

RESUMES

What is a resume? A resume is a **marketing tool** you use to sell yourself to a potential employer. The goal of the resume is make the employer want to interview you.

An effective resume should **convince the employer that your qualifications match the qualifications** they're looking for. Therefore, the best resume is a resume that is TARGETED to the specific position you're applying for. This means each resume you send out should be different!

What goes on a resume?

There are some basic things that should always be on your resume, like your education, experience, and contact info, but the key to knowing what to include in your resume is to ask yourself, "*How have I obtained the qualifications to do this job I'm applying for?*" Those are the things to include and highlight in your resume.

Heading: Consists of your name and contact information (mailing address, phone number, and email address)

Education: Start with your most recent education. Include:

- Degree Title and Major (even if you're not done- can put "Pursuing" in front or "(in progress)" behind)
- Name of School, City, State
- Minors or Emphasis areas
- Graduation date (or anticipated date if close to finishing, or date began – Present if not yet close)
- Only include your GPA if it is exceptional!
- Do NOT include your high school diploma/GED once you have started college

Experience: Can include anything hands-on you've done outside of your mandatory school work (done in the classroom) *that is relevant to the job you're applying for*, whether it was paid employment or not. Internships, full-time jobs, part-time jobs, summer jobs, volunteer experiences, and other field experiences can all count.

When listing your experience, always include:

- Your Job Title (or position title, like "Volunteer Tutor")
- Name of Company or Organization you worked for
- City and State where the company was located
- Dates you worked there (if still there, write starting date – Present)
- You may also include info about what you did there, depending on the format you use (see next page)

Other categories: Design the resume that works the best for you to show off your qualifications. You can make up your own category titles, but some options of other things to include on your resume are:

- Summary of Qualifications
- Honors/Awards/Scholarships
- Community Service/Volunteer Work
- Activities/Clubs/Memberships
- Licenses/Certifications
- Relevant Coursework
- Professional Organizations
- Computer Skills/Languages
- Research Projects
- Conferences Attended
- Foreign Languages
- Class Projects

Resume Formatting:

The visual layout is up to you, but here are some basic guidelines:

- It should look professional, and like you put time and effort into creating a polished document
- Your formatting should be consistent throughout the resume
- Use a standard font (Times New Roman or Arial) to ensure compatibility
- Use a font size of 10-12pt
- It should appear clean and organized, and there should be clear divisions between categories
- Use bolding, underlining, or italics to draw the eye to the most important things (but do not *overuse!*)
- You should fill the page (first page), and white space should be evenly distributed
- It should be strategically designed so that the reader can see your most important info in 5-10 seconds

TYPES OF RESUME FORMATS

There are 2 main types of resume formats, chronological and functional.
The difference between the two is primarily in the way your experience is organized and presented.

| | CHRONOLOGICAL | FUNCTIONAL |
|---|---|--|
| What is it? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your work history is the main focus of your resume Your previous jobs are listed in order by date starting with the most recent Your relevant experience is described through your work history | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant skills and experience are the main focus of your resume Your skills and experience are organized and listed under categories, not under specific jobs |
| When should you use it? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When your work history is related to the job you are applying for When your work history shows an upward progression towards the position you're applying for | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When you have little or no work experience When you are changing careers When your job titles or companies worked for are seemingly unrelated to what you're applying for When you have gaps in your employment When you've had a lot of very similar jobs |
| <p>You can also do a Combination Resume, which combines elements from these two types in whatever way works best to show off your qualifications for the job you're applying for.</p> | | |

TARGETING YOUR RESUME

Remember, a resume is just a marketing tool, NOT your professional biography. Each one must be targeted!

There are 2 types of targeted resumes:

- Job-targeted resume:* targeted to a specific opening. When applying for a specific opening with a specific company, you should always create a job-targeted resume for that position.
- Field-targeted resume:* targeted to a type of work rather than a specific opening. You will want to have a field-targeted resume for networking and career fairs that highlights your qualifications to do the type of work you're looking for.

HOW do I create a targeted resume?

Job descriptions are your cheat sheets! If there is a posted job description for the position you're applying for, this tells you exactly what the employer is looking for. **The best resume is the one that most closely matches the job description!**

The basic steps to targeting your resume are:

1. Address everything from the job description that you can.
2. Remove details that are unrelated to the job description.
3. Use the language from the job description (keywords).
4. Modify your format if necessary to highlight your qualifications.

Tips for working through a job description:

- You want to address the ENTIRE job description, not just the Qualifications section.
- Start by going through the job description and highlighting all the key nouns, verbs, and other keywords.
- It can help to separate out the verbs- this will give you a lot of the "action verbs" that you will want to start each of bullet points with when describing your experience.

Continued on the next page...

