

Resume Writing

A resume is a summary of your experience and background that highlights your strengths and accomplishments. A resume is intended to pique an employer's interest enough to invite you for an interview. It should include all your relevant experiences, training, education, and certifications. Your task is to present yourself on paper in a way that addresses an employer's needs.

COMPONENTS OF A RESUME

HEADING

This section provides information on how to contact you. Your name, address, and phone number with area code, should be at the top of the page. If you have two addresses (local and permanent), center your name and, depending on the layout you choose, place the addresses and phone numbers on either side of the top of the page (see samples). An e-mail address should also be included.

EDUCATION

List your current school first. Indicate your degree/concentration and graduation date. Include academic standing and honors. Note your GPA if it is 3.2 or better. List any other schools or colleges attended in reverse chronological order, including dates of attendance and any other information that applies. Don't include your high school unless you went to a prestigious secondary school.

EXPERIENCE

Employers look at this section to see performance potential, progressions, transferable skills, technical knowledge, and degrees of responsibility. List work experience in reverse chronological order and include full-time, part-time, and volunteer work. Begin each with the name of the organization, then add the department where you worked, your job title, the location (city/town, state), and dates of employment (month, year). Include well written job descriptions (see page two).

SPECIAL SKILLS, CERTIFICATIONS, AND/OR LICENSURES

List special skills, languages, certificates, or professional licenses. You may include a section on computer skills, even if you are self taught.

INTERESTS

Mention career-related interests first. Hobbies, travel, and leisure activities show another aspect of your personality, and can be used as an "icebreaker" in the interview.

AFFILIATIONS AND/OR EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Include membership in student organizations, professional affiliations, community activities, sports, and other groups. Be sure to note all leadership roles.

REFERENCES

At the conclusion of your resume, you may state: *References will be available on request.* This line can be eliminated for space. Compile references and get permission from anyone you intend to use. You may prepare the list on the same kind of paper as your resume, and have it available when asked about references in an interview or on an employment application.

FORMAT

Organize the information you have gathered for your resume in a format that will most effectively market your skills and experience. The two main options are a functional or chronological resume. Some individuals use a combination of these styles by beginning their resume with highlights of their qualifications.

CHRONOLOGICAL

The categories of information we have discussed fit easily into the popular traditional chronological format. This most commonly used format presents your employment history in an easy-to-organize, reverse chronological order. A chronological format highlights career progressions, company names, dates of employment, and job titles, making vital information accessible at a glance. Therefore, it is an ideal way to show off a steady, consistent work history, an impressive employer, internships directly related to your career goal, or promotion within a field.

FUNCTIONAL

This alternative format organizes your experience by skill groups or areas of expertise, rather than by job titles, e.g., "Administrative Skills," "Public Relations," or "Research." Qualify each of the skill groups you highlight with concrete descriptions of how you used that skill, drawing from any of your varied experiences.

FORMAT

continued from page one

Your employment history may then be capsulized with company names, positions held, and dates of employment only. This strategy highlights accomplishments rather than job titles. It can effectively draw out transferable professional skills for candidates who appear to have held jobs unrelated to their current goals. A functional approach may also avoid redundancy for those who have had similar responsibilities at different jobs or want to de-emphasize frequent job changes.

PRESENTATION AND LAYOUT

Usually an employer reviews a resume for less than one minute. Therefore, an attractive presentation is a must.

Limit yourself to one page if possible. Although two-page resumes are acceptable, it may be a disadvantage. Avoid using resume templates as they are frustrating and inflexible. Often, it is more efficient to type the information into your own, individualized format.

Techniques such as underlining, *italicizing*, CAPITALIZING, **boldface type**, s p a c i n g, font Sizing, and indentation emphasize key items like headings and job titles. Use your white space wisely. Generously balanced margins and adequate white space in the body of the resume adds to its overall attractiveness and gives the employer space for notes and comments. **Major categories that present your strongest selling**

points should appear first.

Your resume must be letter perfect. Proofread for errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Also have someone else proofread your resume since it is often difficult to spot your own errors, and because the computer spellchecker does not catch all mistakes. The Career Education Center provides a resume critique service. Duplicate your resume on a good quality bond paper. Choose a color that does not detract from your professionalism; white or ivory are recommended. We recommend drafting your resume on a word processor and generating an original from a laser printer. The Career Resource Library offers a laser printer for printing onto bond paper.

WRITING JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Effective writing is essential to a good resume. Employers are interested in your potential as an employee. Therefore, it is important to create an image of yourself as an active, vital participant in the workplace. Here are some tips:

• START WITH SKILL WORDS

Complete sentences are not needed on a resume. Skip the personal pronouns and begin your phrases with verbs that directly identify your skill.

