Resume Writing

Showcasing Your Skills

What is a Resume & why is it important?

A resume is a summary of your relevant skills, education, and experience.

Your resume is a marketing tool; your first introduction to an employer.

Employers use resumes throughout the hiring process to learn more about applicants and whether they might be a good fit.

Purpose of a Resume

The purpose of the resume is not to get you the job, but to get you invited for an interview. Think of it as a brochure of who you are and what you have to offer an employer.

Change your resume to suit the position to which you are applying. Position descriptions will give you an indication of what an employer is looking for in an employee. Try to tie every piece of information you give them to something they need.

For example: if they are looking for leadership, promote your leadership experience.

Employers spend less than 10 seconds reviewing resumes; information should be:

- *Written Clearly and Concisely*

- *Easy to Read*

- *In an Attractive Layout*

- *No more than 1 page long (usually)*

Resume Basics

- ➢ *Resumes should be one-page, unless you have the content to justify two-pages. Too much 'fluff' will bury your most important content.*
- ➢ *Use 'Active' voice when writing your resume and don't use full sentences. Instead of "I supervised a team which was able to increase production by 25%", say "Led my team to a 25% increase in production."*
- ➢ *Use Powerhouse Action Words like achieved, created, developed, initiated, organized, etc. These words evoke confidence and authority.*
- ➢ *Spend some time in personal reflection so you can effectively describe your skills and abilities. Doing this will make your resume a stronger representation of your true self and unique value as an employee.*

Resume Format and Design

There is no one perfect format!

Unless you are in a design-related field, the fonts and visuals will be secondary to the content. Using free resume templates is acceptable. Layout is all about looking professional and drawing attention to key information.

The focus should be on professionalism and efficiency.
Professionalism means using a modern, easy-to-read font like Calibri, Ariel, or Times New Roman. For readability, stick to 10-12 point font size. Distinguish headings by using bold or italic, but be consistent throughout the document.

The Chronological Resume

The chronological resume is the most popular format. In a chronological resume, the work history section is structured in reverse-chronological order, starting with the most recent position and includes dates. This allows hiring managers to get a good understanding of the applicant's career history. The resume should tell a story that is engaging and logical for the hiring manager.

The layout of the information contained in your resume must be optimized to catch the attention of hiring managers in their initial scan. The top left part of the page is prime real estate because this is where we start reading.

An eye-tracking study conducted by The Ladders Inc. found that resumes organized by E or F pattern tended to do well, especially when they utilized bold titles and bulleted accomplishments.

What are the E and F-Patterns?

The E and F-Patterns are the way our eyes move when we read content. In a matter of seconds, our eyes move quickly across copy and other visual elements, scanning the page in this order:
  - ➢ *First, across the top of the page to read important headlines*
  - ➢ *Then, down the left side of the page to view numerals or bullet points*
  - ➢ *Lastly, across the page again to read bolded text or subtitles.*

The eye tracking study demonstrates that hiring managers spend 80% of the time (less than 10 seconds) scanning for the following content:
  - ➢ *Candidate name*
  - ➢ *Current position/company*
  - ➢ *Current position start and end dates*
  - ➢ *Previous position/company*
  - ➢ *Previous position start and end dates*
  - ➢ *Education*

Components of a Resume

1. Contact Information (Heading)
2. Summary Statement or Objective
3. Education
4. Honors & Awards*
5. Certifications
6. Skills
7. Work Experience
8. Volunteer/Community Activities*
9. Professional Memberships*
10. References

*OPTIONAL

Contact Information

Place your contact information at the top of your resume; it should be the first thing the employer sees. Your name should be at the very top and should stand out. You might make your name a bit larger in font than the rest of your resume, or bold your name, or both.

You can center your contact information on the page, or make it left justified.

Leave a space or horizontal line between the end of your contact information and the next section of your resume.

Contact information should include: full name, mailing address, phone number, email address, and URLs for LinkedIn or personal website. Make sure that you have a professional email address and have voicemail set up with a professional message.

Summary Statement or Objective

A *Summary Statement* is a summary of your skills and experience, structured to quickly give a prospective employer a sense of your key "selling points" and the value you could offer. A Summary Statement can be just a few sentences as long as the focus is on your industry expertise or accomplishments. Summary Statements are ideal for job seekers who have years of experience and want to summarize their relevant job experience.

A resume *Objective* is a statement of your goals for employment, usually listed at the top of your resume. A resume Objective is typically one or two sentences long. Although some experts think an Objective is outdated, it can be useful when you are trying to emphasize that you know what you want in a career and are qualified for the job, even if you don't have a lot of related experience.

Education

Current students or recent college graduates will likely want to put the education section towards the top of the resume. This is because students typically have limited work experience. In this case, you want to highlight your academic successes. After you have gained a few years of work experience, you can move the education section below your work experience.

In the education section of your resume, list the schools you attended, the degrees you attained, your GPA if you are a student or a recent graduate (and if your GPA is a 3.5 or higher), and any special awards and honors you earned. You can also include extracurricular clubs, charitable groups/organizations where you were active and/or held a leadership role.

You should also include any certifications or licenses you have, relevant to the field.

Relevant Skills

The skills section of your resume includes your abilities that are related to the jobs you are applying for. In this section, you should list skills that are relevant to the position or career field that you are interested in. Try to customize your skills section, if possible, to closely match the requirements in the job posting.

