

# Job Application

---

## Learning Objectives

---

*After reading this chapter, you should be able to:*

- Locate job vacancies.
  - Know how to prepare a résumé.
  - Know how to write a job application letter.
  - Gain knowledge on the common problems in a résumé.
  - Know the qualities of a good résumé.
  - Know the usefulness of a résumé.
- 

## INTRODUCTION

A job application letter is one of the most important business letters you write when you graduate from a college. May be it is your first business letter. A job application letter encloses the résumé as well. The employer will form his first impression about you from your application. Generally, a letter of application is written to sell your services. Hence you have to draft it carefully. For this purpose you should know what information have to be covered in this letter and what details have to given in the résumé, what techniques you have to follow to write the application letter and the résumé. You have to search for a vacancy. Job search is a step by step process. This chapter includes locating job vacancies, preparing the résumé and writing a job application letter.

## LOCATING JOB VACANCIES

The first step in your job search involves identifying job vacancies. There are several promising sources like newspapers, professional and trade journals, university placement offices, employment agencies and personal contacts etc.

Newspapers are the most popular source of job needs combining ads of two types—classified and display. Also we find blind ads which mention only box number, signed ads which have the name of company. Professional journals have job placement columns and even classified sections. A third source can be your university placement office, whose services range from job referrals to career counseling. Employment agencies both public and private – are a fourth source of job information. Personal contacts are another excellent source of finding the right job.

After identifying the job vacancy, you ought to know the employer's point of view. You have to raise some questions to yourself. What sort of person does he need? What kind of experience and qualifications are required for the job? While presenting your achievements should you highlight the traits he is looking for? If you analyse the job requirements carefully and then your own skills and achievements it will enable you to prepare your personal details achievements. This exercise will help you to write a job application letter and to prepare a résumé.

## PREPARING A RÉSUMÉ

You have explored your career choices and you are ready to write your résumé. The preparation of a résumé is an important second step in your job search process. The résumé (from the Latin *resumere*, 'to take up again' and the French *resumere*, 'to summarise') is a historical account of a person's education, work experience, skills and other job related personal information. It is a persuasive document. It is defined in Webster's Third Edition International Dictionary as a **short account of one's career and qualifications prepared typically by an applicant for a position**. Sometimes the term '*curriculum vitae*' is used in place of the term résumé.

As an applicant, you have to prepare a résumé because employers require one before an interview is granted. So you use it to get an interview with a prospective employer. A résumé helps you organise the facts of your accomplishments as well as clarifying what you can do in the future. It has to highlight your skills and accomplishments that demonstrate to a recruiter your qualifications for the job that you seek. Thus, a résumé is a structured written summary of your qualifications and activities which are required for job searching. It is designed with an objective to call to attention your best features in front of the employee. Your goal is to present your qualifications for the position that you seek in such a manner that it serves as an introduction to your potentialities to the employer and helps you gain a personal interview. Your chances of being invited to such an interview virtually depend on the effectiveness of the preparation of your résumé and the covering letter. A résumé prepares you for your job interview by forcing you to think about and express yourself in an organised way. A résumé is your personal guidance manual for speaking about yourself fluently and unhesitatingly.

For the interviewer, it helps take the decision whether or not to interview the candidate. It is also useful to screen out the applicants. It can be a decisive tool at the job award level. The length of a résumé is not fixed. It is based on the information to be presented in the résumé. Successful résumés have been as long as one page or as long as eight pages. It is conciseness, relevance and interest that matter. An eight-page résumé can be concise; a four page résumé verbose. Generally, résumés towards a specific job may be longer than résumés written for general distribution.

The style of writing a résumé and its physical appearance affect or influence the executives. So, the language of a résumé must be precise, crisp, succinct, trenchant, expressive, interesting and personal. Clear expression in a minimum number of words to create a maximum impact is essential for writing a résumé. Of course, there is no one way to write a résumé that will appeal to every reader. Fit your résumé to the type of individual whom you expect to be reading it.



## Exhibit 24.1

Year	Examination	Division	Institution	Remarks
------	-------------	----------	-------------	---------

You may include various honours, awards and scholarships under remarks. If your awards are impressive and if you want to emphasise them, list them in a separate section immediately following *education*. If you have no work-experience, you probably need to stress your education.

If you have done courses outside your major field that enhance your education, you make a brief list and include them under education. For example, suppose you are looking for a job in finance, which is your specialisation, but since you have also taken courses in computer science, you might then emphasise them by listing each one. Later, in your application letter, you could explain how they would help you perform in analysing financial problems.

