

Effective Resumes and Cover Letters

A resume and cover letter are your tools to ***make an impact*** on a potential employer and secure an interview.

There are literally hundreds of books on the market with good advice about how to write ***effective resumes and cover letters***, each with a different opinion on style and content. The USC Career Center believes that writing a quality resume and cover letter for internship and full-time job opportunities begins with a targeted one-page summary of your skills and experiences that ***convinces the employer you would be successful*** in that position. The goal is to make your materials so engaging that the reader cannot wait to meet you!

To help you ***impress potential employers***, the Career Center has constructed this booklet with guidelines, helpful hints and examples of quality resumes, including a sample reference page and cover letter that have proven ***highly effective*** with USC recruiters.

USC Career Center

3601 Trousdale Parkway, Student Union 110

Los Angeles, CA 90089-4897

(213) 740-9111 • careers@usc.edu • <http://careers.usc.edu>

RESUME FORMAT

The following information has been created to guide you in writing a quality resume. The most acceptable and readily used format for college students is the chronological resume, in which your most recent experience is listed first. How you choose to construct your resume, in terms of style, is up to you. For example, placing dates on the left or right or whether your contact information should be centered or on the left hand column is entirely your choice. The one rule to remember is that consistency is the name of the game. Always maintain the same style throughout your resume.

CONTACT INFORMATION: Put your contact information at the top of your resume. It should include your name, address, phone number and e-mail address. If you plan to relocate soon it's acceptable to list a permanent address.

OBJECTIVE: For most college students seeking internships or entering the professional job market, stating an objective on your resume is not necessary. Instead, bring out your interests in a cover letter tailor-made for the specific job you are applying for.

EDUCATION: List your degrees in chronological order with the most recent degree first as well as any study abroad experiences you may have. You may also include relevant coursework to highlight specific skills and knowledge. If your GPA is 3.0 or above, go ahead and list it in this section.

EXPERIENCE: List your most recent experience first and do not overlook internships, volunteer positions and part-time employment. Use action verbs to highlight accomplishments and skills. You may also list substantial academic projects under experience.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: This section may stand alone under the "Additional Information" heading and highlight relevant information that may include computer and language skills, professional associations, university and community activities (including any offices held) and interests.

OTHER HEADINGS: You may also choose to use headings that specify other positions you have held. For example, these may include Leadership, Community Service, Athletics or Volunteer Experience. Choosing to break these out as separate headings is perfectly acceptable. It is not acceptable to include personal information such as age, marital status, religion or political affiliation (unless you are applying to a specific religious or political organization) anywhere on your resume.

REFERENCES: Do not list your references on your resume. A prepared list of 2-4 references should be printed on a separate sheet of paper that matches your resume format (see page 9 for example). Bring a hard copy (or multiple copies, if needed) of your resume and references with you to the interview.

RESUME CHECKLIST

- ☐ My resume is clear, concise and makes a positive impression in 30 seconds or less.
- ☐ There are no spelling, grammar or punctuation errors.
- ☐ My resume is one page.
- ☐ My resume presents skills and accomplishments that match employer requirements.
- ☐ My resume accurately summarizes my qualifications.
- ☐ Statements of job accomplishments on my resume start with action verbs.
- ☐ My resume is organized, easy to read and has a balance between content and white space.
- ☐ The type font is Times New Roman, Arial, Century, Helvetica or Verdana.
- ☐ The type size on my resume is 10, 11 or 12 point and is never smaller than 10 point.

* A typical freshman resume may include high school information

THOMAS TROJAN

123 Trousdale Parkway
Los Angeles, California 90089
(213) 123-4567 • thomas.t.trojan@usc.edu

EDUCATION

University of Southern California

Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences
Bachelor of Arts, English
Presidential Scholar
Lee Foundation Scholar

Los Angeles, CA
May 2018

Davis High School
Valedictorian
National Honor Society, Scholar Athlete

Hatboro, PA
June 2014

WORK EXPERIENCE

Pixar

Production Assistant

- Viewed footage and gave creative feedback to 5 development executives
- Provided administrative support to marketing and publicity departments

Emeryville, CA
Summer 2014

Old Navy

Cashier

- Provided customer service in high-volume retail store
- Reported end-of-day sales and reconciled receipts totaling \$2,000 daily

Williams, PA
March 2011-May 2013

COMMUNITY SERVICE

USC Joint Educational Project

- Develop curriculum teaching third graders about global warming
- Manage classroom environment of 35 children

