

Resume Basics

What is a resume?

A resume is a key ingredient in organizing your job search. It is a necessary component, whether you are seeking to further your career inside or outside of your current organization. An up-to-date resume serves you in the following ways.

- It is a tease, a marketing piece.
- It is a door opener.
- It is a short document - crisp and flattering.
- It meets the initial requirements of prospective employers to consider your candidacy.

What is the purpose of a resume?

Your resume is likely to serve as the vehicle through which you land an interview. And, in that respect it also serves the following functions.

- It is your personal sales brochure.
- It is your calling card.
- It provides an overview of your skills, abilities and professional experience.
- It is a reminder that you leave behind.
- It becomes an outline and an agenda for informational meetings and interviews.

What should the length of your resume be?

- One to two pages.
- Entry-level candidate or recent college graduate, minimal experience - one page.
- A professional with five to seven years of experience in the same focus area as their credentials - two pages.
- A candidate with publications or patents – longer, differently formatted document.

The Internet has significantly impacted the entire job application process and has definitely affected the accessibility, the look and format of the standard resume. In our click-and-send world, prospective employers have increasingly demanded shorter and more succinct documents. Even candidates with double digit years of experience and high credentials are encouraged to limit the length of their resumes to one page, certainly not to exceed two pages.

What about the resume format and font size?

- Limit document "controls."
- Use tabs, bold and underline.
- Ten to 12 point font, plain type style. Larger font size is equal to "screaming."
- Black or dark grey font color.
- Hard copies: linen paper, white or beige in color.

Certainly there are exceptions, such as graphic arts or advertising professionals; however, most prospective employers want to see a standard format, professional document. Not only do prospective employers, recruiters and headhunters prefer this; but, you will be well-served to maintain a plain format for the purpose of posting your resume on job boards and pasting it on websites. Although your document can look perfect on your computer screen, once you click and send its appearance is left to the whims of the system of the recipient. Tables and controls can disappear into cyberspace leaving the recipient to wonder just how elementary your computer skills are.

What length of time (or service) should your resume cover?

- Showcase the most recent 10-15 years.
- If you have more experience, consider creating a “Related Experience” section using titles or broad categories of work.

This is a tricky question because of the implication of age of the candidate --- too youthful or too senior --- while also desiring to avoid any gaps in employment. In general it is recommended to showcase the most recent 10 to 15 years. To "showcase" is to develop accomplishment statements as fully as possible. If the candidate has considerably more experience than 15 years an option is to use a heading, such as "related experience" and list titles rather than each separate company and title.

Types of Resumes: Chronological or functional – which will it be? CHRONOLOGICAL

- Most frequently used and accepted.
- Reverse chronological order.
- Provides job titles, dates and areas of responsibility.
- Tied to companies and length of service. FUNCTIONAL

- Emphasizes qualifications and competencies.
- Less emphasis on employers/dates.
- Includes abbreviated work history.
- Used when changing functional areas or fields.

The chronological resume is still preferred by most employers; and, candidates are usually required to provide career information in a chronological format when completing most job applications. However, when changing career directions, or, subsequent to earning a new credential, it may be that the functional resume is the best choice. Nonetheless, candidates should be prepared to present chronological information, too.

What is the most important part of the resume?

Certainly, your name and contact information are important; however, the feature that really sells a candidate is the list of accomplishment statements under each job title. Accomplishment statements are just that --- they describe accomplishments, benefits, results, problems solved, and achievements made. They are not mere lists of tasks and responsibilities. Each bulleted accomplishment statement should begin with an action word, should be one to three lines long, and should include elements of quality and quantity as often as possible.

- Accomplishment statements enable the prospective employer to match you to individual position descriptions.
- Develop accomplishment statements that describe situations, obstacles overcome, actions taken and results (benefits) gained.

Are you comfortable writing about your accomplishments?

Do any of these words describe your accomplishments?

Editing
 Facilitating
 Interviewing
 Managing conflict
 Negotiating
 Assessing performance
 Motivating
 Cataloging
 Reporting
 Scheduling
 Budgeting
 Fund raising
 Analyzing data
 Managing information
 Setting standards
 Administering
 Projecting
 Restructuring
 Formulating
 Instructing
 Managing projects
 Designing

Writing proposals

Managing client relations

Accomplishment Statement Samples:

- Developed a human resource information system and implemented a payroll conversion that reduced time and exceeded industry compliance standards.
- Restructured department reducing the budget by \$30 million.
- Managed, scheduled and trained a staff of 15 for a 24-hour on-call-program, determining staff development needs, training, coaching and technical expertise.
- Installed disciplines and customer satisfaction measurements including wait-time tracking, call-backs and dropped calls. Created an appointment system and varied work hours to accommodate clients.
- Resolved credit extension problems. Set up policies and procedures that ensured regulatory compliance and standardization of reporting to federal and state agencies.
- Experienced in all aspects of commercial banking administration, operations, loans, asset management, investments and capital acquisition.

Always test your accomplishment statements. For your statement to be viable, the reader must be able to discern if things were better or worse after you took your actions.

It is very beneficial to use measurements in accomplishment statements: time, money, quality, standards, percentages, number of people, etc.

What are the parts of a resume?HEADER

NAME

Mailing Address

City, State, Zip code

Phone number(s)

E-mail address

Professional Objective: IF APPROPRIATE

Summary of Skills & written in fragments, phrases, or bullets, 3 to 5 lines. Professional Experience (employment history) Most Recent Company, City, State

Your Title

Scope of the job (optional)

Accomplishment statements

Accomplishment statements

years of service

Next Most Recent Company, City, State

Your Title

Scope of the job (optional)

Accomplishment statements

Accomplishment statements

years of service

Next Most Recent Company, City, State

Your Title

Scope of the job (optional)

Accomplishment statements

Accomplishment statements

years of serviceEducation

Degree (or course of study), College/University, City/State

Degree (or course of study), College/University, City/State

Do not list years

GPA, recent grads

Do indicate honors

Professional Development and Training

List additional training or courses relevant to job objectives.

Do not list years

Memberships

Include memberships and offices held in professional associations,

boards, and community activities – only if they support the current job objective.

Only list years you held office

Computer Skills

List names of software(s) mastered, if relevant to future positions.

Languages, Licenses, Certifications, Military experience

List only when they are relevant to future positions

How should the summary of skills be written?

Your resume is a significant communications vehicle; and, it should begin with a brief summary of skills, or summary of qualifications. It should highlight your unique qualifications and help the reader understand how you will contribute to their organization.

- Don't let your resume collect dust.
- Update it as your career changes.
- Learn from interviews and modify it so that it serves you best.

What about a reference list?

Create a separate reference list. The information may be requested in the formal application process or interview. Do not include a separate reference list the first time your resume is sent to a company or to respond to an advertisement.

Create your reference list so that your relationship to the reference is stated. Ask permission of your references. Coach and guide your references to align their remarks to the position you are seeking. Ask your references to notify you when they have been contacted. Network with your references and grow those relationships.

Who should be included on your reference list? Three to six names is adequate.

- People with whom you have worked and who have worked for you.
- Colleagues with whom you have worked (peers).
- People you have worked with on task forces, teams, projects, vendors, suppliers, clients.
- People in professional associations.

Are cover letters recommended?

- Yes
- Never send your resume out naked and alone without a cover letter.
- Look for an article on cover letters on [reset3.com](http://www.reset3.com) .