

WRITING AN EFFECTIVE RESUME

The importance of creating a marketable resume is evident to anyone who has already participated in the job search process. You must be able to produce an excellent resume and be prepared to elaborate on and articulate your skills and accomplishments in an interview. Remember that there is no such thing as a perfect or final resume. It is a living document that is always in process. Once you have completed a rough draft of your resume, contact the Career Center to schedule your resume critique.

WHAT IS A RESUME?

A resume is a one or two page summary of relevant information giving a prospective employer an idea of who you are by outlining what you have done and highlighting your experiences and qualifications as they pertain to the needs of the position and/or organization. In outline form, you define how your education, skills, and experience relate to the position(s) you are seeking.

A well-designed resume should be a clear and concise summary of your experiences, skills, achievements, and qualifications. Your resume will serve the following purposes:

- **Self-inventory:** You will be better prepared to discuss your capabilities and career goals once you've analyzed your present and past experiences.
- **Interview agenda:** An employer will use your resume as a guide during an interview.
- **Reminder:** Your resume will be useful to the employer as he/she considers you for a position after an interview.

An effective resume, above all else, accurately reflects who you are. Make it work for you. To get the best results from your job search, you have to market yourself effectively. A targeted and well-written resume is an essential component of a directed and effective job search.

EVALUATE YOUR EXPERIENCES

The best place to start in preparing your resume is to do an inventory of your past experiences. Make sure you consider all of your past experiences, including jobs, internships, extracurricular activities, academic accomplishments, and volunteer work. Under each of the areas, list what your experience entailed, including:

- level of involvement, leadership responsibilities
- tasks or duties performed
- accomplishments and outcomes
- specific skills and abilities used (e.g., analytical, research, creative)

Critique what you have recorded as if you were the employer, and remember to tailor your resume to highlight those items that reflect your career objective. You may even elect to write more than one resume if you plan to apply for positions in different fields and will be focusing on different skills (e.g., research vs. sales).

SECTIONS OF A RESUME

Make your resume work for you! Evaluate your experiences and decide how to best display your skills, experiences and achievements. You should include the following sections: **Summary** or **Objective**, **Education** and **Experience**. After that, it's up to you to choose what fits you and your experiences. Possible sections include: **Skills**, **Research Experience**, Teaching Experience, Community Involvement, Leadership Activities, Honors, Professional Memberships, Campus Activities, **Project Experience**, **Volunteer Work**, and **Relevant Coursework**.

SUMMARY: THE MOST IMPORTANT SECTION OF A RESUME.

- Read first and given only about 10 seconds; reader makes the decision to continue based on the information provided here.
- Sometimes easier to write after the rest of the resume – pull out important information from body of resume.
- Defines who you are in the first couple of words and also what you've done in the past.
- Includes skills and qualities you possess, areas of expertise or strengths. These must be supported by some accomplishments within other sections of the resume.

ENTRY-LEVEL SUMMARY STATEMENT EXAMPLES

Example 1

- More than two years of progressive accounting and auditing experience.
- Auditor internship with Ernst & Young in New York City.
- Magna Cum Laude graduate with BS in Accounting.

Example 2

Accomplished, achievement-driven, and results-oriented honors student. Demonstrated leadership and innovation experience. Seeking opportunity in a non-profit organization focused on community development.

ENTRY-LEVEL SUMMARY STATEMENT EXAMPLES CONTINUED ///

Example 3

Multilingual business student with extensive entrepreneurial and business experience. Awarded 2013 Student Leader Award for exemplary service in student government. Fluent in English, Spanish and Portuguese.

Example 4

- Academically-gifted second year student excelling at math and physics.
- Consistently displayed leadership abilities as president of sorority.
- Strong qualifications in customer relationship management and employee supervision/training.

GRADUATE-LEVEL SUMMARY STATEMENTS

Example 1

Mechanical engineer offering 5 years of research experience in combustion, controls, design, and actuation technology. Proven leadership and teamwork skills. Seeking career opportunity in automotive industry.

Example 2

Doctoral candidate in Biochemistry with 10+ years of experience in the healthcare industry. Skilled in project management, research, and facilitating presentations. Seeking consulting opportunity.

Example 3

PhD candidate in Operations Research with research experience in scheduling, linear/integer programming, statistics, logistics and combinatorial optimization. Research interests include forecasting, revenue management, inventory management and simulation.

Example 4

Experienced scientist with expertise in protein purification and microarray technology. Exceptional leadership abilities and outstanding oral and written communication skills. Able to work independently or as part of a multidisciplinary team.