Tips for working through a job description continued:

- Look at one job task at a time, and for each, ask yourself if you've done this before, done something similar, or done something where you used the same skills. If yes, write a bullet directly explaining this, and plug it in where it fits on your resume.
- Even if you can't address an entire task, see if you can use the key noun or verb in a slightly different context.
- Don't leave out *anything* on the job description that you've done or can do, even if it doesn't seem important to you. If they put it on there, they think it's important!

What if there isn't a job description?

Sometimes you won't have a description, or it might just not be a very useful one. First, call the company and tell them you're interested in applying, but wanted to see if they could give you any additional info about what the job will entail and what qualifications they're looking for. Also use the rest of the company's website, which will usually give you plenty of clues about the language they use (keywords), what you might be doing, the credentials other people in that same position have, and the values of the company (characteristics they would be looking for in you). You can also review other similar job postings to look for themes, and use O*Net (online.onetcenter.org), which provides info on all types of jobs that is formatted like a job description.

What about my field-targeted resume?

When putting together a resume that addresses your ability to do a particular type of work, the process you'll follow is similar, you just won't have one particular job description to work from. Start by using O*Net to look up the type of job you're trying to get, which will list tasks, skills, abilities, and characteristics to include in your resume. Also search for similar job descriptions using the professional association website for your field, or general job posting sites like the ones listed on the Job Search Process handout (look nationwide). Look at several descriptions and identify themes and common keywords.

Other Targeting Tips

Think about how your resume might be reviewed, and what that means for how you design it.

Possibilities include:

- *It could be screened by the HR department.* If it's a medium or large size company, it will almost always be screened first by someone in HR, and their job is to weed out as many resumes as possible and only give a few of the best resumes to the department you will actually be working in. They usually have lots of resumes to look at and not much time, so they will often decide after a 10-15 second glance whether your resume will go into the "no" pile or the "maybe, will look at in more detail later" pile. Think about what all this means. Someone in your field may be able to see how your experiences could have prepared you for this job, but the HR staff have a background in HR, not in your field. They know the job description well, however, and those are the things that will catch their eye and tell them you're qualified. You'll need to be explicit in stating your qualifications- be direct and clear about how your experience relates to the job you're applying to, and don't make them have to guess or assume anything. You'll also need to design a format that will allow them to see the overview of your qualifications in only a few seconds.
- *It could be electronically scanned by a software program* to determine how qualified you are, with only the "most qualified" resumes ever being seen by a person. These programs are set to detect certain keywords, and whether or not the program deems you qualified for the job depends on how many of those keywords it picks up. Your best clue as to what words it will be searching for is the job description.
- *It could be scored by a person*, which typically happens when you apply to a government agency. Government agencies will have a point system to ensure that all applicants are given fair consideration. Again, your best clue as to what you'll get points for is the job description. For these positions, you want to include as much relevant detail as possible relating to the things on the job description, even if it means a longer resume, because it will be looked at more closely, and your goal is to maximize your points.

Strategically place the information on your resume. There are no real rules about the order of your categories or the information in them. Determine where to put things by what your strongest selling points are and what the employer is going to care most about. If they glance at your resume for only a few seconds, what would you want to jump out at them? For example, are they going to be more interested in your education or your experience? Which would you rather them see, your job title or the name of the company you worked for? The degree you got or the school you got it from? Make your resume format work for YOU.

FAQs

Is it true that my resume needs to be only 1 page?

There is no “rule” for how long your resume must be. It will depend on:

1. How much relevant experience you have.
2. The type of job you’re applying for. If you’re applying to a private company, shorter, summary resumes are more common (never more than 2 pages). If you’re applying to a government agency (federal, state, or local), longer resumes are appropriate because they are looking for more detail.
3. How long and detailed the job description is. This is a good way to tell how much detail an employer would like to see on your resume. Remember, your goal is to address everything you can in the job description, so a job description with more detail might mean a longer resume.

Except when applying to a government position, one-page resumes are usually ideal, especially when you don’t have a lot of experience in your field yet. There are lots of tricks to making it fit, like shrinking your margins or your font size, or adjusting your spacing or formatting.

Do I have to include my entire work history?

Not necessarily. Here are some guidelines:

- If your work history is very short, you probably want to include everything.
- If you have a longer work history, you can probably get rid of irrelevant jobs you had years ago.
- You have the option of leaving off irrelevant jobs, but you don’t want to create employment gaps. If you take a job off, make sure that time is accounted for somewhere else on your resume, like if you were in school. You don’t want it to look like you did nothing for a period of time!

Here are some options of how to deal with your work history issues:

- If your work history is really long, scattered, or irrelevant, switch to a functional format.
- In the chronological format, split your experience up into 2 different categories- “Related Experience” and “Other Experience.” Only include bullets describing what you did for the relevant jobs.

Should I list my high school education on my resume?

