

RESUME WRITING

WHAT IS A RESUME?

A resume is a brief highlight of your work or activity experiences, educational background and skills. It summarizes your qualifications and experience as they relate to the type of job you are seeking. Your goal is to market yourself effectively on paper to a specific audience – your reader! It should be constructed to gain attention, arouse interest and generate action (an interview!) so that you can sell your strengths in person. Keep in mind that there is no one way to write a resume -only guidelines.

HOW IS A RESUME USED?

A resume is most often used when applying for employment. It can also be used to apply for a co-op or internship, a summer position, graduate or professional school, or may be required when applying for leadership positions in particular organizations.

RESUME CONTENT

There are many different opinions about resume content and organization. The key to writing a strong resume is to highlight those areas of your background that best demonstrate your skills and abilities as they relate to the position for which you are applying. Following is a list of categories most often used in resumes. The types of categories you list on your resume and their order depend upon which parts of your background and qualifications you want to emphasize, as there is no prescribed or standard resume format. Typically however, the first place a reader's eyes fall when looking at a document is the second quarter of the page, so the most relevant information should be placed there.

1. Identifying Information / Heading:

- Cap the top of your resume with:
- Full name (can put nickname or what you go by in parenthesis if you wish)
- Complete address (include both permanent and present addresses and phone numbers if still in college)
- Home phone number (can list work phone number as well -designate each with an "H" and "W")
- E-mail address
- Personal website (if appropriate)

2. Objective:

(May also be called job target, job objective, professional objective or career objective. Use only if you are focused in your job search.)The career objective sets the tone for your resume and indicates the type of work you are seeking. It also tells employers how you might fit into their organizations. It forces you to focus on your primary area of interest and unifies the rest of your resume. Essentially your objective says "this is what I want to do," and the rest of the resume says "and this is *why* I am qualified to do it." The body of the resume should support your objective at all times. The objective may include any combination of the following types of information:

- The level of position, job title or industry area (i.e. entry level, sales trainee, social worker, computer programmer, financial industry, educational arena)
- The type of organization or environment that interests you (i.e. forward-moving, competitive, growing, stable)
- Special interest area within the organization or world of work (i.e. marketing department, change management group, international news, event coordination, purchasing division)
- A description of job activities you wish to perform or skills you wish to gain
- Interests, knowledge or skills you wish to contribute to the organization
- Long and short term goals

Examples:

- An entry level position in human resources management with particular interest in wage and salary administration
- A position in a cutting-edge technological company applying knowledge of software development and modification using Windows based products
- A consulting position in the financial industry utilizing strong analytical and communication skills with the opportunity for advancement in financial services management

3. Education: (List each educational experience in reverse chronological order) This section may include:

- Names and locations of schools or programs
- Dates of attendance or graduation date
- Degrees, certificates or licenses
- Major, minor and / or cognate
- Grade point average (if 3.0 or above)
- Awards / Honors / Scholarships
(add a separate section if more than three)
- Percentage of schooling paid for by self
- Study abroad experiences

Example:

Master of Public Health, May 2000

University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC

Bachelor of Arts in Experimental Psychology, May 1998

Major: Psychology *Minor:* Health Administration

University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC

- *Major GPA:* 3.4 *Overall GPA:* 3.2
- Dean's List, President's List, National Dean's List
- Financed 60% of education

4. Related Coursework:

This category is optional and can also be part of the Education section. It is mainly used when you are lacking related experience but want to demonstrate relevant academic training and knowledge by listing the titles of specific courses.

5. Experience:

Include all types of experience (if relevant) including full-time, part-time, summer, volunteer work, military service, internships, self-employment, research projects, and even activities if the skills that were developed in those activities are directly related to the position at hand. In some cases you may wish to divide this category into two sections: one called Related Experience and one called Other Experience. Whether you choose to list your job title or your employer name first depends on which sounds more impressive, but the order you choose should be consistent throughout the resume. Whether you use periods at the end of your statements or not is up to you, but again should be consistent throughout.

