

The background of the cover is a light blue color. In the top left corner, there is a partial illustration of a laptop keyboard. In the top right, a blue notebook with a white pen resting on it is shown. In the bottom left, a blue pencil is depicted. In the bottom right, a blue envelope is visible. A white rectangular box with a black border is centered on the page, containing the title and subtitle.

HOW TO BUILD A ROCKSTAR RESUME

A COMPLETE GUIDE

ROHAN PUNAMIA

Letter to the Reader

Hey!

Did you know the average job posting has 250 applicants? And that's for average jobs... I bet you're aiming for the cream of the crop jobs.

Among other things, you will need to have a top-notch resume to stand out. That's why I wrote this guide -- to consolidate my thoughts on resume writing into one, convenient place.

This resume structure works well for competitive entry-level jobs and is derived from both my personal recruiting journey and my friend who spent two years at McKinsey. On top of that, this guide has the stamp of approval from friends who work at top technology companies, consulting firms, investment banks, and more.

Writing a resume is not rocket science, but it is also not intuitive. At UC Berkeley, I relied on older friends and mentors to help with the nitty gritty of recruiting, like writing a resume.

My goal with *2 by 22* is to be that mentor -- someone who's been through what you're struggling with. I will give you specific and tactical career advice to help you manage your future through emails once every other week.

If a friend sent you this guide, subscribe below and let's kick ass together. If you've already subscribed, welcome to *2 by 22*!

Best,

Rohan, Founder of *2 by 22*



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Note: There is no such thing as a one-size-fits-all resume guide. The same resume will not be effective for both a neuroscience research position and investment banking internship. This guide is intended to cover the most important basics, which apply to most new-graduate jobs and internships. It is a fantastic starting point from which you can tailor to your specific career interests.

The Most Important Sections in Your Resume

Let's start with the basics:

What content do you include in your resume?

The most effective resumes I've seen have the following sections:

1. Name and Contact Info (always at the top)
2. Education (always the first section)
3. Professional Experience
4. Leadership/Extracurriculars/Side Projects
5. Awards/Skills (optional)
6. Interests

Name/Contact Information

Education

Professional
Experience

Leadership/ECS/
Side Projects

Skill/Awards

Interest

NAME/CONTACT INFORMATION

This is self-explanatory: make sure your name is at the top in **big** and **bold** lettering.

Your name should be significantly larger than the next largest font size used on your resume.

Underneath your name, include your contact information such as your address, email (no email handles from 6th grade), phone number, personal website, etc. Aside from your LinkedIn URL (optional), do not put social media profiles on your resume.

Easy, right? On to the next!

EDUCATION

This is one of the most important sections for college students. Given that most students do not have years of work experience, employers rely on your academic background as a proxy to assess your intelligence and fit for their firm. Below is a list of 5 things you should consider including in your education section:

- 1. Name of all universities you've attended (study abroad included) with expected graduation year.**

Including your study abroad university can be a fantastic way to spark conversation with your interviewer! If you do not put your graduation year, many companies will assume you are not qualified and auto-reject your resume. If you're a Freshman, you can leave your high school name and GPA on your resume but try to move away from that as soon as possible.

- 2. Your major(s), minor(s), and any concentrations**

- 3. Your GPA (optional)**

This depends heavily on your major and type of jobs you are applying to. For general business-related jobs, include your GPA on your resume. Even for jobs that don't care about GPA, if you have over a 3.5 you should include it on your resume. If you have a significantly higher major GPA than cumulative GPA, use that. If your GPA is low (<3.0), omit it from your resume -- it will only hurt you.

- 4. Your SAT/ACT score (optional)**

This is a controversial one but follows a similar story to GPA. Your gut reaction might be "Isn't SAT a high school thing?" You're right, but that doesn't stop employers from caring -- especially for business-related jobs.

If you have a high standardized test score (roughly >31 ACT or >2100 SAT), include it on your resume. It is a helpful data point for employers to assess you -- like GPA. If you have a lower composite score but a high quantitative score, you can include just that component on your resume. A strong quantitative score is a signal that you are analytical, which is an important skill for many jobs.

