Resumé Writing

Your resumé is a marketing tool that provides a summary of your knowledge, achievements, skills, and experience. It is important that you record and maintain information that can be used as a basis for your resumé and provide employers evidence of your education, community and campus involvement, experiences skills, and professional interests.

Before Writing:

- **Learn about the position or career field in which you have an interest.** Talk to people who are in the position. Learn about the knowledge, skills, experience and personal characterics necessary to perform the job well.

- **Read job descriptions.** Highlight the knowledge, skills, characteristics, and experience that are required or preferred.

- **Research the organization.** Review the organization's website and read recent news and press releases to become current on the organization's priorities.

- **Know what you have to offer.** You can't present the best of yourself until you have a handle on your attributes. How have you put your education to work? What value have you brought to a class project, student organization, and/or employer?

- **Identify your skills.** Think about tasks or projects for which you were responsible. What skills did you use? Of the skills used, which gave you the most satisfaction?

- **Create a list of accomplishments.** Review your experiences in and out of the classroom. Think about class assign-ments, projects, group or team activities, volunteer experiences, and jobs. What have you done that would make you an asset to an employer? Quantify your results, if possible.

Content and Design:

Keywords. Employers identify keywords, often including industry jargon, that they think rep-resent essential qualifications necessary for high performance in a given position. By using these keywords, the employer may spend more time reviewing your resume.

Grammar. Your words speak for you. Keep your phrases lean and clean. Readers won't take time to decipher complex sentences. Use words that everyone can understand and that relate to the job. Use your own voice, but keep the tone professional. Don't use abbreviations; they are informal and not universal.

Format. Most recruiters don't have time to search through a resumé. If information is not easy to spot, the resumé will be ignored.

Paper. Use a quality paper with rag content of 25 percent and a watermark (a faint image in-grained in the paper). Restrict the color of your paper to white, off-white, or eggshell. Paper size should be 8.5 inches by 11 inches.

Length. Although a candidate with little experience can probably get their text on one page, it is not a crime to have a two-page resumé. The most important consideration is how relevant the content is to your targeted job.

Margins/Spacing. Margins should be at least 1/2" on all four sides. Don't cram your infor-mation into too little space. An overcrowded page will almost guarantee that it will not be read.

Fonts. Stick to one font for your resumé. Arial, Helvetica, and Univers are standard, easy-to-read, fonts. The body should be 10- to 12-points in size.

Electronic Resumes

An electronic resumé may be:

- Faxed
- Sent as an e-mail attachment
- Incorporated into the body of an e-mail message
- Posted on commercial website, such as College Central Network
- Submitted through an organization's website

However, computers read resumés differently than people do. Take the appropriate steps to ensure that you are ready to submit an electronic resumé in case an employer requests one, and be sure it can be easily retrieved and viewed.

- **If you're not sure, ask.** Call or e-mail the employer's human resource department if you are not sure what electronic format the organization prefers.

- **Keep it simple**. To maximize the computer's ability to read your resume, follow this motto: The simpler, the better!

- **Use keywords to define your education, skills, and experience.** In a database search, nouns are targeted. Include keywords to increase your chances of getting a "hit." A "hit" is when one of the words programmed in a computer search matches a word on your resumé. Use industry jargon and familiar, standard words that everyone in your field knows.

- **Use the correct paper.** Use plain, white, 8.5-inch x 11-inch paper. Don't use colored, speckled, or marbled paper. Print on one side only. Avoid staples or folds.

- **Keep it clean.** Use standard fonts, such as Helvetica, Univers, or Arial, in 10 to 14 points. Avoid decorative, uncommon, or fussy typefaces since they may become a muddy blob when sent electronically. Capital and boldface letters are okay. Avoid italics, underlining, or script. Don't use horizontal or vertical lines on the page.

- **Use lots of white space.** Leave plenty of white space around each section so it is easy to see where one section has ended and another has begun.

- **Save your resumé in several formats.** To cover all bases, create multiple versions of your resumé. First, create your resumé in a common word-processing program, such as MS Word, and save it as a .doc file. Second, convert your resumé into a plain text (ASCII) file by opening your original resumé, making a copy of the file, and saving the copy as a .txt (text only) document. Most computers in the world can understand plain text. Finally, if you have Adobe Acrobat, save your document as a .pdf file. Now you have three formats from which to choose.

- **Make a trial run.** You can avoid problems in e-mailing your resumé to an employer by sending it to yourself and to a friend first. Test your e-mailing ability in two ways: 1) send your resumé as an attachment and 2) cut and paste it into the body of an e-mail message.

