

DO

- **Be concise.**

Your résumé should be an outline of your career and qualifications. It is a place for bulleted points (which are items easily read with a quick scan). You can expand upon things in your cover letter and go into detail during the interview.

- **Show results.**

Quantify your on-the-job accomplishments. Tell the reader of your achievements, such as how you cut costs, increased revenue, developed products/procedures, etc. For example, “Designed the audio module for the company’s state-of-the-art virtual reality simulator,” sounds more impressive than “Assisted in the production of...” Also, where you can use exact figures, do so: cut costs by *how much*; increased revenue *how much*; managed department of *how many*?

- **Create a résumé that fits the job you are after.**

Especially important for those of you who change careers, you should highlight your skills that are pertinent for the job you want. For instance, a librarian with strong computer programming skills who set up a research database might want to explore work in information systems. On his résumé, his computer expertise would get lost using a chronological format. Instead, a functional resume emphasizing his IS experience and skills would better present this information. Remember, there is nothing unusual about having two or three résumés on hand that are targeted for different types of jobs.

- **Carefully proofread and edit your resume.**

Take the time to read your résumé at least twice; read it aloud to help catch awkward phrasing. A tip: after you have read your résumé, put it away for a while before reading it again. Reading it repeatedly makes you more prone to skim over sections and overlook mistakes.

- **Make the effort and investment to produce a quality, finished product.**

If you do not have access to a personal computer, do not rely on your typewriter; make a trip to a copy center. Most chains offer computer and printer rentals for minimal cost. With a draft of your résumé prepared before you go in, you should be able to create your résumé and get multiple copies on high-quality paper (ask at the counter for paper) for less than \$15. It is a small investment when you consider the long-term return.

- **Keep your résumé up to date.**

You might be comfortable and happy in your current situation, but you never know...

- You might learn of a more ideal job
- Your department might be reduced or “restructured”
- Your personal situation might dictate the search for a new job (i.e. your spouse gets an attractive offer in another city)

It is rare that anyone has lifetime contentment and security in a job. Always be prepared. As you get promotions and new responsibilities, you should note these in your résumé and purge outdated material. Also, if you develop outside interests that might make you more marketable (new computer skills, published articles, learning a foreign language), be sure to include your new skills in your résumé.

DON'T

Don't be cute or fancy when it comes to layout and presentation.

Desktop publishing programs can be dangerous things. Even the most basic word processing programs on the market today offer users great flexibility to be creative. A variety of fonts, point sizes and special characters are at your fingertips, as well as the ability to bold, italicize and underline words. When it comes to your résumé, however, use restraint. Save the flashy stuff for your party invitations and holiday newsletters.

Your résumé is one of the first impressions you give your prospective employer. You want to show that you are a viable candidate for the job; your ability to use multiple fonts and graphics is irrelevant. For a clean, professional-looking résumé, it is best to err on the side of caution; Times New Roman is the standard font.

Don't use passive phrases.

Outlining your work history by stating, "Duties included" or "Was responsible for" takes away from what you actually accomplished. Show action in your statements with words such as developed, designed, generated, sold, and wrote. See our list of "Power Verbs" for more examples.

Don't exaggerate.

Padding your résumé is not acceptable. You should be able to tell from a job description whether you are qualified for the position. If you are not a perfect candidate, it is likely that few others are. Do not try to make up qualifications for a specific job. Employers' want ads are often wish lists; they do not necessarily expect every applicant to have all the desired qualifications.

Don't overlook non-work experiences.

Organizing a charity fund-raiser, presiding over a cultural organization or even participating in groups, such as Toastmasters, are valuable and legitimate professional experiences. Adding skills like these will improve your résumé.

Don't include frivolous information.

Photographs, marital status, high school information, salary requirements and even references should not be included.

Don't label the document "Résumé".

It is readily apparent that you are presenting your résumé. Do not make the mistake of using "Résumé" at the top near your name; it is unnecessary.