OBJECTIVE STATEMENT

Some students may choose to use an Objective Statement instead of a Summary. An Objective is more focused on what type of opportunity you are seeking. However, it can also include skills that you have to offer.

Example 1

Seeking a summer internship opportunity in financial services. Offering strong leadership and organizational skills and coursework in accounting.

Example 2

To obtain a full-time opportunity in chemical engineering. Possess strong laboratory and research skills.

Example 3

Seeking Research 1 position for the Cleveland Clinic to continue to build on my 3+ years of undergraduate research experience.

Example 4

Mechanical Engineering senior who offers strong technical and problem-solving skills seeks mechanical engineering co-op or internship opportunity.

EDUCATION

- Degrees earned (abbreviated consistently), school names, locations, and graduation dates
- Include GPA if greater than 3.0
- Exchange programs should be listed underneath the sponsoring school

Example 1

CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY, Cleveland, OH
Bachelor of Arts, English and History, May 2014

- **GPA:** 3.6/4.0

Example 2

CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY
Ph.D, Chemical Engineering
M.S., Chemistry

Cleveland, OH
May 2014
May 2009

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

Bachelor of Science
Major: Chemistry
Major: Biology
Graduated Cum Laude

Columbus, OH
June 2007

Example 3

Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH
Ph.D., Mechanical Engineering, May 2009 GPA: 3.8 / 4.0
 Thesis: "xxx"
 Advisor: Professor Jan Jones
M.S., Mechanical Engineering, May 2004 GPA: 3.5 / 4.0
 Thesis: "xxx"
 Advisor: Professor Bob Smith

University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH GPA: 3.7 / 4.0
B.S., Mechanical Engineering, June 2002

EXPERIENCE

- Start with your most recent experience and work backwards
- List the company, city and state, your title and dates
- List bullets that describe meaningful achievements/accomplishments, showing where and how you added value to the position you held. See page 71 for sample sentences.
- PAR approach – Problem, Action, Result, stated in any order
- Action + goal/result/skill developed
- Always start with a strong ACTION VERB (see the list on pages 87-88) and include some measurable/quantifiable (if at all possible) result.
- Continue this approach for each of the jobs you held.

EXPERIENCE EXAMPLE TEMPLATE

Company

Title

- Action + goal / result
- Action + skill developed

Location

Dates



EXPERIENCE SECTION EXAMPLES

Heartland Community Hospital

Heartland, GA

Dietary Technician Intern

January 2013-May 2013

- Planned menu selection for patients to ensure balanced nutrition
- Kept daily record of food, refrigerator, and dish machine temperatures
- Conducted inventory and ordered food products as needed
- Coordinated activities for food service employees to increase employee morale

Case Western Reserve University: Structures and Systems Lab

Cleveland, OH

Research Assistant, Professor Ronald Science

June 2012-Present

- Develop analytical models for a fuel injector and simulated the system in Simulink.
- Design and construct control systems lab exercises involving PID and PPF control.
- Program systems in C. Derive design equations for actuators that included entities such as deflection and block force. Validate design metric using MTS hydraulic force/displacement system.

Goodrich Corporation, Landing Gear Division

Cleveland, OH

Intern

August 2013-Present

- Design and manage Six-Sigma project focused on decreasing the frequency of structural deformations in landing gears during various phases of the heat treatment process.
- Define a rigorous testing protocol for software packages designed to accurately predict structural deformations in steel due to thermal stresses.

Case Western Reserve University, Department of Computer Science

Cleveland, Ohio

Lab Assistant (August 2013 – present)

- Supervise labs of approximately 50 computers and answer student questions on the software
- Balance a full-time course schedule while working 15 hours per week

Case Western Reserve University, Office of Admissions

Cleveland, Ohio

Office Assistant (Summer 2012)

- Demonstrated organizational skills by filing documents and training others to new filing format.
- Processed and entered data into an Excel spreadsheet in a timely manner. Maintained 99% accuracy

TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

To be successful in the workplace, you have to possess transferable skills. Transferable skills are a product of your talents, traits and knowledge. These skills determine how you respond to new activities, work situations or jobs. Everyone has transferable skills, though it isn't always obvious when and how you've used them. It's your job to identify these skills and highlight them on your resume.

For example, the fact that you served customers their food during a summer job isn't necessarily going to win you points with a recruiter. However, describing on your resume how working in this situation helped you develop your interpersonal skills is relevant.

Before: Served customers their food.

After: Successfully interacted with a diverse customer base while providing exceptional customer service.

Transferable skills are non-job specific skills that you have acquired during any activity or life experience. Draw from activities and experiences such as campus and community activities, class projects, and assignments, hobbies, athletic activities, internships and summer part-time jobs.