Under this section, you can also present your significant skills and abilities that you have developed in your course of work. If you had undergone off-campus training as a part of your educational programme, it comes under this section. Include any relevant seminars or workshops you have attended as well as certificates or other documents that you have received. If you have participated in co- or extracurricular activities, you can include them in this section. You may include all these skills and abilities under the heading 'Education' or you may put them under separate sub-headings.

**Work Experience:** Your next section after Education is 'Work Experience'. Like the previous section, the discussion of your work experience should focus on your overall theme. Tailor your description to highlight the relationship between your previous responsibilities and your target field. Call attention of the reader to the skills you have developed and the progress you made in your jobs from lesser to greater responsibilities. When you list your work experience, remember that the purpose of a résumé is to secure an interview. Accordingly you give stress on your work experience. Once you have decided which work experiences to include, you need to determine the order of presentation. This order may vary. Usually, people use a reverse chronological order. Yet by putting your most valuable work experience first, you may show your abilities to the best advantage.

List all the related jobs you have done in work experience in the following order:

Write your job title or position held; give the name and address of the organisation in which you worked; your duties and responsibilities and your significant achievements or contributions and the period of your service. This information is illustrated in the following format:

Lecturer, Languages Department, Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Pilani from 1986 to present.

**Activities and Achievements:** Any of your activities that demonstrate your abilities should come under this section. List projects that required leadership, organisational ability, teamwork and cooperative work. Also include other activities like participation in athletics, fund-raising or community service activities and offices held in academic or professional organisation. Mention any reward you received while working. If your activities have been extensive, you may keep them into divisions like Service Activities, Professional Activities, Achievements, Awards and Honours.

**Personal Information:** Under this section you can include your state of health, willingness to relocate, geographical employment preference (if any), extensive travel experience, language knowns etc.



**References:** This section always comes at the end of a résumé. In it, write the names, addresses and telephone numbers of at least three people to whom employers might contact. If you do not include the information, state that it is available upon request. It is preferable to choose individuals able to attest your ability and knowledge. Therefore, current and former employers, immediate supervisors and college professors are your best choices.

## SELECTION OF THE ORGANISATIONAL PLAN

The choice of the best organisational plan for a résumé is often in the eyes of the beholder. It should be chosen to present the qualifications of the applicant in the best and the most pleasing manner. Generally, some executives may look for brevity; some may require an ideal education and employment background; others may be impressed by specialised professional skills. The selection of the best organisational plan for résumé is also based on the career that you seek.

You have all the elements you need. Analyse each one, express it suitably and place it in a logical disposition to the other elements. The ability to organise writing in this manner bears witness to an applicant's good judgement and common sense. Although you want to include a little in all categories, emphasise the information that has a bearing on your career objective and minimise or exclude anything that is irrelevant or counterproductive. You do this by adopting an organisational plan that focuses attention on your strongest points. Ultimately, the right choice depends on the suitability of your background goals and your writing ability. There are many résumé formats in use. We had discussed here the commonly used formats. They are chronological, functional and targeted. The name of each format is reasonably indicative of its nature and there is overlapping between formats.

**Chronological Résumé:** It is a very common type of résumé and the most frequently used one as well. It is the most adaptable format. As the term itself indicates, it gives a person's employment history in a chronological way. It, however, lists sequentially in the reverse order, starting with the most recent experience. When you organise your résumé chronologically, the 'work-experience' section dominates the résumé and is placed in the most prominent slot, immediately after the name, address and objective. Work experience is shown in a reverse chronological order, beginning with the most recent position and working background towards earlier jobs. Various positions held at one company should also be described in a reverse chronological order. It shows the advancement of the individual clearly while showing the stability of trend. The order shows the applicant's growth and development – characteristics of great interest to employers. If you are just graduating from college, you can vary the chronological plan by putting your educational qualifications before your experience, thereby focusing the attention on your academic credentials.

This résumé form provides the writer the best opportunity to highlight achievements and offers the reader the best opportunity to gauge the applicant's qualifications. The chronological approach is the most common way to organise a résumé, and many employers prefer it.

The elements of chronological résumé are given in Exhibit 24.2.

### Exhibit 24.2

- Name, address and telephone numbers
- Objective
- Name of the institution of most recent or present employment
- Name of other institutions in which the applicant worked in reverse order
- Education
- Extracurricular activities



**Functional Résumé:** The second approach to a résumé organisation is a functional résumé. You organise your résumé around a list of skills and accomplishments under topical headings such as supervisory skill, managerial skill, leadership-abilities and decision-making activities. Then you can add your work-experience and academic experience. Its elaborate emphasis is on skills and stresses on individual areas of competence. There is no need to detail all past experiences. This approach is particularly useful to people who have varied experience or to those who want to redirect their career or minimise breaks in employment.