Include: •Your title • Dates of employment • Bulleted *active* descriptions of your responsibilities
 • Employer name • City / State of the employer • Major accomplishments and contributions

6. Honors, Activities, Research or Professional Affiliations:

You may specifically want to mention:

- Activities that demonstrate job related skills, leadership or membership in career related organizations
(Some of these experiences may be significant enough to have bullet statements explaining them in detail.)

- Honors or awards (Scholarships may or may not be relevant depending on their selection criteria.)

7. Skills:

As technology skills become increasingly valuable to employers it may be beneficial to have a separate section to list computer skills. Be specific, listing product names and version numbers if possible. Indicate your level of knowledge using such terms as "working knowledge of" or "proficient in." Students seeking positions specifically in technology should break this list down into subcategories such as programming languages, hardware, software, operating systems, databases, peripherals, etc. If you have minimal computer skills, you may wish to combine this section with one of the above categories or demonstrate it through bullet statements in the experience category. If you speak more than one language, you should also list them here, indicating your level of written, reading and oral proficiency in each.

8. Other:

There is certainly the option to add additional categories that reflect your uniqueness, such as interests or volunteer work, but again, consider the relevance that the category and its contents have to your objective and / or the position at hand.

9. References:

List them on a separate page that matches your resume paper. (See the last page of this packet for more information.)

Include your references:

- Complete name (using Mr., Miss, Mrs., Ms. or Dr.)
- Job title
- Name of the organization where they work
- Work address (home address if no work address)
- Phone number (ask if they prefer work or home)
- E-mail address if appropriate

RESUME WRITING

- **Your resume may take you hours to prepare.** Writing an effective resume is an investment which takes dedication and time. Having someone else write your resume means that you may not know it by heart and will not be able to talk about it in an interview. No one knows you better than you!
- **Be prepared to write and rewrite.** Have your resume critiqued by a career counselor not just once, but several times until no more corrections are needed. Professors (especially of English) can also be good proofreaders of both resumes and cover letters, but may not always know the latest trends in resume writing. Remember that suggestions will help improve your resume; they are not criticisms.
- **A one-page resume is sufficient for most students.** Your resume doesn't have to list every position you've ever held or every activity or club you've been involved with -only relevant experience. The exception is if you have significant co-op experience, meaty part-time jobs, professional summer jobs, internships or extracurricular activities in which you held leadership positions. Go to two pages only if absolutely necessary. Employers look for your ability to use industry terminology and be concise.
- **Custom design your resume for each opening / environment.** You should change your objective with each position for which you apply, and if necessary, change the content and / or the format so that it best supports that objective. You want to send the message that the organization should hire you because they need what you have to offer, not that you need them because you need a job.

- **Catch your reader's eye.** Most readers will only spend 20-30 seconds on the initial scan of your resume. Readers prefer statements that begin with bullets, bold print and indentions to guide their eyes quickly to the main points. You may also use all CAPITAL LETTERS, *italics* or underlining to highlight key areas, but do not mix font styles. It can make your resume look cluttered. Stick to one font. Organize the information such that the resume is visually appealing to the eye and easy to follow.
- **Accentuate the positive.** Your resume is the first impression most employers will have of you and how well you write it is an indication of what type of employee you might be. Be results-oriented and highlight accomplishments, not mere duties. Don't just list what you did; show how it contributed to or impacted the organization. Quantify your statements by using numbers, statistics and percentages.
- **Use action oriented verbs** (created, delegated) as opposed to passive verbs (took, had) to help the reader identify transferable skills that could be applied to their organization. Keep the verb tense consistent with the dates you list. For past activities, use past tense verbs (supervised, developed). For activities you're currently engaged in, use present tense verbs (supervise, developing).
- **Do not include on a resume:** religion, race, gender, high school information (unless applying for an internship and it is relevant), marital status, height / weight, birthplace, birth date or a photograph.

