

RESUME WRITING

Resume writing is career marketing. It is understanding that you have a product to sell (yourself) and determining how to best merchandise that product to the right audience. Your challenge is to create a top-flight marketing communication – a powerful resume that will open doors, get interviews and help you land the job you want. Your task is to identify the skills, qualifications, experiences and achievements you possess that are most relevant and supportive of your job search. In one page, you want to paint a picture of yourself that will generate interest leading to an interview. The purpose of the resume is to get an interview – resumes alone do not get jobs.

You should think of your resume as a flexible living document. That means that as you apply for positions, you will change elements of your resume often to suit the job or employer you are targeting. Save your resume in several different places to safeguard against its being lost if something should happen to your computer.

Action Verbs

Good resumes are lively documents that reflect the active nature of the work you've done and will do for your future employer. Here's a list you can use when writing your resume to avoid lackluster descriptions that are easily forgotten.

Accomplish	Detect	Honor	Plan
Achieve	Determine	Identify	Position
Acquire	Devise	Illustrate	Prepare
Adapt	Direct	Implement	Present
Advance	Discover	Improve	Propose
Advise	Display	Increase	Publicize
Advocate	Diversity	Initiate	Qualify
Analyze	Document	Innovate	Recognize
Apply	Draft	Install	Recommended
Arrange	Drive	Institute	Reconciled
Ascertain	Earn	Integrate	Redesigned
Assess	Educate	Introduce	Report
Assist	Edit	Interpret	Resolve
Budget	Emphasize	Investigate	Respond
Build	Encourage	Judge	Review
Calculate	Engineer	Justify	Revise
Capture	Enhance	Launch	Secure
Catalog	Enlist	Lead	Solve
Champion	Ensure	Locate	Stimulate
Chart	Establish	Maintain	Streamline
Clarify	Estimate	Manufacture	Succeed
Classify	Evaluate	Map	Support
Coach	Examine	Market	Surpass
Collect	Exceed	Measure	Target
Command	Execute	Mentor	Test
Communicate	Exhibit	Model	Train
Compile	Expand	Modify	Transform
Compute	Facilitate	Monitor	Troubleshoot

Conceive	Finalize	Observe	Unify
Conduct	Forge	Obtain	Update
Consolidate	Form	Orchestrate	Upgrade
Construct	Formalize	Organize	Utilize
Coordinate	Formulate	Orient	Verbalize
Define	Generate	Participate	Verify
Deliver	Guide	Perform	Win
Demonstrate	Head	Pilot	Write

10 Most Commons Errors in Resume Writing

A strong resume conveys your level of literacy, ability to conceptualize or analyze your own interests and strengths, your pattern or performance or success, who you are, what you've done, and your view of the employer. Here are ten common errors beginning resume writers frequently make.

1. Not keeping the needs of the employer in mind when writing the resume
2. Too long, short or condensed (entry level resumes should be one-page long)
3. Poor format or crowded appearance (stay away from resume templates)
4. Misspellings, poor punctuation, bad grammar, or wordiness
5. Too boastful or dishonest
6. Critical categories missing
7. Hard to understand or requires interpretation
8. Doesn't convey accomplishments or pattern of performance
9. Unclear or vague objective
10. Includes lots of fluff or "canned resume"

Choosing Format

There are three basic types of resumes, chronological, functional and a combination of the two. The type you select depends upon your qualifications and experiences. Chronological resumes track your educational and work history in reverse order (start with what you've done most recently and work back in time). This is the most common format and it is widely accepted. A functional resume focuses on your skill set and downplays work experiences. A combination resume is one that frequently suits new graduates by placing emphasis on skills while also highlighting education, internship or work experience.

No two resumes are alike and they shouldn't be. Your resume is a very personal document that reflects who you are. When thinking about which format you'll use, carefully consider what it is that you most want to emphasize about yourself. Chances are it will be your education and any academic honors quickly followed by relevant real-world experience, internships and special study opportunities. The samples that follow are general guides to content and format – make your resume a unique document that describes your efforts, accomplishments and aspirations.

Writing Your Resume

Think about your target audience – who will be reading your resume? What's important to that person? What would make you the perfect candidate?

Consider all your accomplishments, including work experience, volunteer, internship, research, study abroad, co-curricular and classroom activities. Also think of your computer skills, foreign language ability, certifications, presentations, publications, professional or student associations, honors, travel, and personal interests. Then try to relate those experiences to your current aspirations.

Common Resume Section Headings

Objective, Education, Experience, Honors, Activities, Skills, Additional, Leadership, Professional Membership, Volunteer Experience, Publications and Research.

Identification

At the top of your resume, begin with your contact information, this should include your full name, permanent address, school address, telephone numbers and email address. Make sure all contact information is current.