August 2014-present

Habitat for Humanity, Hatboro, PA

- Assisted Hurricane victims, constructed 10 interim housing units

May 2013-April 2014

ATHLETICS

Davis High School Men's Soccer

Captain (2013-2014)

Hatboro, PA
2010-2014

ACTIVITIES

Yearbook

- Photo Editor (2013-2014)

2010-2014

ASB, Sophomore Class Treasurer

- Assisted in management of fundraisers for sophomore class

2012-2013

Taylor Trojan

3601 Trousdale Parkway
Los Angeles, CA 90089
(213) 555-5555
taylor.trojan@usc.edu

EDUCATION

University of Southern California

Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism
Bachelor of Arts, Communication

Los Angeles, CA
May 2017
GPA 3.67

HONORS

USC Dean's List Fall 2013 - present
Alpha Lambda Delta Honor Society
National Collegiate Honor Society

Mira Costa High School

California Scholarship Federation

Manhattan Beach, CA
June 2013

WORK EXPERIENCE

Target

Presentation Team Member

- Used company guidelines to set new merchandise displays
- Created signs and labels to drive sales
- Ensured that shelves were stocked with products

Manhattan Beach, CA
July 2013 - Present

Manhattan Beach Recreation Department

Camp Counselor

- Taught volleyball fundamentals and sportsmanship
- to 20 middle school-aged girls
- Met with parents to set expectations and review progress
- Attended weekly training sessions with camp administrators

Manhattan Beach, CA
Summers 2011, 2012

ATHLETICS

University of Southern California

Member, Division I Women's Volleyball Team

- Twelve-time starter on NCAA Championship Team
- Competed in 24 events over a three month period

2013 - Present

Mira Costa High School

Captain, Girls Volleyball Team

Member, Girls Volleyball Team

Scholar Athlete

2012 - 2013

2009 - 2013

2010 - 2013

INVOLVEMENT

Vice President, Senior Class

Habitat for Humanity

Model United Nations

2012 - 2013

2011 - 2012

2010 - 2011

SKILLS

Microsoft Office, Conversational Spanish

Tiffany Traveler

813 Johnson Dr. • Los Angeles, CA 90089 • (213) 123-4567 • ttravel@gmail.com

EDUCATION

University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA May 2015

Marshall School of Business

Bachelor of Science, Business Administration

Emphasis in Marketing and Public Relations

Major GPA 3.61, Cumulative GPA 3.41

Copenhagen Business School, Denmark, Study Abroad Spring 2014

California State University, Long Beach, Long Beach, CA May 2013

Business Administration coursework

WORK EXPERIENCE

University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA August 2013 - Present

Athletic Department, Customer Service Assistant

- Respond to 100-150 customer inquiries daily
- Provide administrative support to 20 professionals

Discovery Channel, Bethesda, MD Summer 2013

Alternative Programming Development, Intern

- Supported three producers during pitching, production and board meetings
- Researched creative ideas and materials for programming

Town and Gown Mortgage, Los Angeles, CA Summer 2012

Marketing Department, Administration Assistant

- Marketed services to existing customers, increasing qualified loan applicants by 10%
- Verified employment and financial data for loan applicants

LEADERSHIP

Sigma Kappa Sorority, USC 2013 - Present

Philanthropy Chair (January 2014 - Present)

- Planned, organized, and developed event raising \$25,000 for Alzheimer's Research

USC Entrepreneur Club 2013 - Present

Vice President of Membership (January 2014 - Present)

- Increased new member enrollment by over 25% through self-designed marketing plan

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

American Marketing Association, Student Member 2013 - Present

USC Dance Force 2013 - Present

Computer: Microsoft Office, QuickBooks, LexisNexis; PC and Mac platforms

Languages: Fluent Spanish, Conversational Italian

Interests: Cooking, USC Athletics, Marketing, Golf

BARRY BOVARD

425 Thomas Street
Los Angeles, CA 90089
(213) 123-4567
barrybov@usc.edu

Portfolio: www.usc.edu/portfolios/barrybovard

EDUCATION

University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA May 2016
Viterbi School of Engineering
Master of Science, Computer Science
Emphasis: Systems Programming

California State University, Fullerton, Fullerton, CA May 2014
Bachelor of Science, Electrical Engineering
Minor: Circuit Design

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Programming Languages: C++, Java, VB.NET, Flash, FlexBuilder, PHP, MySQL

