

## Resumes:

### Showcasing Your Skills, Qualifications and Experiences

#### Purpose

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A resume is a targeted summary of your education, skills, accomplishments and experience. A resume serves as an introduction to potential employers and is often the place where they get their first impression of you. Whether you are applying for a job, internship, graduate school or a leadership position, your goal is to build a solid resume that quickly captures your reader's attention and makes them want to advance you to the next step in the process (typically an interview!).

You should never underestimate the power of a solid resume! Employers and recruiters typically take 10-20 seconds to do an initial review of your resume, so capturing and keeping their attention is crucial. An applicant with average qualifications might gain more interviews because of their well-written resume, while candidates who are extremely qualified might be overlooked because their resume is poorly written and hard to navigate.

#### The Key Parts of a Well-Written Resume

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- **Contact Information**
  - The header of your resume should contain the following information:
    - Your name, first and last, in a slightly larger font
    - Your mailing address
    - A phone number where you can reliably be reached and where employers can leave voice messages when necessary. (*Tip: Don't forget to ensure your voicemail box is set up with an appropriate, professional greeting*)
    - A professional email address you check frequently
- **Objective**
  - The objective is a concise statement, no longer than 1 or 2 lines, that goes at the top of the page to give readers an understanding of what you are looking for and provides a framework for your resume
    - For example: "Seeking an accounting internship for Summer 2018 utilizing analytical, organizational, and communication skills"
  - This section is something you should include when attending an event like the Career & Internship Fair where employers are connecting with large volumes of students in a short amount of time. The statement reminds employers about the types of opportunities that interest you most
  - You do not need to include an objective section when applying for a position directly with a company, as the company knows your objective is to obtain the position for which you are applying
- **Summary of Qualifications**
  - Content for this section should be selected based on the position or program you are applying for; the goal is to showcase your skills and strengths that are directly relevant to the position description
  - The Summary section should contain between 4 and 7 points that help the employer understand why they should be interested in you over other candidates
  - Examples include:
    - "Strong work ethic, maintaining a 3.7 GPA while working 20 hours per week"
    - "Six years of experience training and supervising teams of 4-8 people"
    - "Proficient in Java, C++, SQL, HTML, XML, MAC, LAN, WAN, MS Office"

- **Education**

- Entries within this section should include:
  - The full name of the degree you received or expect to receive (e.g., Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration, Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering, etc.)
    - You can include any Concentrations or Minors in this section as well
  - The full name of the college or university the degree was earned from (e.g., “Washington State University Vancouver”, not “WSU Vancouver”)
  - The date you received, or expect to receive, the degree (e.g., if the degree has not yet been completed, write “Expected May 2018” or “Anticipated December 2018”)
- If you have more than one degree, list the most recent and highest degree earned first (i.e., list graduate degrees before bachelor’s degrees and bachelor’s degrees before associate degrees)
- You may want to include relevant information such as certificate programs, projects, courses and honors in this section

- **Experience**

- The experience section is the heart of your resume. You can include things like full-time and part-time work, summer and/or military positions, and internships and co-ops you have participated in. You can list an experience even if you weren’t paid for it
- It is not necessary to list each and every one of your experiences; you should focus on the ones that are most relevant to your goal and the position for which you are applying
  - Review 3-5 position descriptions for jobs that interest you; look at the skill sets they require and think about what they have in common
  - After reviewing these positions, reflect on your own experiences and figure out which ones best highlight the skills the employers are looking for in candidates
- Experiences should be listed in reverse chronological order, with your most recent experiences listed first. This is the most widely accepted and expected format
- For each position, be sure to include:
  - Your position title
  - The name of the employer/company and their location (city and state only)
  - The start and end dates, in month year to month year format (e.g., March 2010 –June 2013)
  - Strong accomplishment statements (or bullet points); see below
- Be careful not to stretch the truth; your resume should be 100% honest

- **Other**

- While every resume should include information about Education and Experience, there are many other sections people can use to organize and showcase their information on a targeted resume. The key thing to remember if you choose to include other sections is that the information you showcase must be relevant to the position you are applying for!
- Other common sections include things like:
  - Community Service or Volunteer Work
  - Leadership Experience
  - Course Projects
  - Honors and Awards
  - Skills or Technical Skills
  - Presentations or Publications

## Bullet Point Construction

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Bullet points are the meat of your resume and should clearly explain your experiences, achievements, or what you have learned. Each statement should begin with a strong action verb (see the last page of this guide). The action verb should be in present tense if the experience is still occurring and past tense if it has ended. In addition, each bullet point should include three elements answering the questions “What?” “How?” and “Why?”

- **What did you do?** – It is helpful to begin by simply making a list of what you did during that particular experience. What tasks or responsibilities did you complete?
- **How did you do it?** – Next, for each task list out how you completed it. This will likely be through a transferable skill or a specific program you utilized
- **Why did you do it?** To provide your reader with context, briefly explain why completing the task was important. Depending on the intended audience of your resume, you could frame it as why it was important to the customer or client served, the organization you were working with, or your personal growth and development

Incorporating these three elements will enhance your experiences, prove you have the skills you claim, and show those reading your resume that you understand the importance of what you did.