Like GPA, if you have low standardized test scores all around, completely omit them from your resume.

If you are an engineer, have a science background, or are generally not aiming for business-related jobs, you can omit standardized test scores from your resume altogether.

5. Relevant coursework to the job you are applying to (more specific is better)

Given that I was a business major with a concentration in technology, my relevant coursework section includes: Buy-side Investing, Corporate Finance, Product Management, Strategy Consulting, Accounting, Negotiations and Conflict Resolutions.

I did not put generic classes (prerequisites) like Calculus, English, etc. That's not very relevant. I like to put more elective classes than core classes because it can spark a conversation: "Oh I see you took negotiations, that was my favorite class" vs. "oh nice, basic accounting and calculus" (said nobody ever).

If you are a Freshman or Sophomore and have not taken any interesting elective or core classes, it's okay to include generic classes, but try to move away from those as soon as possible.

Note: The GPA and standardized test scores are just guidelines. Some firms have solid cutoffs, while others don't care as much. Use your judgement to decide whether to include it on your resume or not.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

This is the most important section! Include any relevant professional experience on your resume in chronological order.

When you are younger (Freshman or Sophomore) with little relevant experience, it is okay to include retail jobs or other work experience from high school. In doing so...

1. Make sure you tie those experiences into your story when in an interview or informational coffee chat
2. Try to get enough relevant experience in college to drop that old/irrelevant experience from your resume as soon as possible

As you get older and rack up more professional experience, it gets harder to fit everything on 1 page. When this happens, prioritize the most important internships or jobs for the role you are applying to.

When I applied to full time jobs my senior year, I showcased 3 out of 5 internships on my resume. They were my 3 strongest and most relevant. For some jobs, I opted to showcase older internships that were more relevant (industry or experience-wise).

In general, aim to have 2-4 professional experiences on your resume. With each professional experience, put the company name in bold letters, the location of the job, and position title. Also put the date during which you worked at that company. Example:

EXPERIENCE

The Walt Disney Company, Burbank, CA

June 2016 – Current

Corporate Strategy and Business Development Summer Analyst (In-House Strategy and M&A Team)

Below each professional experience headline, write 3 bullets of content (minimum 2, no more than 4).

But wait, how do I write Rockstar bullets? Slow down, we'll get there!

Note: If you received a return offer, you can put that as an extra short bullet or next to your position title in the header. Letting your prospective employer know that you received a return offer from your last internship is helpful. That being said, it usually only carries weight if your last internship was with a brand name company.

LEADERSHIP, EXTRACURRICULARS, AND SIDE PROJECTS

This is the other important section that is often overlooked by students but should be close in size to the professional experience section. Somebody once told me, "McKinsey likes presidents and founders of organizations, not members or followers."

While I think that's a bit of a snobby oversimplification, there is some truth to it. Many companies in consulting, finance, technology, and other competitive industries crave students who showcase their leadership experience and entrepreneurial endeavors outside of the university curriculum. Let these experiences shine in this section with the same format as those from the Professional Experience section.

Some examples of experiences to include are:

- Student club/organization involvement (preferably leadership role)
- Side projects with tangible results (startup/business endeavor, graphic design, programming projects, etc.)
- Nonprofit work
- Captain of sports team
- Student government

If you don't have any leadership experience (maybe you're a Freshman or Sophomore), put your role in the club -- even if it is just "member." As a member, take on leadership responsibilities even though you don't have a title. You want to show that you were an impactful member who takes initiative. As you progress through college, strive for those leadership positions.

Why is leadership so important?

This is a rhetorical question I ask my friends who consider running for president/leadership of a student organization: "Once you graduate, when is the next time you will be responsible for managing and leading 50+ people?"

Being the president of an organization teaches you about organizational structure, culture, and teamwork far more than any class will. It's an incredible way to get this type of experience early in your career. Likely the next time you will lead this many people is if you're an executive of a company, so don't miss out on the opportunity to learn "executive" lessons in college.