Applications: MS Office, CAD, MS Visual Studio, JMP, Dreamweaver

Operating Systems: Unix, Linux, Windows, Mac

WORK EXPERIENCE

Systems Programming Intern Summer 2014
Electronic Arts, Los Angeles, CA

- Evaluated automated information systems and major system applications to determine user feasibility
- Developed and programmed web-based applications in PHP/MySQL to improve web interfaces and increase traffic by 12%
- Tested and implemented security software programs, decreasing department viruses by 60%

Customer Service Representative/Reserves Assistant August 2012 - June 2013
Huntington Beach Public Library, Huntington Beach, CA

- Supported staff projects with a variety of multimedia resources including Flash
- Developed user-friendly web interfaces for three reference librarians using FlexBuilder and Dreamweaver

USC PROJECT EXPERIENCE

Title: Network Management and Security

The aim of the project was to develop software capable of capturing the network traffic (packets), buffer all the captured packets and analyze them against a set of rules defined by the network administrator.

- Developed automated test scripts and architectures for application products using C++
- Programmed in VB.NET to develop a dynamic Web page

Diana Doheny
diana.doheny@usc.edu
3601 Trousdale Parkway
Los Angeles, CA 90089
(213) 555-5555

EDUCATION

University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA May 2016
Keck School of Medicine
Masters of Public Health

Boston University, Boston, MA May 2014
Bachelor of Arts, Sociology
Dean's List, all semesters
Alpha Lambda Delta Honor Society, National Collegiate Honor Society

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

USC University Hospital, Los Angeles, CA May 2014 - Present
Project Coordinator

- Evaluate compliance with HIPAA regulations; forecast future needs to maintain regulatory compliance
- Gather and analyze performance data to support restructuring of peri-operative services at hospital
- Participate in daily administration meetings regarding all facets of the hospital including: accreditation, budgeting, physician - administration relations
- Contribute statistical and research backstopping for federally-funded grant project

Public Policy Research Firm, Los Angeles, CA January - April 2014
Research Intern

- Managed and contributed to project design; produced client presentations
- Developed substantive knowledge of Medicare fee-for-service and bundled payments

Americorps Vista Program, Los Angeles, CA September - December 2013
Community Coordinator

- Planned, marketed, and oversaw a summer camp for 250 local underrepresented children
- Created and distributed materials for community meetings

Pan American Health Organization (WHO/PAHO), Washington, D.C. May - August 2013
African Continent Diseases Intern

- Conducted extensive data mining and research on Sub-Saharan diseases in Africa
- Engaged in policy document review for recommendations on how to eradicate a variety of diseases

Healthcare Solutions, Los Angeles, CA May - August 2012
Summer Associate

- Analyzed and reviewed patient medical records; developed analytics that laid the foundation for program designs and strategies for two major clients
- Identified opportunities for operational streamlining positively affecting revenue of client organizations
- Assisted in data warehouse and web portal management

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

American Public Health Association (APHA), member

Computer: Microsoft Office, database management system, familiar with statistical programs
Language: Conversational Spanish

Diana Doheny
diana.doheny@usc.edu
3601 Trousdale Parkway
Los Angeles, CA 90089
(213) 555-5555

REFERENCES

Robert Bovard, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
University of Southern California
Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences
University Park Campus
Los Angeles, California 90089
(123) 456-7890

Sandra Center
Senior Project Coordinator
Levy Construction Services
Los Angeles, California 90089
(123) 805-9115

David Doheny
President
The Doheny Group
1880 Trousdale Parkway
Los Angeles, California 90089
(123) 405-6010

Thomas Trojan, CFA
Director of Investment Advisory
Trojan Investments
1923 Childs Way
Los Angeles, CA 90089
(123) 210-5605

NOTE: Your reference page should have the same heading as your resume

Action Verbs

Communication

addressed	corresponded	interpreted	networked	referred
arbitrated	developed	interviewed	persuaded	reported
arranged	directed	lectured	presented	translated
authored	drafted	marketed	promoted	wrote
communicated	edited	mediated	publicized	
composed	formulated	moderated	published	
contacted	influenced	motivated	reconciled	
convinced	informed	negotiated	recruited	

Creative

acted	directed	integrated	planned	spearheaded
composed	drafted	introduced	redesigned	started
conceived	established	invented	remodeled	stimulated
conceptualized	executed	marketed	renovated	strategized
conducted	fashioned	modernized	replaced	transformed
created	founded	originated	revitalized	
designed	improvised	performed	shaped	
developed	instituted	pioneered	sketched	