### Building Your Bullet Points:

#### Example 1:

- **What** did you do? – Process gym memberships
- **How** did you do it? – Using administrative and interpersonal skills
- **Why** did you do it? – To increase sales for the gym

**Result:** Processed gym memberships using administrative and interpersonal skills to increase membership and overall revenue by 5%

#### Example 2:

- **What** did you do? – Designed marketing materials
- **How** did you do it? – Using Adobe Creative Suite, specifically InDesign and Illustrator
- **Why** did you do it? – To attract new customers and to advertise workshops and events

**Result:** Designed custom marketing materials using InDesign and Illustrator to attract new customers and advertise over 20 events

### Additional Bullet Point Tips:

- Be specific and quantify when possible (e.g., instead of saying “Supervised a team and trained employees” say “Supervised a team of 12 and provided training on company policies ”
- Focus on results and the impact of your work on your workplace (e.g., “Provided excellent customer service, resulting in a 25% increase in quarterly sales”)
- Be as concise as you can while still incorporating all three elements (What/How/Why) where possible

### Transferable Skills:

Transferable skills are abilities and attributes you learn or acquire in one experience, but can utilize in future experiences. Examples include:

- |                         |                        |                           |
|-------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| ● Administrative skills | ● Interpersonal skills | ● Quantitative skills     |
| ● Analytical skills     | ● Leadership skills    | ● Supervision             |
| ● Communication skills  | ● Multitasking         | ● Teaching / facilitating |
| ● Creativity            | ● Organizations        | ● Teamwork                |
| ● Critical thinking     | ● Persuasion           | ● Technological skills    |
| ● Customer service      | ● Problem-solving      | ● Time management         |

## Formatting Your Resume

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- **Appearance**
  - Your resume should look professional and polished; it should be uniform with your cover letter and reference sheet (i.e., you should use the same header, font and similar formatting)
  - Make the document easy to read!
    - Use a standard font that is easy to read and avoid using a size smaller than 10 point
    - Try to leave 1-inch margins around the page; .5-inch margins at the absolute smallest
    - Utilize bullet points for easy scanning of your qualifications and experiences
    - Don't make the document too dense; ensure you balance out text and white space
  - *Tip:* If you are emailing or submitting your resume electronically, be sure to send it as a PDF document; this ensures that your formatting remains intact
- **Layout**
  - Avoid utilizing pre-made templates, as they are often restrictive and waste space
  - Organize your content with section headings that make sense for you – customize if necessary
  - Some common section headings include:
    - Objective
    - Summary of Qualifications
    - Education
    - Work Experience
    - Relevant Experience
    - Related Experience
    - Leadership Experience
    - Volunteer Experience
    - Relevant Projects
    - Research Experience
    - Skills
    - Computer/Technical Skills
    - Trainings/Presentations
    - Honors and Awards
- **Length**
  - Be as focused, clear and concise as possible so you can keep your resume to 1 page
    - More experienced candidates can have a resume that is 2 pages in length; if you do go onto a second page, be sure to place your name in the header of the second page
- **Language**
  - Be sure to start each of your bullet points and accomplishment statements with powerful, skill-based action verbs (see last page for examples)
  - Your reader might not be familiar with all the places you have worked and the activities you have done. It is important to avoid jargon, acronyms and abbreviations
  - Spelling and grammar matters; avoid run-on sentences and other errors

## Is Your Resume Ready to be Sent?

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Before sending your resume off to a potential employer, you should consider the following things:

### *Is your resume...?*

- 100% honest and targeted to the specific position you are applying for
- Focused, clear and concise
- Properly formatted with clear section headers
- Free of personal pronouns, such as "I", "me" and "my"
- Proofread, revised and free of errors

### *Does your resume...?*

- Look professional and original (not like a template)
- Emphasize your relevant skills/experience and your accomplishments
- Contain concrete measures of success that start with strong, varied action verbs
- Use present tense for current experiences and past tense for previous experiences

## Action Verbs

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*Use powerful, skill-based action verbs to start bullet points on your resume.*

*Some action verbs to consider include:*

### **Management skills:**

Administered, assigned, consolidated, coordinated, delegated, executed, improved, organized, oversaw, prioritized, produced, recommended, strengthened, supervised

### **Communication skills:**

Addressed, corresponded, directed, drafted, enlisted, influenced, interpreted, mediated, moderated, motivated, negotiated, promoted, publicized, recruited

### **Clerical / Detailed skills:**

Approved, arranged, classified, collected, complied, dispatched, monitored, prepared, processed, purchased, recorded, retrieved, specified, validated, verified

### **Research skills:**

Collected, diagnosed, examined, extracted, identified, inspected, interpreted, interviewed, investigated, organized, reviewed, summarized, surveyed, systematized

### **Technical skills:**

Assembled, built, calculated, designed, engineered, fabricated, maintained, operated, overhauled, programmed, remodeled, repaired, solved, upgraded

### **Teaching skills:**

Adapted, advised, coached, communicated, developed, enabled, encouraged, evaluated, explained, informed, initiated, instructed, persuaded, stimulated

### **Financial skills:**

Allocated, analyzed, appraised, audited, balanced, budgeted, calculated, computed, devised, estimated, forecasted, planned, projected, researched

### **Creative skills:**

Acted, conceptualized, created, designed, established, illustrated, instituted, integrated, introduced, originated, performed, planned, revitalized, shaped

### **Helping skills:**

Assessed, assisted, clarified, coached, counseled, demonstrated, diagnosed, educated, expedited, facilitated, familiarized, guided, referred, rehabilitated, represented