- **Provide an original.** Only fax an original version because a photocopy reduces the quality. Avoid smeared ink. Make sure that there is good definition between the type and the paper.

- **Follow up.** Call the employer to be assured that your

Common Resumé Information

Section	Basic Information to Include	Additional Comments
Contact Information	• Your name (all capital letters and bold) • Permanent address and phone number • Local (college) address and phone number, if appropriate • E-mail address that you regularly check • Cell phone number, if used • Personal web page, if content is appropriate for employers	• Use only a professional-sounding recorded message on your answering machine • Use a professional e-mail address (not "partygirl@yahoo.com")
Education	• Name of university, city, state, degree, major, minor, graduation date (month/year) • Write out "Clarion University of Pennsylvania" • Write out degree (ex. Bachelor of Science in Business Administration) • Include information about any college/university from which you transferred	• List QPA if it is a strength (over 3.0 overall and in major) • List most recent institution first • Omit high school if you have completed more than two years of college (unless you have highly impressive career-relevant honors or activities)
Professional Development	• Career-related seminars, workshops, or conferences	• Include under "Education" section if you only have one or two items
Career-Related Experience	• Internships, field experiences, summer jobs, or volunteer work relevant to career goal • Include job title, employer, city, state, and dates (month/year) • List responsibilities, tasks, accomplishments, or special projects using a bulleted list	• List most recent experience first; work in chronological order • Use an action verb to start each descriptive phrase (no sentences) • Highlight tasks, skills, and accomplishments • Use numbers, data, dollar amounts, or percentages to quantify job duties and results • Did you train, create, revise, improve, design, increase, or save? • Include awards, recognitions, promotions, raises, or training
Honors/Awards	• Honor societies, scholarships, and Dean's List • List in order of importance • Include dates, such as the semester or academic year received; or number of semesters for Dean's List	• Include a description of an organization that may be unknown (e.g., Beta Beta Beta – honorary biology)
Campus Activities	• List in order of importance; professional activities first • List leadership positions and dates	• Include a description of an organization that may be unknown (e.g., NSSLHA – National Student Speech Language Hearing Association)
Community Involvement/ Volunteer Activities	• List organizations or activities, offices held, contributions, special projects, and accomplishments	• If experience is political or religious, you may want to use generic descriptions (e.g., youth leader for church, volunteer for political candidate)

Section	Basic Information to Include	Additional Comments
Work Experience/ Work History	• Summer jobs, part-time jobs, and other work experiences not directly related to your career goal • Include job title, employer, city, state, and dates (month/year) • Briefly describe job duties using a bulleted list	• List most recent experience first; work in reverse chronological order • Use an action verb to start each descriptive phrase (no sentences) • Highlight tasks, skills, and accomplishments • Use numbers, data, dollar amounts, or percentages to quantify job duties and results

The following sections may be included on your resumé if they are appropriate for your targeted position or career area

Section	Basic Information to Include	Additional Comments
Highlights Statement/ Summary of Qualifications	• Number of years of experience (paid or unpaid) pertinent to targeted position • Education or training relevant to targeted position • Areas of specialized proficiency • Achievements directly related to targeted position • Traits reinforcing your candidacy for position	• A thumbnail sketch (3-5 points) that summarize your best skills and other competencies. Focuses on areas of special relevance to your targeted position or career field • Employers can readily see how your qualifications match the position's requirements • Include knowledge, skills, experience, accomplishments, or characteristics valued in the position • This section is usually listed after contact information
Research/ Publications/ Presentations	• Research projects • Published articles or papers • Presentations at professional conferences; workshops presented	• Include technology used for research, such as special equipment or software; lab techniques
Travel	• Include if your career interest involves travel or knowledge of other cultures	• List countries or cities visited • Include foreign study or semester/ year abroad
Languages	• List foreign language skills	• Include competency level (ex. Read and write in French, conversational in Spanish)
Computer/Technical Skills	• Technical proficiency • Software, programming, and operating systems • Office skills • Lab equipment and techniques	• Can be a separate section if skills are extensive, especially CS, IS, and science majors

List of Verbs

Review the following list if you are having difficulty in choosing a verb to convey your tasks, skills, job responsibilities, or accomplishments.