Sample Heading:

Robert R. Robinson r.robinson@oglethorpe.edu		
Current Address: 6543 Oglethorpe Way P.O. Box 6543 Atlanta, Georgia 30319 (404) 567-4322		Permanent Address: Daylight Drive 2341 Home Street Madison, Virginia 45908 (604) 657-7896

Objective

New graduates and entry-level candidates should not omit an objective statement; however this space should not be wasted with a sentence that is too general or broad. Good objective statements should describe for employers the position and industry you are targeting. You can include skills relevant to the position. Focus on the skills you offer, not what you hope to gain from the position. Avoid using an objective that does not clearly define your focus.

Sample Objective Statements:

Seeking a position in nonprofit healthcare marketing that will allow me to use my research, communications and business skills.

A position in the field of marketing, utilizing economic understanding, leadership, interpersonal communication and presentation skills.

Education

This section includes any information about your degrees, where and when you will be graduating; dates, major, minor, concentration, certification are all appropriate for this section. Degrees should be listed in reverse chronological order beginning with the most recent. GPA is optional and your choice to include it or not should be determined by requirements of the field you have chosen or individual employer requirements. The rule of thumb is not to include a GPA that is below a 3.0. You can list your GPA for your major as well as your GPA for your overall course work. If you choose to do this, list the higher of the two first. If you studied abroad for a semester or longer,

include the name of the school, its location and the dates you were there. Optionally, you may include courses you studied or the focus/concentration of your program. Other types of study can be included and travel abroad for other purposes can be placed under additional information.

Sample Education Section:

Oglethorpe University, Atlanta GA	May 2005
Bachelor of Arts in Communications Minor: Psychology	GPA: 3.7
University of Arizona, Phoenix AZ	2001-2003
Associate Degree Communications	GPA: 3.3
Study Abroad: Universite de Paris, Paris France	2003
Semester Long Language Program	

Note: Honors, awards, courses or activities may each have a subsection in this area of a heading of their own and separate sections depending on how relevant the information or activities are to your job focus.

High School Information:

Juniors and seniors should not include high school information on their resumes unless you received a significant award, your high school activities are extremely relevant to your career objective, or if you are networking with an alumnus/a from your high school.

Experience

This section may include a variety of activities. It is not limited to paid employment experiences:

- Paid or unpaid internships and work study positions
- Part-time or full-time employment
- Independent study
- Co-curricula activities (Greek organizations, professional societies, clubs, SGA, etc.)

The structure of the experience section depends on the type of position you are seeking. Use this section to highlight the opportunities that you've participated in that demonstrate leadership, initiative, or competence in an area. Be factual in your descriptions but include information that enhances the job description. You do not need to list every position that you have ever had. Most importantly, include information most relevant to your potential employer and try to group that information together when possible.

For each position include:

Name of the organization, your job title, location of the organization (city and state) and dates employed. Using month & year, Jan. 2004-May 2004 can be more effective than "Spring 2004" since employers do not think in terms of semesters. Analyze each experience in terms of your responsibilities and outcomes. Describe your skills and accomplishments, such as contributions to the organization, and how your work helped to increase profit, funding, motivation, efficiency, and productivity. Attempt to quantify your accomplishments by using number, dollar amounts, and percentages. This helps the reader to evaluate the scope of your duties. Stress your achievements. Consider what problems you have faced and what solutions you found. Begin each description using action verbs and incorporate present tense verbs to describe current positions and past tense verbs for previous positions.

Example of Reverse Chronological Style

Experience

MostChoice.com

Internet Strategy Director

Sandy Springs, GA

May 2004-Aug. 2004

- Directed successful program of marketing, advertising, and business-to-business integration increasing traffic and revenue by 10%
- Analyzed cost/benefit structures of multiple advertising possibilities in order to maximize effectiveness of advertising budget
- Researched and wrote financial articles on strict deadlines and with space limitations

Petrel Associates

Assistant Editor

New York, NY

Aug. 2003-Dec.2003

- Compiled and proofread copy for yearly publication of an international travel agency
- Developed diverse written descriptions for international properties and resorts meant to stimulate sales
- Assisted editor with all aspects of production from inception to distribution

Campus/Community Activities

Co-curricula activities, such as professional associations, Greek organizations, athletics, SGA, student organizations, honor societies, and community volunteer activities can be listed separately from your experience section. Identify leadership roles that you held in these organizations and dates of involvement. If you have too many to list choose activities that have the strongest connection to the type of job you seek.

Additional Information

This component of your resume is optional and may be used to detail your computer skills (Microsoft Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint, etc.) and language skills (Spanish language proficiency). Unique travel or learning experiences may be included here.

References

Place your references on a separate page. Generally, employers ask for three references. Use faculty, staff, and employers as references, not personal acquaintances. Include the name, title, company name, address, email and phone number for each reference. Leave off the phrase, "References available upon request."

Information to Omit

Do not include personal information such as photographs, graphics, or images, social security number (unless applying for a U.S. government position), date of birth, height, weight, health or marital status.