EXAMPLE

Initial Statement: I worked with students as a reading tutor.
Improved Statement: Tutored

students individually and in groups on a weekly basis.

- **ELIMINATE NON-ESSENTIAL PHRASES**
Phrases like “responsibilities included” or “worked with” add little or no meaning to your statement.

EXAMPLE

Initial Statement: My duties included planning student activities for my residence hall.

Improved Statement: Planned and coordinated social functions for 60 resident students.

- **USE QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE INFORMATION**

Crystallize the picture for the employer and emphasize the scope of your responsibilities by including information on “how big” and “how much.”

EXAMPLE

Initial Statement: Brought in many new clients to the agency.

Improved Statement: Increased service population by 25% over three months.

When writing job descriptions remember three things:

Responsibilities, Skills gained AND Achievements.

Most resume writers include responsibilities that show their daily activities, but neglect to demonstrate transferable professional skills by describing what they learned from these responsibilities.

EXAMPLES

Responsibilities Statement:

Maintained financial records which included more than \$2,000 in daily transactions.

Skills Statement:

Developed financial management skills through processing of daily transactions.

Achievements Statement:

Received award of excellence for design and implementation of an innovative financial record keeping system.

SKILL WORDS - KEYS TO AN EFFECTIVE RESUME

Skill verbs should always be used when writing job descriptions. Rather than listing your responsibilities after such phrases as “duties included” and “responsible for,” using verbs enhances your skills and presents you as an active, contributing member of any organization. Use verbs in past tense unless you are describing your current position. To find additional verbs, you may also consult a thesaurus and/or dictionary.

ACCOMPLISHED **achieved** *acted as liaison* **addressed**
ADMINISTERED **advised** *advocated* allocated **analyzed** **appointed**
ARBITRATED *arranged* assembled **audited** *authored* **balanced**
broadened BUILT calculated *catalogued* **charted** collected **com-**
plied compiled COMPLETED computed **conducted** **consolidated**
constructed *consulted* contracted **contributed** controlled
coordinated corresponded **counseled** created **delegated** *deliv-*
ered DEMONSTRATED designed **detected** **determined** **developed**
devised DIAGNOSED **directed** disapproved *discovered* dispatched
dispensed displayed DISTRIBUTED documented *drafted* edited
eliminated estimated **evaluated** examined EXECUTED **expanded**
expedited forecasted **formulated** **founded** governed GUARAN-
TEED **guided** *handled* headed **identified** implemented **improved**
increased **informed** initiated *installed* **instituted** **instructed** inter-
preted INTERVIEWED invented **inventoried** **invested**
investigated **launched** lectured **logged** **maintained** MANAGED
marketed **maximized** mediated minimized **moderated** modified
monitored motivated NAVIGATED **negotiated** notified **obtained**
offered *opened* **operated** ORDERED organized *originated*
overhauled **oversaw** performed *planned* prepared **prescribed**
presented presided **processes** procured PRODUCED programmed
promoted provided PUBLICIZED **published** purchased
recommended recorded **recruited** rectified **referred** **regulated**
REPAIRED **replaced** represented **researched** restored *revamped*
reviewed **rewired** routed SCHEDULED **selected** *served* serviced
sold **solved** *strengthened* studied **supervised** supplied
SYSTEMATIZED tallied *terminated* tested **traced** **trained**
transformed **translated** TRIMMED **updated** *utilized* **wrote**

RESUME CHECKLIST

In order to have a polished, professional resume, use this checklist before copying your final draft.

- ✓ The resume is one page in length.
- ✓ The resume has been carefully and thoroughly checked for spelling and punctuation errors. Don't rely solely on your computer's spellchecker.
- ✓ Job descriptions are grammatically correct.
- ✓ There are no personal pronouns (I/me).
- ✓ Job descriptions begin with active verbs, not passive phrases such as “responsibilities included” or “duties consisted of.”
- ✓ Abbreviations of states are correct e.g., MA – not MA., Ma. or Mass. The format is neat and appealing
- ✓ to the eye. The format is easily readable.
- ✓ All major components of a resume are included. Job titles are listed for each job
- ✓ description. Dates (month and year) and place
- ✓ of employment (city, state) are included for each work experience. Phone numbers are correct.
- ✓ Phone numbers are listed with
- ✓ area codes. A friend has proofread resume.
- ✓ Resume is copied on 8 1/2" x 11" bond paper in white or another neutral color.