RESUME APPEARANCE

- Use light colored resume paper (white, ivory or beige) that will copy cleanly and not come out gray.
- Use the same style paper for both your resume and cover letter.
- You may use simple graphics such as lines to create a border, but don't overdo it. *Exception:* If you are a graphic or interior design major, you may want to use your resume to display your design skills.
- Maintain reasonable margins. (In general, 1 inch margins are preferable) Apply to cover letters also.

COVER LETTER (Guidelines)

USC P.O. Box 9999
Columbia, South Carolina 29208
March 9, 2004

Mr. U.R. Employer
Director, Personnel Department
Knick Knack, Incorporated
Columbia, South Carolina 29208

Dear Mr. Employer:

Introductory Paragraph: This paragraph should include information introducing yourself, why you are writing and specifically where you learned of this position or organization. You might make reference to a previous conversation or correspondence, giving specific dates if possible. If you learned of the position through another person, be sure to mention his or her name as personal referrals often attract more attention. For example, you might open by saying: "I am writing to apply for the Community Relations Coordinator position advertised in the March 5th issue of *The State*." or "I am writing to express my interest in positions in retail marketing at Knick Knack, Incorporated."

Body: The next one or two paragraphs contain your "sales pitch", and should convince the employer that you have what it takes to do the job. The idea here is to "tease" the reader and make them want to look further at your resume.

You can do this by saying "As you will note in my enclosed resume, I have.....". You should also emphasize particular skills or duties that are a part of this job description. If a recent graduate, you may wish to dedicate one paragraph to addressing academic qualifications, while dedicating the other paragraph to experience and skills. Your letter will be most effective if you incorporate specific knowledge of the organization and the position for which you are applying. It shows that you have done your homework and are truly interested in the position.

Follow-up Paragraph: This paragraph should be short and to the point. Indicate what steps you would like to happen next. (If you want an interview, ask for it!) There are two different approaches you might take. The **PASSIVE** approach puts responsibility on the employer to make the next move and you would wait for the employer to contact you. With the **ACTIVE** approach, you would offer to initiate further contact with the employer. You may indicate that you will call the employer on a specific date or in the near future in order to verify receipt of your letter and / or to arrange an appointment. Finally, remember to thank the employer for his time and considering you.

Sincerely,

Ima Gamecock

Enclosure: resume

COVER LETTER (Sample)

Kristi Jackson

kristi@juno.com

Home (864) 499-4949 School (803) 544-0000

March 9, 2004

Mr. U.R. Employer
Director, Personnel Department
Knick Knack, Incorporated
Columbia, South Carolina 29208

Dear Mr. Employer:

I am writing to express my sincere interest in entry-level management opportunities at Knick Knack, Incorporated. Currently, I am a senior at the University of South Carolina and will graduate in May of 2000 with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration degree.

As you will note in my resume, I have double-majored in both management and marketing and have developed strong skills in both areas over the past 4 years. I currently work for XYZ Corporation as a co-op student and assist both the Regional Marketing Director, as well as the Branch Manager of the Harbison area store in Columbia, SC. In the 3 years prior to this position, I also held several part time positions in customer service and sales. Finally, I have been actively involved on the USC campus by holding leadership positions in several organizations and contributing to the marketing efforts of numerous campus activities. My combined academic, extracurricular and work experiences have each enabled me to develop outstanding analytical, interpersonal, financial and leadership skills, which I am certain would be an asset to Knick Knack, Incorporated.

I plan to contact you in the next two weeks to confirm receipt of my resume and to discuss the possibility of meeting. I am excited about the opportunities that Knick Knack, Incorporated provides and feel confident that both my skills and personal traits will allow me to make an immediate and positive impact on your organization. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to speaking with you soon.