Analytical/Financial

accounted for	estimated	projected	remedied	submitted
administered	financed	provided	researched	substantiated
allocated	forecasted	purchased	reserved	suggested
analyzed	managed	raised	revived	supplemented
appraised	marketed	rated	satisfied	sustained
audited	minimized	reconciled	scrutinized	tailored
balanced	mobilized	refined	secured	transferred
budgeted	monitored	reformed	sought	
calculated	multiplied	regarded	settled	
controlled	planned	related	staffed	
developed	procured	relieved	strengthened	

Management/Leadership

accounted for	condensed	developed	hired	recruited
administered	confirmed	employed	maintained	regulated
analyzed	consented	evaluated	managed	reviewed
centralized	consolidated	executed	organized	revitalized
certified	contracted	formulated	oversaw	set goals
chaired	consulted	founded	planned	scheduled
changed	correlated	fulfilled	prioritized	supervised
commissioned	cultivated	grew	produced	
committed	delegated	handled	proposed	
concluded	determined	headed	recommended	

Organizational/Time Management

approved	distributed	integrated	reshaped	streamlined
arranged	enlisted	monitored	retrieved	systematized
catalogued	executed	operated	revamped	tabulated
classified	expedited	organized	revised	targeted
collaborated	extracted	prepared	scheduled	updated
collected	generated	prioritized	screened	validated
compiled	identified	processed	shaped	
conserved	implemented	recorded	specialized	
consolidated	inspected	reorganized	specified	

Quantitative/Research

acquired	collected	guaranteed	investigated	processed
amplified	compared	identified	involved	researched
analyzed	conducted	indexed	issued	reviewed
approximated	diagnosed	inferred	judged	studied
ascertained	designed	innovated	justified	summarized
attested	determined	inspected	led	surveyed
authorized	evaluated	inspired	licensed	systematized
bolstered	examined	instituted	linked	tested
boosted	extracted	interested	minimized	trouble-shot
calculated	formulated	interpreted	modified	
charted	grew	interviewed	organized	

more...

Drive/Motivation/Results

accelerated	decreased	improved	obtained	stabilized
accomplished	doubled	increased	pioneered	standardized
achieved	effected	initiated	proved	succeeded
attained	eliminated	introduced	reduced	transformed
augmented	enlarged	launched	re-established	trimmed
completed	established	lowered costs	resolved	validated
compounded	exceeded	maximized	restored	
contributed	expanded	measured	selected as	

Teaching/Counseling/Helping

adapted	coordinated	explained	interacted	simplified
advised	corrected	facilitated	investigated	solicited
analyzed	defined	generated	modeled	speculated
applied	demonstrated	guided	modified	stated
appraised	designated	identified	motivated	structured
assessed	developed	implemented	observed	synthesized
assigned	directed	incorporated	organized	systematized
categorized	educated	indicated	postulated	taught
clarified	elaborated	informed	praised	trained
coached	elicited	initiated	questioned	tutored
communicated	enabled	instructed	reinforced	
cooperated	evaluated	integrated	rewarded	

Technical

activated	deliberated	engineered	maintained	screened
assembled	delivered	enhanced	navigated	sold
built	designed	enriched	operated	serviced
calculated	detected	excelled	overhauled	solved
computed	devaluated	exercised	participated	supplied
constructed	devised	exhibited	programmed	trained
converted	dispersed	fabricated	rehabilitated	upgraded
customized	displayed	familiarized	remodeled	
debugged	elevated	finalized	repaired	
deciphered	endorsed	formed	resolved	
dedicated	enforced	installed	retrieved	

COVER LETTERS

Your resume is your marketing brochure. Your cover letter is your introduction or 'executive summary' to your resume. The main point of a cover letter is to tie your experience directly to the job description. Look at the description and be sure the words relate directly to those in your cover letter and resume. If the employer is looking for teamwork, highlight a team experience in your resume and be sure to include a team-related accomplishment in your cover letter.

A Cover Letter should be:

- **Concise:** A cover letter should be three to four paragraphs. Any longer might lose the interest of the reader. We suggest the following format:
 - **Opening paragraph:** Four or five sentences maximum. Mention the position you are applying to/interested in, briefly introduce yourself, and indicate where you learned of the opportunity.
 - **Body of letter:** Usually one or two paragraphs. Share detailed examples of your qualifications for the position's specific requirements. Many students choose to use one paragraph to discuss previous work experiences and another one to discuss academic experiences or leadership experience, etc. Choose whatever combination communicates your most relevant qualifications most effectively!
 - **Closing:** Three to four sentences maximum. Summarize your qualifications, restate your enthusiasm for the position, and include your preferred contact information for the employer to follow-up with you.
- **Clear:** Articulate your qualifications in words that mirror what the employer provided in the job description. Do not try to impress with a long list of accomplishments. This is the executive summary, not the resume.
- **Convincing:** An employer will make a decision on your candidacy based on the combined letter and resume package. You have to articulate the connection to the job description and sell your skills. This is a competition. Why should the employer hire you?

Cover Letter Checklist

The words and action verbs in your cover letter should be reflective of the job description.

Always be professional.

Use proper grammar.

Check for spelling and punctuation errors.

Know to whom the resume/cover letter package is going. Do not use "To Whom It May Concern." Address letter to the Recruiter or Hiring Manager.

Use paragraph form, not bullet points.

Do not copy and paste content from your resume to your cover letter.

Do not be forward in requesting an interview.

Keep to one page (no more than 3-4 paragraphs).

When e-mailing a recruiter or hiring manager directly, use the body of the email to write two to three sentences that introduce yourself and mention to what position you are applying. Include your cover letter and resume as PDF attachments. Do not cut and paste your cover letter into the body of the email.

Sample Job Description

Identify key points in the job description to address in your cover letter.

Focus Marketing, LLC

Focus Marketing, LLC is a public relations firm committed to personalizing services to its clients. We are looking for summer interns who want to gain hands-on experience with new product launches. This is an excellent opportunity to gain exposure to the intricacies of the public relations industry.

Duties include:

- Monitoring industry and client news
- Building and maintaining media lists
- Drafting press releases and pitches
- Event support
- Writing copy for brochures, websites and advertisements
- Creating social media campaigns and maintaining social media pages
- Creating monthly newsletters

Desired Skills & Experience:

The ideal candidate is highly creative, has excellent writing and organizational skills, is highly motivated and detail oriented, and has an understanding of current social media trends (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram). Candidates should have the ability to handle multifaceted projects and have strong follow through. Previous internships are a bonus but not required.

Qualifications:

Junior or Senior level students with a PR, advertising, journalism or marketing major preferred. Must be comfortable with Social Media, Photoshop a plus but not required. Word, Outlook, Excel are essential.

Please send all materials to:

Emily Annenberg
Marketing Coordinator
Focus Marketing, LLC
1391 Tweet St.
Los Angeles, CA 90089
emily.ann@focusmarketing.com

Sample Cover Letter

It is OK to use either of these types of headers for your cover letter.

(traditional block:)

• Tiffany Traveler
813 Johnson Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90089

March 3, 2014

Emily Annenberg
Marketing Coordinator
Focus Marketing, LLC
1391 Tweet St.
Los Angeles, CA 90089

(match your resume:)

Tiffany Traveler

813 Johnson Drive * Los Angeles, CA 90089 * (213) 123-4567 * ttravel@usc.edu

March 3, 2014

Emily Annenberg
Marketing Coordinator
Focus Marketing, LLC
1391 Tweet St.
Los Angeles, CA 90089

Dear Ms. Annenberg, (or use full name if pronoun is uncertain)

Dear Ms. Annenberg, (or use full name if pronoun is uncertain)

It was great meeting you during the University of Southern California (USC) Internship Week marketing panel on February 13. I am very interested in the Focus Marketing, LLC internship position advertised through the USC connectSC portal. I am a junior at USC majoring in Psychology and am very excited about this opportunity to combine my skills in social media and marketing to customize services for Focus Marketing, LLC's clients.

One desired strength mentioned for the Focus Marketing, LLC internship is motivation. As a leader and Marketing Chair of OUTreach, a USC community service organization, I coordinate and write articles for our weekly newsletter and maintain three social media pages, including Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest. I increased our social media audience by 50% within 12 months by developing strategic partnerships across campus and customizing updates for each social media account daily. Part of my success is attributed to my passion for marketing our organization to the USC community. I am confident my high motivation level, strong social media and marketing skills make me an excellent match for this internship position.

I understand that creativity is a very important asset to successful product launches. Recently, I worked closely with four team members to propose a new product line of beverages during a marketing class. I designed a 3D product rendering, a print brochure and a social media ad using Photoshop. As part of the final project, our team presented the product line to a panel of marketing professionals. The panel ranked the project first place among eight groups nationally. Remarks from the panel included mention of my innovative designs. Using my creative skills to benefit the Focus Marketing, LLC team would be a great experience in my future career as a Public Relations professional.

I am highly motivated to contribute my creative, social media and marketing skills through the internship. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to discussing my qualifications with you in the near future. I can be reached at (213) 123-4567 or by email at ttravel@usc.edu.

Best regards,

Tiffany Traveler