AWARDS AND SKILLS

This is an optional section. If you do include it, keep it brief. This is where you want to list the following:

- Awards
- Scholarships
- Competitions
- Academic Honors

For each award, give some description of how selective the award is. For example:

- Summa Cum laude (top 5% of class)
- Coca-Cola Scholarship (awarded to 150 students nationwide)
- 2nd place Goldman Sachs Case Competition (2nd out of 20 teams)

This helps convey the importance of each award and will be especially useful for lesser-known awards you may have. If the award is well known (coincidentally, all three of the above examples are well-known awards), you can omit the selectivity description.

In this section, you can also include relevant skills. One of the biggest mistakes I see on 80% of resumes is the use of irrelevant skills.

For example, do not waste valuable words on your resume citing that you are skilled with Microsoft Word. You should probably never have Microsoft Word as a skill for any job... if 10-year old kids are using Snapchat it is assumed you know how to use a word processor. Relevant skills are skills that are directly applicable to the job you are applying to. Some example for various roles:

- Data Analyst: Proficient in SQL and R statistical analysis, Excel modeling
- Graphic Designer: Balsamiq wireframing, advanced Photoshop
- Business Analyst: Storyboarding and decking, financial modeling, data analysis with Excel (pivot tables, V-lookups, index match)

A few things I want to call out here:

1. Try to use words like “proficient” or “advanced” when applicable to indicate your experience with the skill. On paper, there’s no difference between an experienced graphic designer listing “Photoshop” on their resume and a complete novice also listing “Photoshop” as a skill. Emphasize your strongest skills to stand out.
2. Use adjectives to describe your depth of understanding. For example, PowerPoint is a basic skill. However, someone familiar with more advanced use cases of PowerPoint would appreciate the phrases “storyboarding” and “decking.” Same idea with Excel, where I indicated a few common functions that are well-known for data analysis and modeling. By sprinkling in a little industry-relevant jargon, it makes you seem like a stronger fit.
3. Limit your skills to 2 lines on your resume. It’s helpful to score easy points in an interview or resume screen, but will likely not get you the job.

INTERESTS

This is the last section in your resume (and the most fun)! The purpose of the Interests section is to humanize your resume.

Use these last 1-2 lines to list out a few very specific interests or hobbies you have. While these generally should not be professional, keep in mind your prospective employer will see this so use your judgement.

Let's first talk about what not to do. Many students write the following:

- Interests: Traveling, hiking, basketball, reading, dining

Boring! If I asked 10 of my friends if they like dining and traveling, all 10 of them would say yes. These are not specific or interesting enough.

You want your interest section to pop out and make the interviewer say, "wow, that's interesting, tell me more about that." This can make interviews a lot more comfortable and earn you serious credibility.

Let's try this again:

- Interests: Backpacking in Southeast Asia, hiking in Yosemite, pickup basketball (Warriors fan), science fiction novels, hole-in-the-wall Mexican food

See how we can take the same experiences and make them sound much more interesting? Some other examples of great interests I've seen include: spearfishing, sailing on the Marina, reef diving (80ft), espresso barista, classical violin, etc. You can even include a TV show or movie that you love, like "Game of Thrones" or "Blade Runner."

Of course, only list interests that are real. Do not try to fake this. It's disingenuous, and you will have difficulty talking about the subject when asked.

How to Write Powerful, Impact-Driven Bullets

Resume readers scan your resume for less than 30 seconds. I know it sounds crazy, but it's true at many companies. With hundreds or thousands of high-quality resumes per job, readers don't have time to give each resume the care and dedication it deserves.

Welcome to the real world.

In fact, many resume readers just skim the bolded headlines and first few words of each bullet. So how do you catch a reader's attention?

Impact-driven bullets.

With poorly written bullets, the reader will not be interested in your experience. Conversely, well-written and impact-driven bullets will entice the reader into your experiences.

Start your bullet with the impact or outcome followed by what you did. Write out what you did, then ask yourself "what was the impact of this" or "so what?" Once you figure out the impact/so what, rewrite the bullet with the impact first followed by what you did and how you did it afterwards (how is optional). This is the reverse of what most students do.

