

RESUME WRITING

Open the Door to Opportunity!

Primary Purpose

- ✓ A resume will get youan interview!
- ✓ A resume is a marketing piece that presents you in the best possible light.
- ✓ It's not an application

A well-designed resume does a number of things:

- Paints a positive and factual picture of YOU.
- Sets a positive tone for the interview.
- Guides the interviewer in what to ask.
- Influences others who approve the hiring.

Ten Steps to a Good Resume

- Choose a job target (also called a “job objective”). An actual **job title** works best.
- Find out what skills, knowledge, and experience are needed to do that target job.
- Make a list of your 3 or 4 strongest skills, abilities, knowledge that make you a good candidate for that target job.
- For each key skill, think of several accomplishments from your past work history that illustrate that skill.
- Describe each accomplishment in a simple action statement that emphasizes results

Steps continued

- Make a list of the primary jobs you've held in chronological order. Include unpaid work that fills a gap.
- Make a list of your training and education that is related to the new job you want.
- Choose a resume format that fits your situation—either chronological or functional.
- Arrange your action statements on your resume according to the format you chose.
- Summarize your key points at or near the top of your resume in about five short lines.

Step 1: Choose a job target

FOCUS: The people who have the hardest time finding a job are often the ones who insist on writing a “generic” resume that lists everything they ever did. They HOPE some employer will figure out what job will fit them....but employers won't do that; they're looking for people who know what they want.

Step 2: Find out what skills and experience are needed

- Find that information in job ads, in employer's job descriptions, or from someone working in that field.
- Informational interviewing is one of the BEST ways to find out exactly what skills the job requires. Visit someone who does that kind of work and ask them to tell you about it.

Step 3: List your strongest skills

Examples taken from resumes:

Target job: Customer Service representative

Relevant skills: verbal skills

problem solving skills

computer skills

customer care skills

Target job: Department Manager

Relevant Skills: Personnel Management

Budgeting/Financial Planning

Supervision and Training

Step 4: Accomplishments

Examples taken from resumes:

Job Objective: Electronic Sales Representative

Direct Sales and Product Demonstration

- Set sales record for 3 consecutive months.
- Exceeded quotas and increased sales in largest territory

Job Objective: Merchandising display

Display

- Set up effective retail displays of beverages in supermarkets and package stores
- Inventoried and reordered display materials

Step 5: Write action statements

- Think about what problem existed in your workplace.
- What action did you take to resolve the problem?
- What were the beneficial results of your action?

Examples of accomplishments written as action statements

- Increased account base by 50% at two locations.
- Developed friendly, supportive relationships with coffee shop customers, building a loyal base of repeat customers.
- Advised callers on how to make connections.
- Designed and presented hour-long weekly orientation program; doubled membership
- Assembled materials and reports.
- Developed greatly improved filing system saving time.
- Transformed a disorganized warehouse into a smooth-running organization; saved \$250,000 in recovered stock.

Step 6: List past jobs

- List your most recent job first, then your earlier jobs.
- Include ALL jobs IF you are young and have very little work experience
- Include ALL jobs that show experience related to your job objective
- Include unpaid work if it helps to prove you have skills and experience or it fills in a gap.
- Omit jobs that were very brief UNLESS they are needed to show how you developed your skills—or to fill in a skimpy work history.
- Round all employment dates to years.

Step 6 continued

- Eliminate the earliest jobs; go back only 10-15 years
- If you did roughly the same kind of odd job repeatedly, you could create your own job title and call yourself self-employed.
- Examples:

Household Repairman (self-employed) Atlanta, 1994-present
Customer references available.

Child Care (self-employed) Dallas, 1991-present.
Customer references available on request.

Step 6 continued:

- If you've worked with a lot of staffing services, here's how to handle that gracefully. List the agency as the employer and pick one job title that covers most of the temporary work. Then list the specific assignments, accomplishments, and the experience gained.

Administrative Assistant/Secretary, Staffing Solutions, Marietta, 1995-2000

- Typed business correspondence and routed calls for 6 busy offices
- Cleaned up a backlog of past due accounts receivable for Martinson Dry Cleaning.
- Conducted accurate year-end inventory for Design Studio

Step 6 continued

- If you are CURRENTLY unemployed, it would help a LOT to find an immediate short-term opportunity to get some unpaid volunteer work experience, preferably in your line of work, and put that on your resume now. This will look better than being unemployed. Don't use the word "volunteer". Rename the category "Work History".

Step 6 continued

- If you have gaps in your work experience, tell what you WERE doing as gracefully as possible rather than leave a gap.
- Examples:
 - 1993-95 Full-time parent
 - 1992-94 Maternity leave and family management
 - 1995-97 Full time student

Step 7 List training and education

- Omit high school if you have academic credentials from college.
- Mention your college work even if you don't plan to get a degree.
- Examples:

Accounting Major, Chattahoochee Technical College, 1998-99

Business classes, 1997, Chattahoochee Technical College

Step 7 continued

- Omit this section IF you have no training, no college experience, and no courses to list that are in any way related to your new job goal.
- If you completed a training class, list the certificate you earned.
- If you only completed part of the training, list every course you took that is directly related to your current job target.

Step 8: Choose a format

- Choose chronological if you're staying in the same field and you have an unbroken employment history
- Chronological means your work experience is arranged in order by dates of the jobs you've held with the most recent first. This one places more emphasis on your **JOB TITLES**

Step 8 continued

- Functional means your work experience is described by emphasizing the SKILLS involved. Put the descriptive details into skill-group paragraphs.

Example:

RELEVANT SKILL #1

-something I did using that skill

-something I did using that skill

RELEVANT SKILL #2

-something I did using that skill

-something I did using that skill

Job Title, Company, City, State, dates

Job Title, Company, City, State, dates

Step 9: Arrange your action statements

- If you chose a chronological format, place each action statement under the appropriate job title where the action happened.
- If you chose a functional format, place each action statement under a skill category.

Step 10: Summarize your key points at the top

- Keep each summary statement to one line. Include key points that a new employer will need to know and those that will make you look attractive and qualified for the new job.
- Examples:
 - How much experience in this line of work
 - Training or education in this line of work
 - A special accomplishment or recognition
 - Your key skills, talents, special knowledge
 - Something about your attitude or work ethics

Reminders

- Proofread for grammar and punctuation.
- Check the spelling.
- Get feedback from someone in-the-know.

References

- Parker, Yana **Damn Good Resume Guide**, Ten Speed Press, Berkeley, CA
- Parker, Yana **The Resume Catalog: 200 Damn Good Examples**, Ten Speed Press, Berkeley, CA