



WHAT IS A RESUME?

A resume is a marketing document. It informs potential employers what you are bringing to the table. A resume is succinct and objective. The recipient learns of transferable skills that their organization can use to meet their needs. Descriptions of skill sets focus on achievement rather than on subjective opinion. Frequent dusting of measurable achievements in dollars, percentages, and amounts help the reader to understand that you can make some difference to their business as well. The objective of a resume is to interest the reader and to be invited for an interview.

What is The Purpose of a Resume?

A good resume (in combination with a cover letter) will provide you with an interview. The employer will select applicants on the basis of how well their skills match up with the job requirements. Sometimes, the difference between getting an interview and being placed in the “no” pile is a well put-together resume.

STYLES OF RESUMES

Chronological: List your employment in reverse chronological order. Give position held, employer, and dates of employment. Describe each position according to job duties: list tasks performed, emphasizing those requiring the highest level of skill, responsibility and judgment. Begin each phrase with action verbs (see page 3). Quantify and qualify your accomplishments, i.e. “Surpassed sales quota by 15%”, trained and supervised 5 employees”, maintained average caseload of 85”.

Functional: Group your work accomplishments, responsibilities, and duties into 2 to 5 categories according to functional skill areas such as “Teaching and Training”, “Managerial Skills”, or “Sales”. Choose your skill headings according to your job objective and briefly describe, using action statements, the work you did in each of the broad categories you identify. For example, if you did financial analysis and planning in your previous positions, describe these responsibilities under the heading “Financial Planning” and treat your experience in this area as one complete unit.

Combined: Both functional and chronological features appear in a combined resume. Functional skills should be highlighted at the top. Work experience should be described briefly in reverse chronological order.

Professional Career Services (PCS) Suggested Format

To help make a solid first impression, Professional Career Services (PCS) has created a resume format it recommends for students and alumni to use. This format is based on continued feedback from recruiters and our staff’s collective experience in corporations, non-profits, and higher education organizations based in the U.S.

Professional Career Services’ recommended format has a simple font, no fancy graphics, lines or italics. Since many organizations are now using computerized Resume Management Systems, it is important that your resume be “scannable.” This means when your resume is received, it is scanned immediately into an electronic database before it is read by anyone.



Since these systems can’t read fancy fonts, graphics or other aesthetic features, simplicity will ensure when your resume is scanned into the system and printed, it will appear the way you intend both in systems and for online submissions.

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There are two different formats that PCS suggests. One resume is “selling your work experience first” and the second is selling your education first. The idea is to showcase your strongest selling points first. Whichever format you choose, you want to best reflect your skills and experience. Remember to work on your format first (easiest to do), and then focus on your content. Each format contains the following sections:

Header: your name and contact information

Profile: a 3-4 sentence introduction at the top to draw the reader in and propel him/her to read further.

Professional Experience: details the work experience you have relevant to the position you’re applying for.

Education: details the formal education you have had leading to a degree or as part of a degree program.

Professional Development: shows how you have continued to develop yourself professionally and includes detail on your training, certifications, technology skills, volunteer work and language skills.

HEADER

Your header contains your name and contact information so that organizations can identify and contact you. When completing this section, keep in mind:

- Be sure your name stands out, and if you have a nickname you normally go by, include it in parentheses
- Include one or two phone numbers where you can be easily reached (home and cell are best) and be 100% sure the contact information is correct; ensure the voicemail messages on those numbers are professional and simple (i.e., no humor, music or children’s voices)
- Use an email address that is professional
- Include certifications or degrees if common to do so in your field (i.e., including J.D. after your name is common if you have a law degree, including MA or MBA is not)

Example Header

Elizabeth (Beth) R. Johnson
1215 Dogwood Trail • Bethesda, MD 11111
(301) 555-1111 (h) • (301) 555-2222 (c) • beth_johnson204@domainname.com

PROFILE

Your profile is designed to draw the reader in and to give an overview of who you are, what you bring to the table and what you are looking for. When completing this section keep in mind:

- It should be 3-4 lines at the top of your resume
- It should not include first person (“I”) or third person (“Ms. Johnson”)
- It should be supported by your content (i.e., if you claim to have a certain skill in your profile, be sure to include specific examples of that skill in your Professional Experience section)

Example Profile

MBA candidate and marketing manager with successful track record of entrepreneurial start-ups and project management, P&L responsibility, the ability to motivate and manage people, and strong, hands-on technical skills in web-based marketing. Highly motivated and organized professional seeking a marketing management position in a for-profit company.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

The Professional Experience section is designed to showcase elements of your work history that are the most relevant to the audience receiving your resume. When completing this section keep in mind:

- Don't include everything you did at every job—pick and choose relevant bullets based on your audience
- For each employer, be sure you list each position beginning with the most recent first—it shows progression and promotion
- Bullet point your experience—no one wants to read long paragraphs and don't use periods at the end of bullets—bullets are meant for statements—use dashes, colons or semi-colons to connect thoughts
- Tense: be sure to use correct tense; current positions should have present tense action words (i.e., “Manage \$1.2 million budget” Past positions should use past tense (i.e., “Managed ...”)
- Don't include orphans (lines with one or two words); the white space can be distracting

Example listing in Professional Experience:

HUMAN RESOURCES CONSULTANT

2000-2003

Discovery Communications, Bethesda, MD

- Bullet 1
- Bullet 2

EDUCATION

The Education section is designed to showcase degrees or coursework you have completed at degree-granting institutions. When completing this section keep in mind:

- Be formal--don't write sentences (i.e., MA, Real Estate and not “received MA in real estate”)
- List the degrees first—they are always more important than where you got them (however, be sure to list name of university or college below the degree as it should be included)
- If you choose to include the city and state, list after the institution
- Include minor, thesis, and specific coursework if important to the audience reading your resume
- Put projected graduation date if degree completion is more than a semester away (i.e., Expected May 2005)
- Right justify all graduation dates with month and year
- While GPA isn't crucial to include, graduate GPA 3.6 or higher, undergraduate GPA 3.0 or higher

Example Education Section

MS, Organization Development and Human Resources, GPA 3.7/4.0

May 2005

Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD

- Coursework:
- Projects:

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Professional Development section is designed to showcase all of the additional work and effort you have undertaken to develop yourself professionally. When completing this section keep in mind:

- Use formal titles of software and be sure to spell correctly
- Be sure to include leadership roles if you have them (i.e., Vice-President, Baltimore Chamber)
- Volunteer activity is optional; include it if it shows community involvement or is relevant to your area of expertise (i.e., finance analyst who is also treasurer of a local community group)

Example listing in Professional Development

Technology Skills: Formal training in: XHTML, HTML, ASP, JavaScript, SQL, Dreamweaver, Flash and Photoshop; proficient in all Microsoft Office programs, advanced training courses in PowerPoint and Excel

Awards: ABC, Inc. Customer Service Excellence Award – 2001 and 2003

Associations: American Marketing Association, Public Relations

Volunteer: Webmaster – Boy Scout Troop #535 of Eastern Maryland