Bonus points if you can quantify your impact (percentage, dollars, etc.). I realize this is hard. It's okay to take liberties with how you calculate the percent or dollar impact, but make sure your impact is believable. As an alternative to numerical quantification, you can mention who you presented your work to (the more senior the better). And don't lie. Never lie. You don't want the resume reader to second guess your honesty because you claimed to save the company \$50M in a 3-month internship.

Here are three examples of the first few words of action-oriented bullets:

- "Reduced customer service response time by 10%..."
- "Spearheaded \$2M cost-savings strategy..."
- "Increased customer engagement by 5% (\$300k annually) by..."

When skimming these bullets, the reader immediately thinks "wow this person gets shit done." That's the exact response you want to elicit.

Unfortunately, here's an example of a typical student-written bullet (tells reader what he/she did):

- Utilized proprietary analytics platform to identify assumptions and drivers for security market to locate 7 new sales opportunities

Now, this is what a high-quality, impact-driven bullet looks like (quantifies impact):

- Identified \$150,000 in new sales opportunities through a market analysis of the consumer security market using SQL, Excel, and proprietary analytics platforms.

A few takeaways:

1. The second bullet catches your attention immediately. Wow... \$150,000 in sales... tell me more. Yet all this person did was convert "7 new sales opportunities" to an estimated dollar value. Slight change, big impact.
2. Make your analysis clearly relatable to the jobs you are applying to. Writing "identify assumptions and drivers for security market" leaves me wondering what assumptions and drivers were identified? Instead, the phrase "market analysis of consumer security market" uses transferable language that is well known to professionals in business strategy, which this resume was tailored towards
3. Similarly, it's important to make your skills stand out as easily transferable to the job you are applying to. "Utilized proprietary analytics platform" doesn't mean much to a new employer.
4. It's also okay if not all your bullets have quantified impact. However, every bullet should start with action-oriented verbs. After writing your resume, go through each verb and use [this chart from Stanford's Graduate School of Business](#) to replace existing verbs with stronger, action-oriented ones.
5. Write each bullet using professional language. Don't use casual words like "I, my, we." If you're not great with professional language, do your best and have a friend look it over.
6. Do not let any spelling, grammar, or formatting errors slip by. This document is the one thing you have complete control over in the recruiting process -- take the time to make sure it is 100% right. After writing your resume, print it out and read every word. It's much easier to catch mistakes on a paper than on the computer screen. For extra points, send

your resume to two trusted friends to check for any mistakes you may have missed.
(Friends don't let friends write crappy resumes... right?)

Now that you know the theory behind strong bullets, check out the following 10 examples from my friends. I've split these examples into 3 categories:

1. Three Freshman/Sophomore Professional Experiences
2. Three Junior/Senior Professional Experiences
3. Three Leadership Experiences

Note: my friends have a bias towards business strategy and finance jobs, but the underlying principles are the same for anyone.

Professional Experiences (Freshmen/Sophomores):

- Raised over \$2,000 per year and increased hospital awareness by planning and executing millennial-targeted events such as bake sales, food fundraisers, and book drives
- Increased client engagement by 5% by developing and sending targeted email advertisements to upsell current and potential clients on [Redacted] products
- Increased parent membership by 100% and event attendance by 50% through consistent email outreach and engagement to improve overall sorority culture

Professional Experiences (Juniors/Seniors):

- Identified 11% annual savings in carbon emissions for Fortune 100 global company by developing a data-driven energy efficiency model with R and Excel
- Recommended 18 new market-entry opportunities by analyzing emerging markets using macroeconomic indicators, socioeconomic demographics, and digital adoption/media consumption; presented findings to senior vice president
- Advised a major film studio on the creation of a [redacted] by creating a business plan and validating content roadmap with consumers through surveys and regression analyses

Leadership/Extra-Curricular/Side Project Experiences:

- Increased applicant pool by 75% in one month by executing a disciplined growth strategy focused on targeted marketing; achieved highest number of applicants in organization's history

- Raised \$3,000 for first annual external event with plan to increase sponsorship to \$10,000 in 3 years by establishing long-term partnerships with leading venture capital firms including [Redacted]
- Led team of 4 undergraduates while managing client expectations to develop market opportunity assessment and product pricing model for B2B startup

Yes, you can be impact-driven even with a bake sale.