The Simmons College Career Education Center

is available to students and alumnae/i throughout their careers. Our services include, but are not limited to, workshops on resume writing, interviewing skills, and networking, self-assessment tools, job search strategies, on-campus recruiting, career fairs, and private consultations.

Simmons College
Career Education Center
300 The Fenway, Boston, MA 02115
Phone: 617-521-2488
Fax: 617-521-3172
Email: careers@simmons.edu
www.simmons.edu/resources/career

LEEZA LEADER

leader@simmons.edu

78 Pilgrim Road
Boston, MA 02115
555-555-5555

One Emmanuel Parkway
Rome, NY 33333
333-333-3333

Education

Simmons College, Boston, MA, May 2000
Bachelor of Arts in English

Honors: Member of the Honors Academy, GPA: 3.25
Received Outstanding Senior Award for Fictional Writing

Experience

Fenway Project After School Program
Teacher Aide
Boston, MA
September 2000 - present

- Supervise and organize structured recreational activities for up to 30 children (ages 7 to 13).
- Conduct individualized tutoring sessions in writing and reading.
- Design lesson plans.
- Effectively intervene during incidents of physical or verbal disputes.

Amy's Apple Pie Place
Salesperson
Rome, NY
Summers 1998 - 2000

- Provided excellent customer service at a popular town bakery.
- Efficiently handled orders during peak periods.
- Accepted telephone requests and verified that products met customer specification.
- Trained new employees in product knowledge, customer service, and store operations.
- Talled daily sales receipts and prepared bank deposits for manager.

Rome General Hospital
Volunteer
Rome, NY
January - June 1997

- Participated in a community service program for high school students.
- Provided support to nursing staff.
- Delivered gifts and offered assistance to patients.
- Earned a certificate for exceptional community service.

Skills

Computer: proficient in Microsoft Word, Access, and Excel
Language: conversational French

Achievements

Elected representative to the Student Government Association
Managed a research team studying reading comprehension of eighth grade students in the Massachusetts school system
Received the City of Rome scholarship for outstanding high school graduates

Student Activities

Simmons Centennial Committee, student representative
Student fundraiser for Alumnae Relations

References will be furnished on request

LEEZA LEADER

78 Pilgrim Road, Boston, MA 02115, 617 555-5555, leader@simmons.edu

HIGHLIGHTS

- More than one year marketing experience, including planning and running focus groups, and developing comprehensive marketing strategies.
- Skilled in technology, including analyzing and refining Web sites, and preparing and giving PowerPoint presentations.
- Managed marketing study of buying trends of adolescent girls.
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EDUCATION

Simmons College, Boston, MA
Bachelor of Arts, May 2000
GPA 3.38
Majors: Management and Marketing Minor: Retail

HONORS

- Selected for Success Connection, a mentoring program for future leaders.
- Entrepreneur of the Year.
- Woman's Philanthropy Association scholarship.

PROJECT

Developed business plan for bakery, including market research and an industry analysis.

- Presented findings using PowerPoint.

STUDY ABROAD, Cordoba, Spain

- Studied Spanish language and literature.
- Selected as class correspondent to document the experience with photographs and a travel log
- shown via the Internet.

EXPERIENCE

Syrus Industries, Boston, MA *Market Research Intern* Spring 1999-2000

- Conducted comprehensive analysis of Web sites and recommended changes to corporate site.
- Analyzed market research software packages and selected program for company use.
- Spearheaded study of girls aged 9-12: research included journals, questionnaires, photography, and analysis of results.

Facilitated and attended focus groups.

- Reviewed, analyzed and condensed data into useful formats and PowerPoint presentations.
-

Casa Myrna Vasquez, Boston, MA *Student Consultant* Fall 1999

- Served as marketing consultant to a Boston women's shelter.
- Researched funding sources for free goods and services.
- Produced industry analysis and an actionable marketing plan.
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Dix Program, Boston, MA *Student Consultant* Spring 1998

- Member of student consulting team with goal of increasing enrollment.
- Researched corporate tuition reimbursement plans and other sources of non-traditional learners interested in continuing in higher education.
- Utilized SPSS software to develop questionnaires and analyze data.
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The Boston Food Bank, Boston, MA *Office Assistant* Fall 1996

- Drafted correspondence and processed and updated records.
- Assisted with the organization and staffing of fundraisers.
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SKILLS AND INTERESTS

Lotus 1-2-3, PowerPoint, SPSS, SNAP, MSWord, Windows 95, and MacOS.

- Backpacked through Europe and lived in Japan.

- Working knowledge of Spanish.
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