Skills Most Desired by Employers

According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), the top twenty personal qualities/skills employers requested are:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Analytical skills | 11. Leadership and management skills |
| 2. Communication skills | 12. Motivation/initiative |
| 3. Computer skills | 13. Organizational and time management skills |
| 4. Creativity | 14. Real life experiences |
| 5. Detail-oriented | 15. Self-confidence |
| 6. Entrepreneurial skills/risk-taker | 16. Strong work ethic |
| 7. Flexibility/adaptability | 17. Tactfulness |
| 8. Friendly/outgoing personality | 18. Teamwork skills (works well with others) |
| 9. Honesty/integrity | 19. Technical skills |
| 10. Interpersonal skills (relates well to others) | 20. Well-mannered/polite |

TRANSFERABLE SKILLS CHECKLIST

Check off the skills you already have, and then use these phrases to help build your resume.

COMMUNICATION

- ☐ speaking effectively
- ☐ writing clearly and concisely
- ☐ listening attentively and objectively
- ☐ expressing ideas
- ☐ facilitating group discussions
- ☐ interviewing
- ☐ editing
- ☐ responding appropriately to +/- feedback
- ☐ using various media to present ideas imaginatively
- ☐ providing appropriate feedback
- ☐ negotiating
- ☐ perceiving nonverbal messages
- ☐ persuading
- ☐ reporting information
- ☐ describing feelings
- ☐ public speaking
- ☐ using various styles of written communication
- ☐ conveying a positive self image to others

CRITICAL THINKING/PROBLEM SOLVING

- ☐ anticipating problems before they occur
- ☐ defining problems and identifying possible causes
- ☐ identifying possible solutions and selecting the most appropriate ones
- ☐ creating innovative solutions to complex problems
- ☐ involving group members to evaluate solutions
- ☐ developing plans to implement solutions
- ☐ multi-tasking
- ☐ identifying a general principle that explains interrelated experience

RESEARCH/PLANNING/INVESTIGATION

- ☐ forecasting/predicting
- ☐ creating ideas
- ☐ identifying problems
- ☐ imagining alternatives
- ☐ identifying resources
- ☐ gathering information
- ☐ solving problems
- ☐ setting goals
- ☐ extracting important information
- ☐ analyzing
- ☐ developing evaluation strategies
- ☐ testing validity of data
- ☐ designing an experiment or model
- ☐ formulating questions
- ☐ making conclusions
- ☐ conceptualizing
- ☐ observing and discovering
- ☐ defining needs

TRANSFERABLE SKILLS CHECKLIST CONTINUED ///

Check off the skills you already have, and then use these phrases to help build your resume.

HUMAN RELATIONS/INTERPERSONAL

- ☐ developing rapport
- ☐ being sensitive
- ☐ listening
- ☐ conveying feelings
- ☐ providing support for others
- ☐ motivating
- ☐ sharing credit
- ☐ helping others
- ☐ counseling
- ☐ cooperating
- ☐ keeping a group "on track"
- ☐ being patient
- ☐ interacting effectively with peers, superiors, and subordinates
- ☐ persuading others
- ☐ being willing to take risks
- ☐ teaching/instructing others
- ☐ demonstrating effective social behavior
- ☐ perceiving feelings and situations
- ☐ delegating with respect
- ☐ working with diversity or multi-cultural issues

PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR

- ☐ implementing decisions
- ☐ cooperating with others
- ☐ enforcing policies
- ☐ being punctual
- ☐ managing time and stress
- ☐ attention to details
- ☐ working effectively under pressure
- ☐ taking initiative in job-related duties
- ☐ discerning appropriate behaviors for the workplace
- ☐ meeting goals
- ☐ enlisting help
- ☐ accepting responsibility
- ☐ setting and meeting deadlines
- ☐ organizing
- ☐ making decisions
- ☐ seeking opportunities for professional development
- ☐ evaluating personal and professional strengths and weaknesses

TRANSFERABLE SKILLS CHECKLIST CONTINUED ///

Check off the skills you already have, and then use these phrases to help build your resume.