Sincerely,

Ima Gamecock

Enclosure: resume

CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME (Sample)

Kristi Jackson

kristi@juno.com

Home (864) 499-4949 School (803) 544-0000

Permanent Address

9274 W hisper Lane
Greenville, SC 29301

Current Address

USC PO Box 0000
Columbia, SC 29205

EDUCATION

University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC

Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, May 2000

- Minor: Spanish
- G PA: 3.2

Universidad de las Americas, Puebla, Mexico, Fall1997

- Resided with a Spanish speaking family for 4 months

SKILLS

Language: Fluent in Spanish & English, working knowledge of French

Computer: Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Power Point), SAS, SPSS

EXPERIENCE

Citizens Against Sexual Assault, Columbia, SC

Crisis Intervention and Victim Advocate, 1/98 -Present

- Provide hotline advocacy services to clients.
- Participate in community outreach and education programs.
- Completed 30 hour victim advocate volunteer training.

International Programs for Students, Columbia, SC

Peer Assistant, 8/98 -Present

- Serve as a mentor and resource for international students.
- Assisted with the coordination of USC's International Fair.

Department of Residence Life, USC, Columbia, SC

Resident Advisor, 8/98 -Present

- Organize social and educational programs for hall of 22 women.
- Explain and enforce residence hall and university policies.

Camp Wildwood, Kings Mountain, N C

Camp Counselor, Summers 1996 and 1997

- Supervised and disciplined girls ages 8 -14 in daily recreation, educational, and social events to groups with an average size of 30.
- Received certification in CPR and first aid techniques.

RESEARCH

University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC

Research Assistant, 8/98 -12/98

- Collaborated with a professor in research on the interpersonal development of children of single parent families.
- Presented findings at annual Carolina's Psychology Conference .

HONORS

Dean's List, National Dean's List, LIFE Scholarship recipient

REFERENCES

Choosing your references is an integral part of the job search process and can significantly affect your success in securing a job. There are many steps to making the most of your references:

- Choose references -Brainstorm a list of people who can speak highly of your past work performance, (job, classwork or research related). Ideally, your references should be those who were in a position to supervise you or rate your performance, such as a previous boss or professor who knows you and your work very well. In some cases a colleague can also provide a strong reference of your work performance, particularly if you worked on a team project together. Character references should be provided only if requested, or if you are limited in your choices. In general, you should provide the names of a minimum of 3 references, but no more than 5.
- Ask references -Contact those designated and ask if they will give you a positive reference. Never provide anyone's name to a potential employer as a reference without first doing so.
- Gather contact information -Once given permission, you need to make sure you have the proper spelling of their name, their company name, their official job title and the address and phone number at which they wish to be contacted. For your own use, you may also get their e-mail address.
- Prepare references -To help your references speak intelligently about your background and strengths you should provide them with a copy of your resume. They should also know what your goals are and the types of positions you are seeking. Finally, you may wish to coach them as to which skills you would most like them to emphasize so each can call attention to a different strength.
- Keep references informed -Notify your references about *each* position for which you apply so they might anticipate a call and prepare to "sell" you based on the specifics of each position.
- Thank references -Notify references when you accept a position and send a thank-you letter.

REFERENCE PAGE (Sample)