Last General Tips

1. For each internship or leadership experience, you should have 2-3 substantial bullets. If there's only 1 bullet under an experience, it's not meaningful enough to include on your resume.
2. Aim for each bullet to take up 2 lines, and don't go past 3 max. It's funny how some students will bend over backwards to put together a bullet that is perfectly 1 line. Often these bullets are weak because it's difficult to explain impact in 1 line. On a similar note, don't fuss over getting a bullet to hit the other side of the page perfectly... it's okay if it takes up half a line (a bullet that takes 1.5 or 2.5 lines is OK)
3. Resumes are often screened through an automatic software to weed out people who have very little experience. It can help to sprinkle in a few buzz words and phrases directly from the job description to increase your chances of making it past the software.
4. Explain your impact. People aren't interested in what you did, they're interested in your impact. Make sure each bullet explains the impact or "so what" of your work.
5. Never let your resume get longer than one page. A young professional's resume should not be multiple pages (this rule may not apply for research positions or science-intensive roles).
6. Always submit your resume as a PDF with your first and last name in the file name. When you send your resume as a word document, it gets distorted on the reader's computer due to Microsoft Word version issues. It is best practice to send a resume as a PDF.

Resume Format

I've attached the exact resume template I used to land interviews with some of the world's most competitive firms. Feel free to use this template or personalize it to make it your own.

While Google and Microsoft default resume templates may look prettier (flowery fonts, lots of colors, etc.), they aren't effective at packing content into one page and will hurt your ability to communicate your experiences.

Lastly, don't spend too much time on resume formatting -- formatting is not nearly as important as many students think. Once you get an effective format, stick with it and focus on writing great content.

(Resume template is attached separately in Welcome Email for 2 by 22 subscribers)

Final Thoughts...

I guarantee if you follow these steps, you will have a Rockstar resume. But you can't stop there!

The average job posting gets 250 applicants, many of whom also have strong resumes. We live in a world where anyone can apply to any job with a just a few clicks. What are you doing that's different from everyone else?

Writing a great resume is just the tip of the iceberg. You still must find jobs/internships that resonate with your passion, network and validate your interests, land interviews, kill the interview, and more.

There's SO much more to recruiting than applying to jobs online; it can be overwhelming.

But don't worry! Together we can chip away at that challenge with each of my emails. You will find that life gets a lot less stressful when you are in control of your career. Again, if you haven't already click the button below to subscribe.



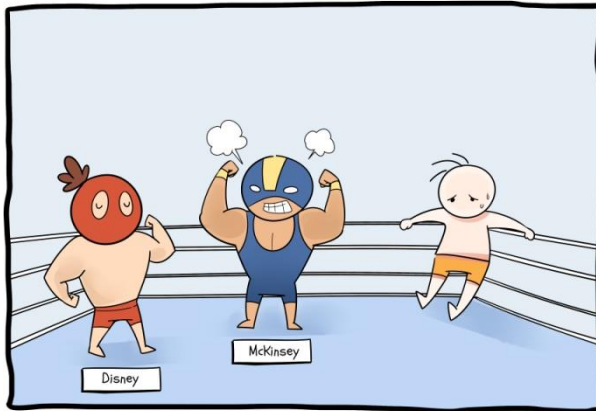
- Rohan

PS. You're welcome to send this to friends -- I always appreciate readers who spread the word. If you like what you read, drop a note at rohan.2by22@gmail.com.