**Targeted Résumés:** In this approach the job objective at the top clearly identifies the position sought. This résumé is organised to focus attention on what you can do for a particular employer in a particular position. Immediately after stating your career objective, you list any related skills that are useful to carry on the asked job's responsibilities. This list is followed by a list of your achievements, which provide evidence of your capabilities. It concludes with work experience and the education section. Its effectiveness depends on how clearly you identify and state your skills and your qualifications as they relate to the position you seek.

## PREPARATION OF THE FINAL COPY

Whatever may be the organisational plan you follow, the success to write an effective résumé is to put yourself in the reader's position. Think about what the prospective employer needs and then tailor your résumé accordingly. No one form for a résumé is the best. If your résumé presents your qualifications clearly, concisely, precisely and attractively then that will be the best one for you. In preparing the final copy of your résumé, you may keep in mind the following points:

Give preference to physical appearance, the physical appearance of your résumé has a strong effect on its potency. It reveals something about your organisational and presentation skills. Therefore, create a professional format by using the following points:

- Use uniform indentation and capitalisation
- Emphasise the important information by using bold face
- Employ rows and columns for short items
- Arrange longer items in lines extending across the pages
- Leave blank spaces between various segments of the material
- Type your résumé on 'white or off-white' 8 1/2 "(inches) × 11" bond paper

For preparing an effective résumé, the following checklist may be useful.

### Checklist for a Résumé

#### I. Heading, Content and Style

- Write your name and address as a heading
- Give a telephone number (if you have one)
- Prepare the résumé before drafting the application letter
- Omit information about qualifications that might be considered negative
- Omit information that is not relevant to the required job
- Do not mention your desired salary, work schedule or vacation schedule
- Use short noun phrases and action verbs and not whole sentences
- Write facts not opinions
- Use headings to introduce various sections (Education, Work Experience etc.)
- Prefer descriptive headings instead of topic headings
- Use grammatically consistent headings
- Use precise and specific language



## WRITING A JOB APPLICATION LETTER

The job application letter is like a 'sales letter' in which you 'sell' yourself and your qualifications to get an interview. It should be organised like a persuasive message. You need to stimulate the reader's interest before showing how you can satisfy the organisation's needs. The letter gives you the opportunity to highlight your abilities, experiences and qualifications, especially in relation to the employer's need and to the requirements of the job you want. The style should project confidence; you cannot hope to influence a potential employer on your merits unless you truly believe in them yourself and sound as though you do.

A job application letter is used as a device to feature the applicant's best qualifications. It is a brief covering letter that identifies the position sought, explains the abilities, stresses other qualifications, appeals to the reader's interest, proves usefulness to the prospective employer, refers to the enclosed résumé and requests an interview. It has an excellent potential to help you achieve your goal of getting an interview.

### Solicited and Unsolicited Letters

There are two types of application letters: solicited and unsolicited. Solicited letter is sent in response to an announced job opening. An unsolicited letter also known as a 'prospective letter' is one sent to an organisation that has not announced an opening. When you send a solicited letter, you usually know in advance the qualifications that the organisation seeks; its needs and the job's duties.

In contrast, you write an unsolicited letter when you do not even know if an opening exists. Basically, such a letter identifies you and the type of job you seek, requests the prospective employer to consider your application if an opening arises and requests an interview. The unsolicited letter, however, has basic disadvantages. Often organisations do not have openings when they receive your letter. Since your letter is unsolicited, they are not obliged to answer.

### Drafting the Letter

Whether your application letter is solicited or unsolicited, present the qualifications in a similar way and use the language persuasively. It should be to the point, informative and short. You begin your letter with an attention getting paragraph. Try then to create some interest in your qualifications so they arouse a desire to talk with you. Finally close your letter with a request for an interview.

**Opening Paragraph of a letter:** A good opening paragraph usually contains three to five sentences. In the opening itself, state clearly that you are applying for a job and the kind of job that you want. Another way to state your reason for writing the letter is to use a 'subject' at the opening of your letter as given below:

**Subject:** Application for \_\_\_\_\_.

It is such so that the prospective employer should not have to read the entire letter before knowing its purpose. After this clear signal, your first paragraph can focus on getting the attention and indicating how you will be useful to the organisation. The opening paragraph marks the major difference between the two types of application letters.

This is because in an unsolicited letter, you have a greater need to catch and hold the reader's attention and interest. In contrast, the reader of a solicited letter is written in an announced job opening.

In the solicited letter you indicate the position sought, how the opening became known to you and what your qualifications are. Here is an example:

'Please consider my application for the position of 'Quality Control Manager' which you have advertised in The Hindu on \_\_\_\_ August 2006. My qualifications are twelve years of quality control experience, and my administrative position qualifies me for the position of 'Quality Control Manager'.