Kristi Jackson

kristi@juno.com

Home (864) 499-4949 School (803) 544-0000

REFERENCES

Mr. Thomas (Tom) Smith

Associate Vice President

Bank of Carolina

8981 Harden Street

Columbia, South Carolina 29205

(803) 252 -8888

Mrs. Susan Brown

Director of Residence Life

University of South Carolina

Columbia, South Carolina 29208

(803) 777 -0000

E-mail: sbrown@univscvm.csd.scarolina.edu

Dr. Phillip (Phil) A. Jones

Associate Professor

Department of Business Administration

University of South Carolina

Columbia, South Carolina 29208

(803) 777 -0001

E-mail: pajones@univscvm.csd.scarolina.edu

Mr. Frank Patterson

Summer Staff Coordinator

Camp Wakahatchie

P.O. Box 590

Cullowhee, NC 28746

(803) 367 -9862

accelerated	completed	enlarged	installed	prioritized
accepted	complied	enlisted	instituted	probed
accommodated	composed	enriched	instructed	processed
accomplished	computed	ensured	integrated	produced
accounted for	conceived	entertained	intensified	programmed
accumulated	conceptualized	envisioned	interacted	projected
achieved	conciliated	escalated	interfaced	promoted
acknowledged	conducted	escorted	interpreted	proofread
acquired	confirmed	established	intervened	proposed
acted	confronted	estimated	interviewed	protected
activated	connected	evaluated	introduced	proved
adapted	considered	examined	invented	provided
addressed	consolidated	exceeded	invested	publicized
adjusted	constructed	exchanged	investigated	published
administered	consulted	executed	judged	purchased
advanced	contracted	exhibited	launched	questioned
advertised	contrasted	expanded	learned	raised
advised	controlled	expedited	lectured	ran
affected	conversed	experienced	led	ranked
aided	conveyed	explained	listened	reached
amplified	convinced	explored	located	read
analyzed	cooperated	expressed	logged	realized
answered	coordinated	extended	made	received
anticipated	corresponded	extracted	maintained	recognized
applied	counseled	extrapolated	managed	recommended
appointed	crafted	fabricated	manipulated	reconciled
appraised	created	facilitated	marketed	recorded
appreciated	critiqued	familiarized	matched	recruited
approached	decided	fashioned	maximized	rectified
approved	decorated	followed	mediated	redesigned
arbitrated	decreased	followed	mentored	reduced
arbitrated	defined	through	merchandised	refereed
archived	delegated	forecasted	met	referred
arranged	delivered	formalized	minimized	rehabilitated
assembled	demonstrated	formed	moderated	reinforced
asserted	described	formulated	modernized	related
assessed	designed	fortified	modified	relieved
assigned	detailed	fostered	molded	remodeled
assisted	detected	found	monitored	rendered
attained	determined	founded	motivated	renewed
attended	developed	funded	multiplied	repaired
attracted	devised	funneled	negotiated	reported
audited	diagnosed	furnished	nominated	represented
augmented	directed	furthered	observed	rescued
augmented	discharged	gained	obtained	researched
authored	dispatched	gathered	operated	reserved
authorized	dispensed	generated	optimized	resolved
backed	displayed	governed	orchestrated	responded
balanced	disproved	grouped	organized	retrieved
boosted	dissected	guided	originated	revamped
briefed	distinguished	handled	overhauled	reviewed
broadened	distributed	hired	oversaw	revised
budgeted	drafted	honored	participated	revitalized
built	drew up	identified	perceived	scanned
calculated	earned	illustrated	performed	scheduled
capitalized	eased	impacted	persisted	screened
cataloged	edited	implemented	persuaded	scrutinized
categorized	educated	improved	piloted	searched
chaired	effected	improvised	pioneered	secured
channeled	elected	inaugurated	planned	selected
charted	eliminated	increased	pointed	served
clarified	empowered	indexed	polled	set in motion
classified	enabled	influenced	positioned	settled
coached	encouraged	informed	predicted	shaped
collaborated	endured	informed	prepared	situated
collected	energized	initiated	presented	sketched
commanded	enforced	innovated	preserved	sold
communicated	engineered	inspected	presided	solved
compared	enhanced	inspired	printed	sorted

specialized
specified
spoke
sponsored
staffed
standardized
steered
steered
stimulated
straightened

streamlined
strengthened
structured
studied
subsidized
substantiated
summarized
supervised
supplemented
supplied
supported

surpassed
surveyed
swayed
synchronized
synthesized
systematized
tabulated
talked
targeted
taught
tested

took
trained
transacted
transformed
translated
transmitted
traveled
treated
understood
updated
upgraded

upheld
used
utilized
validated
valued
volunteered
won
worked
wrote