ORGANIZATION/MANAGEMENT/LEADERSHIP/ DECISION MAKING

- ☐ initiating new ideas and tasks
- ☐ handling details
- ☐ coordinating tasks
- ☐ coaching/mentoring
- ☐ counseling
- ☐ managing conflict
- ☐ motivating and leading people
- ☐ organizing people/tasks to achieve a specific goal
- ☐ following up with others to evaluate progress
- ☐ conducting meetings
- ☐ giving praise and credit to others for a job well done
- ☐ solving problems/mediating
- ☐ taking risks
- ☐ implementing sound decisions
- ☐ managing groups
- ☐ delegating responsibility
- ☐ teaching/instructing
- ☐ promoting change
- ☐ selling ideas or products
- ☐ making decisions with others
- ☐ analyzing tasks
- ☐ identifying people who can contribute to solutions of problems or tasks
- ☐ facilitating brainstorming activities
- ☐ developing goals for an organization
- ☐ prioritizing tasks
- ☐ encouraging and inspiring
- ☐ negotiating agreements
- ☐ taking responsibility for decisions

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- ☐ developing a budget, accurately estimating expenses and income
- ☐ keeping accurate and complete financial records
- ☐ accounting
- ☐ assessing
- ☐ ensuring timeliness of payments
- ☐ fundraising
- ☐ calculating
- ☐ projecting/forecasting
- ☐ investing

TRANSFERABLE SKILLS EXAMPLES IN A RESUME

- Before: Oversaw floor of residents.
After: Effectively resolved conflicts arising periodically on a floor of over 50 residents to ensure a safe and comfortable living environment.
- Before: Responsible for supervising shift.
After: Demonstrated ability to work effectively under pressure, accept responsibility, as well as cooperate and implement decisions. Promoted to shift supervisor after 2 months at company, based on performance.
- Before: Led team of 3 in class project.
After: Used persuasion skills to convince team to take a nontraditional approach to semester project. Interacted effectively with team and professor to lead team to highest marks possible.
- Before: Sold computers to customers.
After: Improved communication skills by asking relevant questions and listening attentively and objectively to customer needs. Extracted important information from dialog to make best possible recommendation to customer. Earned Sales Employee of the Month Award based on total sales and customer satisfaction ratings.
- Before: Helped tutor middle school students.
After: Provided one-on-one small group tutoring to students in math, english and biology. Developed original study tips guide for students.

ACHIEVEMENT PHRASES

It is important to describe your experience in terms of your accomplishments/achievements. The following questions can serve as stimuli in identifying and writing your career achievements.

- Did you help increase sales? membership? contributions?
- Did you save the company money? time?
- Did you implement a new procedure or system?
- Did you suggest or “roll out” any new products or programs for your company?
- Did you receive any awards or special recognition?
- Did you train anyone?
- Were you asked to do a special project?
- Did you exceed your goals or objectives?

SAMPLE ACHIEVEMENT PHRASES

- Developed an accounting system that eliminated duplications and resulted in \$25,000 annual savings.
- Developed a safety training program for supervisors that reduced incidents by 46%.
- Led company in sales each of last 3 years.
- Automated the inventory system that reduced warehouse materials by 30%.
- Improved customer service and reduced complaints by 12%.
- Collaborated with inventory control, manufacturing and customer service functions to reduce average shipping time by 11%.

RESUME STYLE TIPS

FORMATTING

- Information should be presented in reverse chronological order and aligned and spaced consistently
- Leave adequate margins / white space around and throughout the resume (no smaller than 0.5 inch)
- Avoid using color, graphics, or graphical enhancements
- Consider using numbers and characters, instead of writing the words out. This will draw the eye directly to the page. (e.g. 7 vs. "seven", \$ vs. "dollars," % instead of "percent")

FONT

- Must be consistent – only 1 Font style throughout the resume. Recommended/easy-to-read fonts include: Times New Roman, Garamond, Verdana, Arial, Sans Serif
- Should be no smaller than 10 point and not condensed. Avoid italics, as they don't scan well

LENGTH

- One page for undergraduates; and as a general guideline, one page per degree or one page per 10 years of experience
- Second page must have name and page number in header/footer and enough information to fill at least 1/2 page if used

GRAMMAR

- Use a variety of action verbs; do not repeat the same word over and over
- Sentence fragments are acceptable
- Do not use first person (I, our, my)
- Do not rely on Microsoft Spell Checker to be your proof reader – triple check everything
- Use appropriate subject-verb tense and action verb tense (e.g., all positions that you held previously should be in the past tense)
- Be consistent in use of verb tense, formatting and style, including dashes, periods, commas and semi-colons

SAVING

- Once you get it on paper, READ IT and have others (3-5) review it to ensure that your resume is meaningful (to what you want to do next), well-written, and concise.
- Save resumes as Last Name, First Name "Resume".doc (e.g., Smith, Jane Resume.doc)

LETTERHEAD

- Name, home address, e-mail, phone. Name on page 2, if applicable
- Consistent on all other correspondence, including cover letters, thank you letters, reference list

EXAMPLE:

Joseph M. Smith

12345 Cedar Road, #222 ▪ Cleveland, OH 44106 ▪ joseph.smith@case.edu ▪ 216.555.1234