However, an unsolicited letter starts by capturing the reader's attention and interest. In writing the opening paragraph of an unsolicited letter, you may use one of the following approaches:

- You can start with a description of the requirements associated with a specific job and then show how your work experience, your abilities and your qualifications could benefit the organisation.
- When responding to a job ad, identify the publication in which the ad appeared and briefly describe how you meet each requirement stated in the advertisement.
- You can present your major qualifications and skills suitable for the position you are seeking. The prospective employer then can readily perceive that you are qualified to do the job. Here is an example for this approach:

'When you need a person with an integrated background, skilled in programming languages, adept in using various application of software, familiar with personal computers and hardware please consider my qualification.'

- Pose an attention-getting question that shows you understand an organisation's problem, need or goal and have a genuine desire to help, solve or meet it.
- You can mention the name of a person known to the reader; it is bound to capture some attention. An example is given below:

'Dr. \_\_\_\_\_, Dean \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, has directed me that I apply for the position of Sales Manager in your company. He has suggested that I might be well qualified for this post because of my past experience in the sales department, my command of four languages and my background of travel abroad. I shall appreciate your considering me as an applicant'.

- You can use a 'catchy' phrase or sentence that identifies your major qualifications. This approach is useful especially if the job sought requires ingenuity and imagination. Look at the example given below:

'\_\_\_\_\_ seems to be entering a new era in marketing and I would like to discuss with you my experience in marketing innovations in consumer production'.

- Present one of your relevant interests, mention your previous experience with the organisation or cite your present position or status as a means of leading into a discussion of why you want to work for the organisation.
- You can also use references to publicised company activities, achievements, changes or new procedures to gain attention. The following example gives an idea:

'I have read the Annual Report of \_\_\_\_\_. Its outstanding accomplishments of marketing department of your company motivated me to become an employee of your company. If you give me an opportunity, I would like to discuss my becoming part of it.'

Whatever approach you use in your opening paragraph, it must demonstrate the 'you' attitude and must indicate how the applicant can serve the employer. Finally, your opening paragraph must indicate clearly that you are applying for a job, mention clearly the type of job that you want and lead naturally and logically into the rest of the letter.

**The Middle Section of a Letter:** Presenting major qualifications and relating them to the job you want from the middle section of your application letter. In this section present your strongest points, relate them to the job you want and show their potential benefit to the organisation.

Create the reader's interest in you and a desire to interview you. This section should contain the details which amplify the features and the quality of the opening paragraph.

In presenting your strongest selling points, keep in mind the purpose of both the résumé and application letter. Your résumé is a historical account of your educational qualification, experiences and other qualifica-



Dear \_\_\_\_\_

Your advertisement in The Hindu of \_\_\_\_\_ August \_\_\_\_\_ attracted my attention for a Sales Executive. My qualifications are eight years experience in the Sales Department and my organisational skill in organising sales promotion qualifies me for the post of a Sales Executive.

When I was doing MBA, I got intensely interested in market analysis and research. So I did projects pertaining to the area. My project work in marketing emphasised on the latest techniques of market analysis and research and stressed on developing viable marketing strategies.

I have had eight years experience in the sales departments of three reputed companies and I am familiar with sales techniques. My special duties include the training of sales personnel, organising market research and sales promotion programmes. I thoroughly enjoy my work.

With the sound background in the theory of marketing, the practical experience in the sales department and my organisation skills, I would be able to assume fully my duties after just a short period of orientation.

As you will see from my enclosed résumé, I have been a member of the \_\_\_\_\_ Marketing Association and I am willing to travel.

Mr. \_\_\_\_\_, my Managing Director, and Mr. \_\_\_\_\_, Sales Manager of my former company have both consented to provide references for me. I gave their details on my résumé. I shall be pleased to provide any further information you may need and hope I may be given the opportunity of an interview.

Yours sincerely  
xxxxx

Encl: Résumé

The following list of Action verbs is useful for preparing résumé:

### List of Action Verbs That Add Strength to Your Résumé

#### Clerical Skills

##### Words

approved	confirmed	inspected	recorded	validated
arranged	copied	monitored	retrieved	
catalogued	detected	operated	scheduled	
checked	dissected	organized	screened	
classified	executed	prepared	specified	
collected	generated	processed	systematised	
compiled	implemented	purchased	tabulated	

#### Communication Skills

##### Words

addressed	demonstrated	illustrated	promoted
arbitrated	developed	interpreted	publicised
arranged	directed	lectured	reconciled
articulated	drafted	mediated	recruited
authored	edited	moderated	reported
collaborated	enlisted	negotiated	spoke
composed	explained	persuaded	suggested
convinced	formulated	presented	translated
corresponded	influenced	proposed	wrote