My best articles

(titles are clickable)

JUNIOR YEAR RECRUITING



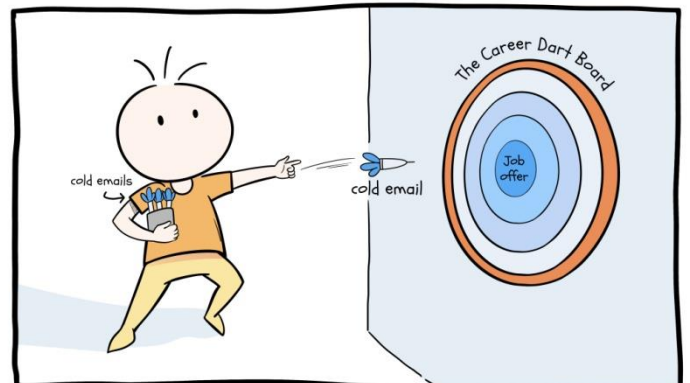
[The entire story of my Junior year recruiting process](#)

Below is the **entire story** of my Junior year recruiting process. I went all out, leaving no stone unturned and no detail left behind. Every firm I recruited for, every interview I had, and every failure I went through — it's all here in its unfiltered and raw form.

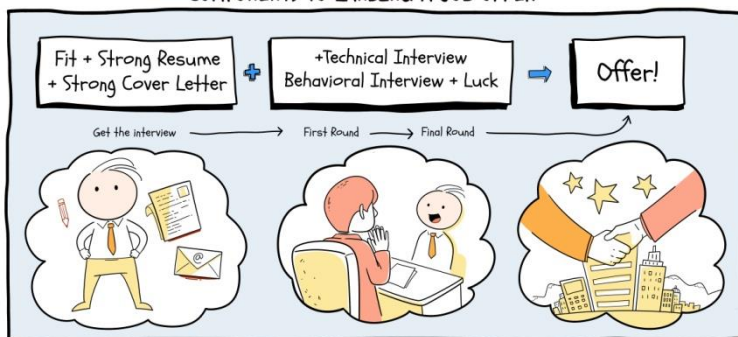
[The step-by-step guide on cold emailing to land an internship](#)

One of the most important parts to cold emailing successfully is the ability to find many great leads. A lead is a professional who you want to chat with.

ONE COLD EMAIL CAN WIN THE GAME



COMPONENTS TO LANDING A JOB OFFER



[How to write a cover letter for the highly competitive internships and jobs](#)

Cover letters are one of the greatest mysteries in the internship and full-time recruiting process.

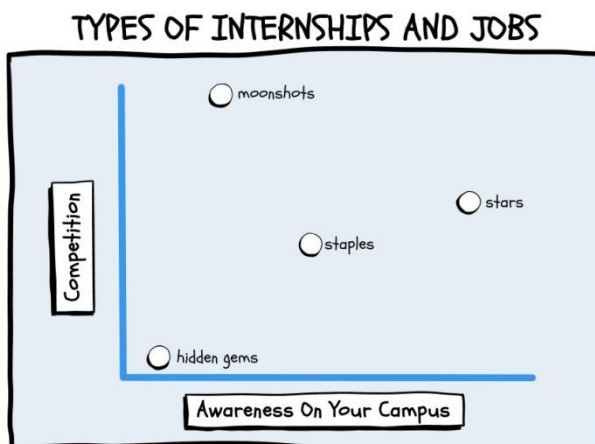
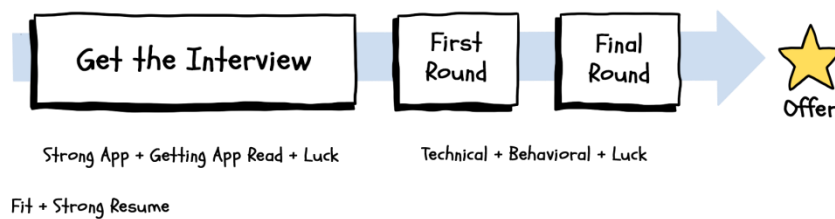
Find your career path with this 3-step framework

When I was a Freshman at UC Berkeley, I thought I wanted to work for a startup. Despite knowing very little about entrepreneurship in the Bay Area and what founding a startup entails, I liked the idea of it.



A complete guide on answering behavioral interview questions

What if I told you most students forget to prepare for one of the most important parts of the interview process: the behavioral interview.



The 4 types of internships

All internships are not equal. There's the Fortune 500 and obscure startup. Hyper competitive internships and those that fly under the radar. Firms with formal on-campus recruiting and those that recruit for a single position, seemingly on a whim.