

RESUMES

Writing Your Resume

Resumes are a key tool for landing that first job – or the second, or the third, or whatever. Throughout your career in whatever field you choose, having an effective resume' will key a key factor to help determine what kind of job you'll be considered for. It can determine how much a company is willing to pay to hire you. In short, a good resume' can have a very positive impact on your quality of life.

A resume is, basically, a self-promotional document. It tells a potential employer why they should hire you. It is not a job application; that is usually a separate document that the company may ask you to fill out for them. A resume should include truthful, specific and brief information about your past, your performance and accomplishments. It is the purpose of the resume to get you invited to an interview with a prospective employer. Your resume and your conduct at the interview must be complementary. Know your resume and be prepared to answer questions about it.

Resume Guidelines

- Always tell the truth in your resume. The facts you present (degrees, dates of employment, salary history, etc.) will be easy to verify. If the employer checks and it turns out you weren't truthful, you will probably be disqualified from consideration no matter how qualified you are. If you do get the job, you might be fired later if it's discovered that you lied in your resume'. Besides, it's just plain unethical to misrepresent yourself.
- Assuming you are truthful, your resume is no place for modesty. Employers want to know what skills, abilities, talents, traits, and experiences you have that will meet their needs. Your resume' is the first – maybe the only – chance to show them.
- If you're having trouble thinking of what to include on a resume, think about positive and honest things that your friends, family, teachers or others would say about you. What are the accomplishments that set you apart? What are the personal qualities that would make you a good employee?

- Information should be organized in order of interest to the reader, whether you're applying for a job or internship, or trying to get into a graduate program. The resume' should be customized somewhat every time you use it.

What's in a Resume?

There are many things that can be included in a resume'. Basic information about you is critical; what to include about your background may depend on the amount of relevant experience you have and the type of jobs you're hoping to land.

Contact Information: Name, address, telephone, e-mail

- All this goes at the top of your resume.
- Use a permanent address and phone number if possible (for example, your parents' address rather than a dorm room).
- Include your email address, but make sure it's a professional-sounding one. An address like 'h8katz@email.com' may amuse your friends, but it could automatically disqualify you in the eyes of a potential employer who loves kitties.

Your Objective

- What are you looking for? State your objective or what sort of job you are looking to find. This is a specific item you might want to customize with each application. Don't use a resume' that lists your objective as "a job working with animals" if you're applying for a computer technician position.
- Realize that there are quite likely several resumes on the employer's desk from people who are interested in the same position. Focus on what makes you stand out from the crowd, and on convincing the employer that if you are hired, you will approach the job with interest and initiative.

Your Qualifications and Skills

- This section is your chance to show off your skills and abilities. Be specific and truthful, and don't be too modest.
- This is another area you should review and possibly adjust for each position you seek. Make sure to draw attention to your specific skills that will best fit the position you're applying for. You may be a great athlete or a whiz at cooking, but if you want a job repairing computers you'll want to emphasize the technical skills and abilities up top.

Your Work Experience

- Have you had previous jobs, whether they're related to the field you hope to enter or not? Include that information here. They'll want to know if you have experience

working with the type of functions they need an employee to do. But if you don't have specific experience relevant to the job, they'll want to know if you've been in a workplace of any kind, if you were reliable and easy to work with, if you exhibited any leadership or other skills that might translate to their needs.

- Give a brief overview of any work you've done that has taught you **any** skills you may have that relate to the position for which you are applying – whether that's working with technology, or working with people, or just learning to be responsible. Use action words to describe job assignments and duties.
- Include your most recent jobs first, and include:
 1. Title or position.
 2. Name and location (city & state) of organization.
 3. Dates of employment. It's best to specify down to the exact month if possible. That gives a better idea of how long you held a job. Saying you had a job from 2006-07 might mean you had it only over the winter holidays, or might mean you worked there for two years. There's a big difference.
 4. Describe your work responsibilities, and list the specific skills you learned or personal qualities you developed.

Your Education

- List your most recent education first.
- Include any degrees or certificates (high school diploma, associate's degree, A+ Certification) along with the institution attended you attended.
- Mention any academic honors.
- If you haven't graduated yet, list the courses you've taken that are relevant to the position you are applying for.

Your References

- Have a list of references available, complete with contact information. Make sure you check with those people ahead of time to make sure it's alright to list them, and to make sure they'd have good things to say about you.
- You do not need to list the references on your resume' – but have the list ready when and if it is requested.

Putting it All Together

Resume Design

- Most experts recommend using white or off-white 8-1/2 x 11-inch paper, and print on one side only.
- Use a font of 10 to 14 points, and don't use all italics or all CAPS.
- Avoid cute, fancy or decorative fonts. Stick to one or two fonts throughout the resume.

- Use bullet points. Lists are easier to read than narrative paragraphs.

Final Checks

- Be sure to use spell and grammar checks to make sure you have a resume' that's professional and literate.
- Be consistent with your verbs. Pick either "ing" or "ed" when writing in past tense, and stick with it. (Ex: Created, organized, and presented marketing materials).
- Once you're finished, have friends and family members review your resume' to help you catch any errors, awkward phrases or missed opportunities to show your positive traits and achievements.

Types of Resumes

There are several different formats for resumes. Pick the one that best meets your needs or what the employer is likely to want to see.

Chronological Resume'

- A chronological resume your work experience in a chronological sequence, beginning with the most recent job. This format highlights your dates of employment, places of employment, and job titles.
- This format is best if you have a solid work history and are looking to land a better job in the same career field.

Functional Resume'

- Functional resumes highlight your abilities – whether that's working with people, managing others, working with your hands, writing or researching, or whatever other skills you may have. You'll still need a summary of your work history, but that is listed below the section that shows your personal qualities and abilities.
- This format works best if you have a short work history, or if you're looking for a job that lies outside your previous work experience. This allows you to talk about qualities that would make you a good fit for the job, even if you don't have direct experience.

Combination Resume'

- A combination resume is a combination of a chronological and functional resume.
- Use this 'mixed' format if you have a solid work history but want to do something a little different in the future. It lets you highlight both your personal qualities and your history of being a good employee.