No! You only put your high school diploma (or GED) on a resume if that’s the highest level of formal education you have. As soon as you’ve started college, it’s implied that you’ve completed high school requirements.

Should I include personal information on my resume?

In the vast majority of cases, no. This means don’t include interests that are unrelated to the job you’re applying for. If your hobby is related, such as if you’re applying to a sporting goods company, and the job description asks for candidates who have a passion for sports, that would be appropriate. Also, DON’T include any personal data like birth date, social security number, physical characteristics, marital status, etc.

What’s with the Objective Statement, and do I need one?

No. In recent years, the objective statement has become optional. Some employers like objectives, and some don’t. Therefore, when deciding whether to include one, consider how much value it could add to your resume. In many cases it won’t add much, but it can sometimes be useful for two different things: applying to a larger company with multiple jobs open (to clarify which you’re applying for), or on a field-targeted resume (to remind your contacts what you’re looking to do). If you include an objective on a resume for an advertised job, however, it needs to be very specific to that particular job. Remember, though, you can leave the objective off entirely, or you can replace it with a summary section.

What’s a summary section?

The optional summary section, which can be called “Summary,” “Professional Summary,” “Summary of Qualifications,” or something similar, is an optional section that lets you make your strongest selling points more visible. This section usually consists of 3-4 bullet points, and will address the most important qualifications the employer is looking for. It usually goes at the top of your resume, right under your heading. This section can help you tie everything together, and give the employer a reason to want to review the rest of the details on your resume.

Sample Resume – Chronological

JANE A. SMITH

555 Smith Ln.
Boise, ID 83706

<http://www.linkedin.com/in/janesmith>
<http://www.janesmithportfolio.com>

(555) 555-5555
JaneSmith@internet.com

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

- 4+ years demonstrated commitment to customer satisfaction and product promotion
 - Experience communicating on various levels with advertisers, artists, corporate clients and media contacts
 - Proficient at design and layout work
-

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) in Marketing

Boise State University, Boise, ID

May 2012

- GPA: 3.82

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Marketing Intern

Smith and Smith Marketing Associates, Boise, ID

January 2012 – Present

- Assist in the design and development of print and TV advertising campaigns for two local businesses
- Generate original, innovative ideas for new campaigns using social media
- Develop working relationships with clients, focusing on needs assessment
- Collaborate with local retail stores to arrange the distribution of promotional flyers, samples, and coupons
- Coordinate local events in partnership with regional sales representatives
- Analyze data from previous campaigns, identify trends, and make actionable recommendations

Sales Associate

Lady Foot Locker, Boise, ID

June 2010 – December 2011

- Assisted prospective customers in exploring product options
- Assessed customer needs and made appropriate product recommendations
- Effectively persuaded customers to make purchases, and/or to purchase higher priced items
- Consistently met and exceeded sales goals, winning Sales Associate of the Quarter three times

Clerk/Customer Service Representative

Dillard's, Inc., Boise, ID

August 2008 – June 2010

- Assisted customers with a variety of tasks, including locating products, gathering information about product features, and making selection and purchasing decisions
- Utilized interpersonal skills in resolving customer complaints and promoting customer satisfaction with the corporation

ACTIVITIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

- Active member of Pi Sigma Epsilon, National Marketing Fraternity
- Member of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars (academic honor society)
- Regular volunteer for the American Red Cross

Sample Resume – Functional

JOHN DOE

555 Smith Ln., Boise, ID 83706
(555) 555-5555, JohnDoe@internet.com

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) in Marketing

Boise State University, Boise, ID

- Expected Graduation Date: December 2012
- GPA: 3.85

RELEVANT SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

Customer Service and Communication

- Over 4 years experience providing outstanding customer service
- Effective at recruiting new customers as well as retaining existing customers
- Utilize superior communication skills to work with customers effectively
- Attentively listen to customers in order to accurately assess needs
- Maintain a positive, friendly, and cooperative demeanor at all times
- Utilize conflict resolution skills in resolving customer concerns and maintaining a positive company reputation

Sales and Persuasion

- Demonstrated ability to successfully persuade customers to purchase products and to increase the quantity of products purchased
- Able to explain features of products and services in a way that convinces customers of their usefulness
- Met or exceeded sales goals every month during time of employment at Foot Locker

Organization and Administration

- Proven ability to manage large quantities of data and paperwork while simultaneously ensuring complete accuracy
- Always record necessary documentation in a timely fashion
- Keep documents consistently organized through hard copy filing and use of electronic databases
- Process account billing contracts, and collect payments

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Desk Assistant, August 2011 – Present
Boise State University, Boise, ID

Sales Clerk, June 2009 – July 2011
Foot Locker, Boise, ID

Crew Member, August 2008 – June 2009
McDonalds, Boise, ID