

A résumé is a written document that is used to market your background to potential employers. The purpose of a résumé is to obtain an interview with a prospective employer; therefore, it is important that you have a résumé that is organized, well written and highlights your education, experience, skills, and accomplishments.

Before writing your résumé, it is helpful to write down your activities and accomplishments with regard to your education, employment, activities, special projects, etc. Then ask yourself what you actually did in each of those activities; your answers to what you actually did are the sets of skills that you have to offer to an employer.

After identifying your accomplishments and the accompanying skills, you will need to write down some ideas about what you want to do with those skills and accomplishments. This will become your objective on your résumé.

Outline for a Résumé

Heading/Contact Information

Your name is your heading. It should be bold and in larger print than the rest of your resume. Contact information includes your permanent and campus address, your permanent and campus telephone numbers with the area codes (remember to use a professional message on your voice mail), your email address, and your web address, if you have one. Remember to check your email often.

Objective

Your objective should focus on your desired job title. Concentrate on what you can bring to an employer, not on what you hope to get out of the position. Use phrases such as “To obtain an internship in accounting or finance” or “Seeking full-time position in engineering design, research, or development”.

Education

Include colleges/universities where you have obtained, or are working on obtaining, a degree. List the official name of your degree and/or certification that you have obtained, or will obtain, the month and year of your graduation, and your major and minor(s). You may also list your overall or major GPA in this section.

A brief description of your coursework, independent studies or research should be included in this section, along with computer, language, and other skills developed through your education. Omit high school information unless you are a freshman or sophomore in college, or unless you had a significant accomplishment related to your field.

Experience

This section could be labeled a number of things – Experience, Work Experience, Related Professional Experience, etc. List your job title/position, the name of the organization for whom you worked, the dates of employment, and an active, descriptive

summary of job duties. Be sure to include important keywords, or hot topics, that are relevant to your field in your job descriptions. Also be certain to mention skills used and developed. If you have had unpaid experiences which relate to your desired objective, be sure to include them in this section as well.

Additional Sections

According to your background, there may be other sections which you will want to add to your résumé. These sections could include:

- Activities
- Honors
- Interests
- Hobbies
- Community Service
- Computer/Foreign Language Skills
- Professional Memberships
- Volunteer Experiences

Creating Your Résumé

Once your rough draft has been written, you are ready to create your resume. *Start with a blank word document on the computer rather than using a resume template.* Resume templates often do not use formats that are conducive to loading into electronic databases or for emailing.

Scannable Résumés

Many organizations are using scanners to manage the résumés which they receive. When résumés are scanned into databases they are often scanned for multiple positions by using keywords, skills sets, and any other number of criteria they may be wanting in an applicant.

For a scannable résumé, it is important to use nouns to concretely describe your knowledge and experiences. Use industry jargon, key words, phrases, technical terminology, and any other items important to your field. Keep your resume free of bullets, italics, underlining, or graphics. These features make resumes unscannable, therefore leaving your résumé out of the database.

There are many kinds of formats that can be used in writing a résumé. Three formats will be presented here. They are:

- The Chronological Résumé
- The Functional Résumé
- The Combination Résumé

Chronological Résumé: The chronological résumé is the most commonly used format. A chronological résumé is written in reverse chronological order – with your most recent

education and experiences listed first. This is the easiest format to write. Chronological resumes are good to use when your most recent experience or education is advantageous to the kind of position you are seeking, you have had job growth within the same company, or you are staying in the same field as your prior experience. Sections on this type of résumé would include Objective, Education, Work Experience, and Activities.

Functional Résumé: In a functional résumé, your skills and abilities are highlighted rather than where and when your education and experience took place. This is a good format to use if you have developed a set of skills over a wide variety of experiences or if you have developed skills over a wide variety of experiences within the same organization or activity. This is a good résumé if you are entering the job market after a long absence or if you are entering the market for the first time with little related experience but a lot of skills. Section headings in this kind of resume would include Management, Leadership, Training Skills, Computer Skills, Technical Experience, Research, Sales, etc.

Combination Résumé: A combination résumé contains the best of the chronological and functional formats. This format is usually used by applicants who have a strong background related to their objective. Sections on this résumé would include Education and Experience, as well as skills that you wish to emphasize.

Conclusion

There are many different ways to make a résumé. What is important is that your résumé should make a good impression and should tell a potential employer what you have to offer. Remember – your résumé will not get you a job, but if well-executed it should certainly get you an interview!

The Three R's of Résumé Writing

1. **Research the company.**

Read whatever literature the company has placed in the career library. For additional information, try the Internet or, even more directly, call the company. Ask for any literature it may have, find out how the company is structured, and ask what qualities the company generally looks for in its employees. Ask if there are openings in your area, and find out the name of the department head and give him or her a call. Explain that you are trying to decide whether to apply to their company, and ask for their recommendation for next steps. Thank that person for the information, and ask to whom your résumé should be directed.

2. **Research the position.**

The more you know about the position, the better able you will be to sell yourself and to target the résumé to that position. If possible, interview someone who does that same job. In addition to finding out the duties, ask if there is on-the-job training, whether they value education over experience (or vice versa), and what kind of

turnover the department experiences. Ask what they like about the position and the company; more importantly, ask what they don't like about it.

3. **Research yourself.**

Your goal is not just to get a job. Your goal is to get a job that you will enjoy. After you find out all you can about the company and the position, ask yourself honestly whether this is what you really want to do and where you really want to be. The odds are overwhelming that you will not hold this position for more than two or three years, so it's not a lifetime commitment; however, this first job will be the base of your lifetime career. You must start successfully so that future recommendations will always be positive. Furthermore, three years is a long time to spend doing something you do not like, working in a position that is not challenging, or living somewhere you do not want to live.

Once you have done this research, you will sell yourself more effectively. **Most employers devote an average of 15 to 30 seconds to each résumé, so it is your responsibility to make it attractive, readable and informational.** One last word of advice: **Before you go to the interview, review the version of your résumé that you submitted to this employer. The résumé can only get you the interview; the interview gets you the job.**