Clerical/Office Skills

administer
approve
arrange
catalogue
classify
compile
implement
index
inspect
monitor
opeate
organize
prepare
process
purchase
record
retrieve
screen
specify
tabulate

Communication Skills

address
author
communicate
correspond
critique
disseminate
draft
edit
exhibit
influence
inform
interact
interpret
interview
lecture
mediate
moderate
negotiate
outline
persuade
present
proofread
publicize
publish
reconcile
recruit

report
review
speak
summarize
translate
write

Creative Skills

act
compose
conceptualize
create
customize
design
develop
direct
establish
found
illustrate
improvise
initiate
inspire
invent
originate
perform
play
shape
sing
vocalize

Financial/ Mathematical Skills

acquire
adjust
administer
allocate
analyze
apply
appraise
appropriate
audit
balance
budget
buy
calculate
compute
cut
decrease

disburse
dispense
eliminate
finance
forecast
fund
gain
generate
increase
invest
maintain
project
purchase
reconcile
reduce
save
secure
supplement
tabulate
tally

Customer Service/ Helping Skills

advise
aid
assist
clarify
coach
counsel
encourage
facilitate
guide
help
listen
mentor
minister
motivate
nourish
nurse
nurture
observe
refer
rehabilitate
serve
support
treat

Leadership Skills

appoint
arrange
chair
coordinate
delegate
develop
direct
enlist
found
govern
lead
organize
oversee
plan
prioritize
propose
review
schedule
spearhead

Management/ Administrative skills

administer
analyze
assign
consolidate
direct
evaluate
manage
plan
prioritize
produce
oversee
recommend
review
schedule
set goals
solve
supervise
train

Research Skills

chart
clarify
collect
compile
critique
detect
diagnose
discover
evaluate
examine
experiment
extract
formulate
identify
inspect
interpret
interview
investigate
measure
organize
research
review
summarize
survey
systematize
test

Sales/Marketing Skills

advertise
improve
increase
launch
market
merchandise
negotiate
obtain
order
process
promote
purchase
research
sell
supply

Teaching Skills

adapt
advise
assess
coach
communicate
coordinate
demonstrate
develop
educate
enable
encourage
evaluate
explain
facilitate
guide
inform
instruct
persuade
present
stimulate
train
tutor

Teamwork Skills

associate
affiliate
assist
assemble
collaborate
cooperate
confer
participate
partner
persuade
relate
support

Technical Skills

analyze
assemble
build
calculate
compile
compute
design
detect
develop
devise
draft
engineer
fabricate
install
integrate
interface
launch
maintain
operate
overhaul
prepare
process
program
remodel
repair
restore
solve
train
troubleshoot
upgrade
write

To Describe Accomplish-ments

accomplish
achieve
attain
augment
expand
improve
initiate
produce
reduce
resolve
restore
save
strengthen

Resumé Checklist

The following checklist has been designed to assist you in evaluating your resumé. It was developed as a result of thousands of resumé reviews by Career Services staff, feedback from a variety of employers regarding their selection criteria, and input from a wide range of professionals.

Overall Appearance – Does the appearance promote a positive first impression?

- Is one page in length (two pages maximum)
- Includes your name and "Page 2" in the upper right hand corner (if you have a second page)
- Is inviting and easy to read; not too much information
- Headings stand out from the text; are capitalized and bolded
- Has adequate margins, preferably one-inch margins
- Incorporates enough white space between sections to facilitate skimming
- Includes the most important categories at the beginning; categories are organized in order of importance
- Is printed on high quality (20 lb. white or ivory) bond paper
- Font size is between 10 and 12 points
- Excludes pictures or graphics

Marketing Focus – Does the content focus on the employer's needs?

- Has a "theme" that indicates what you want to do and proves you have the qualifications to do the work
- Begins with a "Summary of Qualifications" or "Qualifications/Skills" profile for individuals who have substantial experience (or an Education section if you're a new graduate with no experience)
- Speaks to the requirements of the targeted position
- Includes knowledge, achievements, skills, and experiences that demonstrate you have the ability to perform the job duties
- Cites at least one achievement for each skill that you mention
- Uses "industry" jargon where appropriate, but translates acronyms, technical jargon, or military lingo into easy-to-understand English
- Doesn't list personal information that isn't related to the job you seek, such as marital status, number of children, or height

Writing Style

- Omits personal pronouns such as "I" and "my"
- Omits articles (the, a, an)
- Keeps phrases lean and clean; uses brief and succinct language; no unnecessary words
- Is written in your own voice; doesn't use words that you would not normally use
- Eliminates abbreviations that are not universal (ex. Use *Internet* instead of *Net*)
- Is free of all grammatical, spelling, punctuation, usage, and typographical errors
- Uses short phrases for descriptions; no complete sentences
- Begins phrases describing job responsibilities with powerful action verbs
- Verb tense is consistent (describe current jobs in present tense; past jobs in past tense)

Proofreading

- Has been read aloud line by line using a ruler
- Has been read backward, from the bottom up
- Has been spell-checked by the computer
- Has been proofread by at least three people
- Has received feedback from people in your targeted career field