements, awards, and results. Use numbers and statistics whenever possible. Emphasize your skills whenever possible. Describe what skills you used to perform certain tasks. Describe the manner in which you performed your tasks.

Proofread for typographical errors, misspelled words and poor grammar. Be sure your language reflects a candidate that is mature and professional.

### **COVER LETTER**

Your resume should always be accompanied by a well-written one-page cover letter. Your cover letter should be written in standard professional business letter format. Produce each letter individually. It should be a personal letter, addressed to a specific individual, at a specific company or organization, and making reference to a specific job. Never send a form letter. It is best to use a more exploratory, open-ended, introductory tone in your cover letter, rather than a more assertive, application-oriented tone. Think of it as a letter of introduction instead of a letter of application.

Avoid salutations that sound too impersonal or too general, like *Dear Sir* or *Dear Sir/Madam* or *To Whom It May Concern*. The letter should be single spaced. Use active rather than passive voice. Edit carefully, double-checking for spelling, grammar, or typographical errors. Use the same matching brand, letterhead, and paper for your cover letter as your resume. You may wish to use this sample cover letter as a guide in producing your own unique letter.

### **RESUME LAYOUT**

Your resume should have a clean, well-balanced and professional look. It should be visually appealing, graphically attractive, and verbally compelling. Keep it simple. Regardless of chosen format, the contents should be organized in a way that makes the resume succinct and easy to read. The content should flow smoothly and easily. Margins should be even. The layout should be consistent. Make proper use of white space, returns, and indentation. Use only one font, but vary treatment of that font throughout the resume for emphasis (bold, italics, capitalization, size).

The categories you choose should be appropriate for the amount and type of experience you have. Typically a resume has a Header, Profile Section, Education Section, and Experience Section.

**HEADER....** Use the name by which you are commonly addressed. Make your name big and bold. Use only one mailing address... Keep it simple... Don't make the employer have to choose from among several addresses and telephone numbers. Two telephone numbers are okay... home phone and cell phone. Include area code.

**PROFILE...** The Profile section is a summary or overview of your qualifications. It includes brief introductory remarks of a general nature that present your unique contributions, organized by relevant knowledge, experience, and skills.

**EDUCATION...** The Education section contains relevant schooling and training. Along with degree and major, include awards and memberships. List experiences and activities that took place outside the classroom to show evidence of leadership abilities and well-roundedness.

**EXPERIENCE...** The Experience section contains relevant jobs and work activity. Any entry in the Experience section must include more than just institutional information and more than just dates and job title. Include descriptions of relevant experience and transferable skills with each entry. Descriptions should be non-narrative. Begin each description with an action verb. Keep the tense consistent. Experience can be fulltime, part time, temporary, seasonal, volunteer or freelance... Do not differentiate.

# YOUR NAME

City, State | Telephone Number | E-Mail Address

## PROFILE

- Highlights of Qualifications and General Background
- Overview of Relevant Knowledge, Education and Training
- Brief Summary of Relevant Experience, Activities, and Functions
- General Statements and Remarks about Relevant or Transferrable Skills
- Adjectives to Describe Your Unique Personal Traits

## EDUCATION

### **NAME OF INSTITUTION** - Location/Dates

- Degree, Certification, Diploma, Major, Minor,
- Coursework, Subject Matter, Internships
- Scholarships, Honors, Awards, Achievements
- Extracurricular Activities, Clubs, Memberships

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## EXPERIENCE

### **NAME OF COMPANY** - Location/Dates

- Job Title, Department
- Description of Duties, Functions, Tasks, Responsibilities
- Description of Duties, Functions, Tasks, Responsibilities
- Highlights of Experience, Specific Skills, Projects, Training

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### **NAME OF ORGANIZATION** - Location/Dates

- Title, Official Capacity, Nature of Membership
- Involvement, Participation
- Description of Duties, Specific Skills, Special Projects
- Description of Duties, Specific Skills, Special Project

## RESUME VERBS

You can use these action verbs to begin the descriptors in the Experience section:

accomplished	delivered	increased	outlined	scheduled
achieved	demonstrated	initiated	participated	served
analyzed	designed	installed	performed	set up
arranged	determined	instituted	persuaded	showed
applied	devised	instructed	planned	sold
assembled	directed	integrated	practiced	solved
assisted	distributed	interacted	prepared	sorted
attended	earned	interpreted	presented	sponsored
balanced	edited	introduced	presided	started
calculated	encouraged	invented	processed	supplied
changed	enforced	investigated	produced	supervised
checked	enlisted	launched	promoted	taught
clarified	established	learned	provided	tested
coached	equipped	led	raised	tracked
collated	ensured	listed	realized	trained
collected	estimated	located	received	transacted
compared	evaluated	made	recorded	transferred
compiled	examined	maintained	recruited	translated
completed	expanded	managed	reduced	transmitted
composed	expedited	measured	refined	treated
computed	explored	minimized	regulated	undertook
communicate	facilitated	modified	reinforced	updated
conducted	finalized	monitored	related	upgraded
controlled	fostered	motivated	repaired	used
conveyed	generated	negotiated	reported	utilized
coordinated	guided	notified	represented	validated
corresponded	handled	observed	researched	verified
created	helped	obtained	restored	visited
dealt with	identified	operated	responded	watched
decided	implemented	organized	reviewed	worked
defined	improved	oversaw	revised	wrote

## RESUME MODIFIERS

Describing knowledge, experience and skills in the Profile section:

Strong, excellent, well-developed, proficient, thorough, extensive, active, effective

## RESUME ADJECTIVES

Describing your personality traits or soft skills in the Profile section:

Dedicated, responsible, determined, energetic, honest, mature, hard working, goal oriented, team player, self-starter, friendly, personable, disciplined, ambitious, diligent, reliable, dependable, confident, conscientious, loyal, trustworthy, attention to detail