Having a skills section makes it easy for a hiring manager to pinpoint if you have a specific skill required for a position. It is also an easy way to get resume keywords onto your resume. Never just tell the employer what skills you have—show them with examples that describe your skill.

Example:
➢ *I have strong have leadership and organizational skills.*
➢ *Elected Treasurer of the Business Club. Responsible for 4 annual fundraising activities that netted the club $8,000.*
  Numbers jump out on a page of text and have more of an impact!

Work Experience

Work experience should include: Job title, company name and location, and dates employed. Job descriptions show prospective employers what you have accomplished in the positions you've held, including internships and clinical rotations. They also provide a synopsis of your experience and skills.

When it comes to applying for jobs, looking good on paper is important. You can make jobs and accomplishments sound impressive without being deceitful. Use powerful words and numbers to catch the reader's attention.

Volunteer/Community Activities & Professional Memberships

Whether you're using a resume template or creating your own, you may find there are some optional sections you do not need. If you have limited work experience, emphasize any non-work activities. These might include clubs, sports, babysitting, volunteer work, or community service. All of these activities can show your skills and abilities.

You may also find it useful to combine sections if you are having trouble filling a section with more than two bullet points. List only relevant professional memberships and don't list professional organizations you joined in name only.

Remember, use your resume space wisely! Deleting unnecessary sections to expand more important sections is perfectly acceptable.

References

It is important that you identify at least 3 professional references who can speak to your qualifications and work ethic. Unless instructed to do so, do not include the list on your resume; rather, create it as a separate list.

Your Reference sheet should include:
- *Reference's full name*
- *Job title and Company*
- *Address*
- *Phone number*
- *Email address.*

On the last line of your resume, you can add a Reference section, but only state "Available Upon Request".

Visual Hierarchy

Visual hierarchy refers to the arrangement or presentation of elements in a way that implies importance. In other words, visual hierarchy influences the order in which the human eye perceives what it sees. This order is created by the visual contrast between forms in a field of perception.

Here's an example of Visual Hierarchy:

❖ **Luzerne County Community College, Nanticoke, PA**
   Associate of Applied Science, Computer Information Systems

❖ **A.A.S Computer Information Systems**
   Luzerne County Community College, Nanticoke, PA

Which information is more important? The eye is drawn to the information that is bold.

Embrace the White Space

White space, often also referred to as negative space, is a section of your resume which remains empty to create space between paragraphs. Getting the right amount of white space in a resume can be tricky. If you leave too much white space, your resume may look bare and bland; not enough white space and your resume looks cluttered and disorganized. White space naturally attracts the eye. Items surrounded by white space attract attention.

Which is more eye catching and a better use of white space?

In this position, I managed three sales clerks, supervised the monthly inventory, and sold $1,200 worth of apparel weekly.

- *Supervised the monthly inventory*

- *Managed 3 sales clerks*

- *Sold $1,200 worth of apparel weekly*

Resume Do's and Don'ts

- ✓ *Do think of your resume as an ad for your qualifications, not an autobiography*
- ✓ *Do begin each bullet point with a Powerhouse verb*
- ✓ *Do choose an appropriate template and format your resume clearly*
- ✓ *Do proofread many times and have it critiqued by others, including Career Services*
- ✓ *Do alter resume for different positions and include keywords from position descriptions*
- ✓ *Do include only relevant information*
- ✓ *Do use Visual Hierarchy in resume formatting*
- ✓ *Don't make GRAMMAR or SPELLING errors*
- ✓ *Don't make the reader search for information*
- ✓ *Don't use complete sentences*
- ✓ *Don't make your resume too cluttered or dense, embrace the 'white space'*
- ✓ *Don't use fancy fonts or use a font size smaller than 10 point*
- ✓ *Don't include personal information or references on resume*

Sample Student Resume (no work experience)

* *Personal Information is top center, with name bigger and bolder.*

* *Notice the visual hierarchy used by bolding important information.*

* *Notice the white space surrounding important information.*

* *Bullet points begin with Verbs and numbers catch your eye.*

* *Volunteer and Campus activities are used to demonstrate work skills.*

Leo Leopard
555 La Verne Way, La Verne, CA
lleopard@laverne.edu
(909) 555-5555

OBJECTIVE
To obtain an on-campus position serving my fellow students which utilizes my strong communication skills.

EDUCATION
University of La Verne, La Verne, CA   Expected Graduation: June 2016
Bachelor of Arts, Business Administration
GPA: 3.5

HONORS/AWARDS
Dean's List   Fall 2013 – Spring 2014

ON CAMPUS INVOLVEMENT
Enactus, University of La Verne   August 2013 – Present
Member
* Implement collective ideas to sponsor campus and community events which promote educational and social change
* Led groups of 9 junior high students in discussion on success skills, business ethics, and personal finances
* Co-designed 17 minute audio-visual presentation accurately and creatively describing project for use in regional and national competition

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE
LionLike MindState, Pomona, CA   June 2012 – Present
Volunteer
* Plan two yearly outreach events to highlight community members' creativity in spoken word, poetry, music, and art

YMCA, Pomona, CA   Summer 2013, 2014
Volunteer Swim Coach
* Instructed classes of up to 15 children on basic swimming skills
* Communicated regularly with parents on children's progress

SKILLS
Computer: Proficient in Windows and Mac OS, Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and Excel
Language: Fluent in Spanish
Social Media: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram