

Lecture # 3

Reader-Centered Writing

In this lecture you will learn

Writing your resumes

Defining your objectives

Planning

Drafting

Evaluating

Revising

Writing your letter of application

Defining your objectives

Planning

Drafting

Evaluating

Revising

Writing your Resume

Defining your objectives

The first activity of writing, defining objectives, is especially important whether you are writing a letter or a job application letter.

When defining your objectives, you tell what you want your communication to do. Thus your objectives form the basis of all your other work at writing.

To take the reader centered approach, you need to look at three things

- The final result you desire
- The people who will read your communication
- The specific way you want your communication to affect the people as they read your communication

Understanding your Reader

The first step in understanding your readers is to learn who they will be.

To find out who will read your resume, you will need to find out how your resume will be used by employers you apply to.

Typically employers recruit new employees in two stages.

In the first stage, employers try to attract applications from as many qualified people as possible.

At this stage of recruiting, resumes are usually read by people who work in personal office.

- To help understand the first stage you may find it helpful to draw an imaginary portrait of one of them.

- Imagine a man who sat down to read a stack of 25-50 new applications that arrived in today's mail.
- He doesn't have time to read through all the applications so he sorts quickly those applications which merit additional consideration.
- He quickly finds reasons to disqualify most applicants.
- Only occasionally does he read a full resume.
- As you write your resume you must keep in mind that it must quickly attract and hold that man's attention.
- In the second stage of recruiting, employers carefully scrutinize the qualifications of the most promising applicants.
- Often this involves the visit of the candidates to the employer's work place.
- The second stage reader of your resume include managers of the department you have to work for.
- To represent your reader you can imagine the head of department at this stage.
- This person is shorthanded and wants rapidly to fill one or more openings.
- When she gets the resumes, she knows precisely what qualifications she seeks.
- Of course, some job searches vary from two-stage recruiting procedure as described above.
- If you interview at a campus placement center, you will probably hand in your resume to the company recruiters at the same time you meet them.

Deciding how you want your resumes to affect your readers

- After you have identified the readers, you should determine how your resume will affect them in the job that you are seeking.
- More precisely you should define how your resume is to affect your readers *while they read it*.
- To determine that, you can think about two things
 - The way you want your communication to alter your reader's attitude.
 - The task you want to help your readers perform while they read.

Altering your Audience's Attitudes

- First determine how your audience feels before reading what you are writing, and then decide how you want them to feel after they have read it.
- However your reader's attitude before they read anything is neutral towards you.
- Once you have described your reader's present and desired attitudes, try to find out things about your reader that will help you plan a strategy for persuading them to change their attitudes the way you specified.
- To begin, find out what will appeal to your audience.

Altering your employer's attitudes

- As common sense will tell you, your employers will want to hire people who are
 - Capable – applicants must be able to perform the tasks assigned to them
 - Responsible – applicants must be trustworthy enough to benefit the organization.
 - Pleasant – Applicants must be able to interact compatibly with other employees on the job.
- Of course these qualifications are stated only generally.
- The reader of your resume will look for specific terms.
- Instead of asking “Is this applicant capable?” he will ask “Can this person program in Java” etc.

Helping your readers perform their tasks

- Different kinds of communication involve different tasks.
 - When you know what those tasks are, you can write your communications in a way that will help your readers perform them easily.
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- When reading your resume, your reader's primary task is to get the answers to the following questions
 - What exactly does the person want to do?
 - What kind of education does the person have for the job?
 - What experience does the person have in this or a similar job?
 - What other activities has the person engaged in that have helped him prepare for the job?
 - How can I get more information about the person's qualifications?
- Knowing that your readers will be looking for the answers to these questions tells you a great deal about what to include in your resume.

Planning

- When you plan you decide what to say and how to organize your material.
- In addition you should find any relevant expectations your readers have about your communication. --
- Those expectations may limit the choices you make concerning content and organization.

Deciding what to say

- Your definition of résumé's purpose provides you with direct help in determining what to say.
- In addition your resume is a persuasive argument whose purpose is convince your readers to hire you.
- The persuasive argument has two elements; a claim and evidence to support your claim.

- Your definition in of your objectives tells you what the implicit claim of your resume should be.
- That is, you are the kind of capable, responsible and pleasant person that employers want to hire.
- Furthermore, your objectives can help you identify the specific facts you can mention as evidence to support the claim about yourself.
- Your objectives do that by alerting you to the kind of questions your readers will be asking about your resume.

Conventional	Usual Questions By Readers	Persuasive Claims to Make
<i>Objective</i>	What, Exactly, do you want to do?	I have a sense of direction and I want a job that you have.
<i>Education Honors</i>	Do you have the required knowledge?	I have the required knowledge, perhaps more than you expected.
<i>Work Experience Activities</i>	Do you have experience in this or a similar job? What responsibilities have you had?	I have related experience in which I learned things directly relevant to the job I want. I was trusted by my employers.
<i>Interests</i>	Do your interests show that you would be a pleasant and compatible employee?	I am an interesting, well-rounded person who can work well with others.
<i>References</i>	How can I get more information about your qualifications?	Important people with knowledge of my business qualifications will attest that I would make a good employee.

Organizing your material

- When planning a communication, you need to decide not only what you will say but also how you will organize your material.
- For example your definition of resume objectives requires you emphasize the points as major evidence that you are qualified for the job you seek.

- More than one organizational pattern can be used to achieve those objectives.
- Most resumes are organized around applicant's experience.
- Thus you can categorize them under educational experiences, work experiences, and so on.
- However some individuals choose to organize a substantial part of their resume around their accomplishments and abilities.
- Such a resume is called a *functional Resume* because it emphasizes the functions and tasks the applicant can perform.
- Whichever organizational pattern you choose, you must still decide the order you will present your resume.
- If you think about your readers in the act of reading your resume, you will see that you have to make your name and professional achievements prominent.
- If you are writing a *conventional resume* you can provide the desired prominence by placing the name and professional objectives at the top.
- If you are designing a non-conventional resume you may place your name along the bottom or side.
- After stating your professional objective, you should organize your remaining material by following one of the most basic strategies for writing at work; put the most important information first.
- This will ensure that your hurried readers come to the most important information quickly.

•Finding out What's expected

- A final task involved with planning a communication is to consider the expectations your audience have about it.
- Often expectations arise from custom, reflecting conventional rather than required ways of doing things.
- Applying for jobs at a highly ritualized activity in our society and many conventions about resumes exist.
- However these conventions vary from one place to another.
- So to deal with them effectively is to refer to the same advice; learn about your readers and create your communications effectively.
- For example people in conservative fields take a similar conservative approach to resumes.
- To them resume should be typed in a white, buff or gray paper with the applicant's name and address at the top.
- Keep in mind, the conventions in your fields may be different and you may have to do some investigating to learn whether or not that is the case.

Drafting

- When you draft, you transform your plans – your notes, outlines, and ideas – into a communication.
- For your resumes that you create at work, you must not only draft a prose but also draft the design the visual appearance of your message.

Drafting the Prose

- While you draft the prose of your resume, keep in mind your imaginary portraits of your readers.
- Remember that your purpose is to enable those people to locate the answers to their questions relating you.
- The feeling by personnel manager may surprise you
 - “After all, once I present my qualifications, shouldn't an employer be able to match me to an appropriate opening?”
 - The answer to that question lies in your imaginary portrait of your reader.
- What should your professional objectives look like?
- By convention, such statements are one or two sentences long and are usually general enough that the write could send them, without alteration to many prospect employers.
- If you follow the convention for example you would not say
 - “I want to work in the process control department of Adam Jee cloth manufacturing unit.”
- Instead you would make a more general statement like
 - “I want to work in the process control of a mid-sized cloth manufacturing unit.”
- This does not mean, however, that you need to develop a single professional objective that you can send to all employers you might contact.

Professional Objectives

- When you state your professional objective, you answer your reader's questions ‘what exactly do you want to do?’; your answer can be extremely important to the resume.
- In contrast people in other fields such as advertising are accustomed to seeing highly unconventional resumes, perhaps printed on pink paper.
- In a survey, personnel officers of 500 largest corporations of United States reported that the most serious problem they find with the resume, is the failure to specify the job and career objectives.
- You could write multiple resumes each with a professional objective suited to respective fields.
- Continued...
- Consequently, the challenge you face when writing your professional objective is to be neither too general nor too specific.
- You have struck the proper balance if you could send the same resume to several companies and if your readers can see that you want to work in a particular kind of *organization*.

Education

- When describing your education you provide evidence that you are capable of performing the job you applied for.
- The basic evidence is your college degree, so you should name the college and your degree and the date of graduation.

Remember

- If your grades are good, mention them
- If you have earned any academic honors mention them.
- If you have any specialized academic experience, such as a co-op assignment or internship, describe it.

Example

- By looking at Ramon and Sharon's resumes you can how three very different people have elaborated on the way their education qualify them for the jobs they want.
- Ramon for example describes his honors in a separate section, thereby making them more prominent than they would have been under the simple heading of 'Education'

Ramon Perez

16 Henry Street
Brooklyn, New York 11231
Days (212) 374-7631
Home: (718) 563-2291

Professional Objective	A position as a systems analyst where I can use my knowledge of computer science and business to develop customized systems for financial institutions.
Education	New York University. B.S. in Computer Science December 19 GPA 3.4 overall; 3.7 in major Computer classes include artificial intelligence and expert systems, computer security, data communication, deterministic systems, stochastic, systems design Business classes include accounting, banking, finance, economics, business law Worked full-time while completing last half of course work
Honors	Dean's List three times Golden Key National Honor Society
Related Work Experience	Miller Health Spas, New York City, 1988-Present. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helped convert to a new computerized accounting system• Served on a four-person team that wrote user documentation for the new system• Trained new employees• Earned employee of the Month Award twice
References	Professor Mildred Do brick Finance Department New York University New York, NY 12234 (212) 254-9642 Professor R. Theodore Berger Communication Department New York Department New York, NY 12234 (212) 254-7539 Wilson Meyer Hoff Senior Accountant Miller Health Spas New York, NY 12232 (212) 671-9007

Sharon Pollock

Objective	A position as corporate Manager of Drilling Operations for an international oil company
Summary	Fourteen years of experience in a variety of drilling operations in both the United States and overseas. Steady progression in management and budgetary responsibilities. Extensive record of success in introducing technical innovations that improved drilling performance.

Experience and Achievements

Pilot Petroleum Company

Regional Drilling Engineer 1986-Present

Responsible for Pilot's drilling operations throughout the entire Gulf of Mexico Region. Coordinate comprehensive drilling programs for both exploration and new oil field development. Prepare one-year and three-year drilling plans for corporate head-quarters. Prepare and administer a \$60,000,000 annual budget. Select drilling contractors and negotiate all contractual agreements with them.

Successfully integrated the drilling operations of three small companies acquired by Pilot.

Introduced measurement-while-drilling technology to the company, reducing drilling time for directional holes by an estimated 12%.

Sharon Pollock

Previous Employment

Neptune Oil – Corpus Christi, Texas <i>Engineering Summer Intern</i>	1975-1976
Lawson Enterprises – Galveston, Texas Roustabout during summer vacations from college	1974

Education

University of Texas at Austin, B.S. in petroleum Engineering	1977
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Certification

Registered Professional Engineer in Alaska, Colorado, Louisiana, and Texas

Professional Honors and Service

Member, Industrial Advisor Council, University of Texas	1989-Present
Society of Petroleum Engineers Distinguished Lecturer	1988

Professional Memberships

Member, Society of Petroleum Engineers of AIME
Member, Society of Professional Well Log Analysts
Member, Pi Epsilon Tau (Petroleum Engineering Honorary)

Personal

Born: 8/24/54 Excellent Health Married, three children

Ordering your jobs

- When deciding on the order in which to present your jobs, remember that you want to enable your busy readers to see your most impressive qualification.
- Most people can achieve that objective by stating their jobs in the reverse chronological order because their most recent job is also their most impressive.

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- Writing your resumes
 - Defining your objectives
 - Planning
 - Drafting
 - Evaluating
 - Revising

In this lecture you will learnt

- Writing your letter of application
 - Defining your objectives
 - Planning
 - Drafting
 - Evaluating
 - Revising