

Resume & Cover Letter Writing

**Writing impactful cover letters +
Tailoring applications to specific roles**

Agenda

- ➔ Learn about ATS
- ➔ Craft ATS friendly resume
- ➔ Introduction to Cover Letters
- ➔ Key Components of an Effective Cover Letter
- ➔ Tailoring Your Application
- ➔ Writing Techniques for Impact
- ➔ Common Mistakes to Avoid
- ➔ Practical Examples
- ➔ Q&A Session

CV vs. Resume: Format and Content

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CV

Emphasizes involvement and academic accomplishments

Used for applying to academic positions, such as graduate school and faculty

Lengths varies but typically does not have a limit

Sections and experiences may move or be taken off as you advance in your career

Resume

Emphasizes skills and experiences

Used for applying to most positions

Typically 1 page (2 pages may be applicable for advanced applicants)

Sections and experiences may move or be taken off as you advance in your career

What is an ATS?

- ➔ **ATS stands for Applicant Tracking System**
- ➔ **Software used by employers to collect, sort, and rank job applications**
- ➔ **Over 75% of companies use ATS to streamline hiring process**
- ➔ **Acts as a digital gatekeeper before human eyes see your resume**

Key Elements of an ATS-Friendly Resume

- ➔ Proper formatting
- ➔ Relevant keywords
- ➔ Standard section headings
- ➔ Consistent styling
- ➔ Simple design

Resume Basics - Purpose

- ➔ Summarize your qualifications
- ➔ Showcase your relevant skills and experiences
- ➔ Secure an interview

Chronological Resume Structure

- ➔ **Contact Information**
- ➔ **Summary or Objective Statement**
- ➔ **Work Experience (in reverse chronological order)**
- ➔ **Education**
- ➔ **Skills**
- ➔ **Additional Sections (optional)**

Contact Information

- ➔ Full name (larger font size)
- ➔ Phone number
- ➔ Professional email address
- ➔ Location (City, State)
- ➔ LinkedIn profile
- ➔ Personal website or portfolio (if relevant)

Writing a Strong Summary/Objective

- ➔ 2-3 sentences or bullet points
- ➔ Highlight your professional identity
- ➔ Mention years of experience (if applicable)
- ➔ Include 1-2 key achievements or skills
- ➔ Tailor to the job you're applying for
- ➔ Example: "Results-driven marketing professional with 5 years of experience in digital advertising. Skilled in SEO, content creation, and social media management. Achieved 150% increase in client web traffic through targeted campaigns."

Crafting Your Work Experience Section

- ➔ List jobs in reverse chronological order
- ➔ Include: Job title, Company name, Location, Dates of employment
- ➔ Use bullet points to describe responsibilities and achievements
- ➔ Start each bullet with an action verb
- ➔ Quantify results when possible
- ➔ Focus on achievements rather than just duties
- ➔ Example bullet point: "Increased sales by 30% through implementation of new customer relationship management system"

Education Section

- ➔ List degrees in reverse chronological order
- ➔ Include: Degree, Major, University name, Graduation year
- ➔ Add relevant coursework, academic honors, or GPA if notable
- ➔ Include certifications and professional development
- ➔ Example:
 - Bachelor of Science in Computer Science
 - University of Technology, Graduated May 2022
 - Relevant coursework: Data Structures, Algorithms, Machine Learning
 - GPA: 3.8/4.0

Skills Section

- ➔ List hard skills, soft skills, and technical proficiencies

- ➔ Include language proficiencies if relevant

- ➔ Tailor skills to the job description

- ➔ Consider categorizing skills for easy reading

- ➔ Example categories:

Technical Skills: Java, Python, SQL, Git

Soft Skills: Team leadership, Project management, Public speaking

Language Skills: Hindi (Native), English (Conversational)

Additional Sections to Consider

- ➔ **Volunteer Experience**
- ➔ **Publications**
- ➔ **Professional Associations**
- ➔ **Awards and Honors**
- ➔ **Relevant Projects**
- ➔ **Choose sections that enhance your qualifications for the target job**

Proper Formatting

- ➔ Use a simple, clean layout
- ➔ Stick to standard fonts (Arial, Calibri, Times New Roman)
- ➔ Font size: 10–12 points for body text
- ➔ Use standard margins (0.5" to 1")
- ➔ Avoid tables, columns, and text boxes
- ➔ Save as a .docx or .pdf file (check job listing for preference)

Relevant Keywords

- ➔ Analyze job description for important skills and qualifications
- ➔ Incorporate these keywords naturally throughout your resume
- ➔ Use industry-specific terminology
- ➔ Include both spelled-out terms and acronyms (e.g., "Search Engine Optimization (SEO)")
- ➔ Avoid keyword stuffing – keep it natural and relevant

Simple Design

- ➔ Minimize use of graphics, images, and charts
- ➔ Use simple bullet points (•) instead of fancy symbols
- ➔ Avoid headers and footers
- ➔ Don't use color unless submitting directly without ATS screening
- ➔ Focus on content over design elements

Tailoring Your Resume

- ➔ **Customize your resume for each job application**
- ➔ **Match your skills and experiences to the job requirements**
- ➔ **Use the same language and terms as the job description**
- ➔ **Prioritize relevant experiences and skills**

Writing Effective Bullet Points

- ➔ Start with strong action verbs
- ➔ Quantify achievements when possible
- ➔ Focus on results and impact
- ➔ Keep each bullet point to 1-2 lines
- ➔ Use present tense for current jobs, past tense for previous positions

ATS Resume Example

CHRISTIE ALVARADO

SAN DIEGO, CA 92111

H: 555 555 555 | C: (555) 555-5555 | EXAMPLE@EXAMPLE.COM

Resourceful office manager with solid experience optimizing productivity, efficiency and service quality across various environments. Highly dependable, ethical and reliable support specialist and leader that blends advanced organizational, technical and business acumen. Works effectively with cross-functional teams in ensuring operational and service excellence.

WORK HISTORY

Total Tech

Office Manager // San Diego, CA // November 2021 to Current

- Establish workflow processes for a team of 20, monitor daily productivity and implement modifications improving 40% of the overall performance of personnel.
- Oversee office inventory activities by ordering, drafting requisitions and stocking saving 30% of the budget.
- Update information, manage accounts and generate monthly reports for the company database.

Element Biosciences

Assistant Office Manager // San Diego, CA // September 2015 to October 2021

- Drafted agendas, recorded minutes and generated documents to facilitate weekly meetings for 10 staff members.
- Produced letters and memoranda to inform stakeholders of business decisions.
- Analyzed data related to administrative costs and spending trends to prepare budgets for 150 employees.

Invetech

Administrative Assistant // San Diego, CA // June 2012 to August 2015

- Greeted visitors, delivered messages to staff and answered multi-line phone system, reducing wait time by 25%.
- Executed record filing system to improve document organization and management of 500 files.
- Set up office calendars, conference rooms, technology and materials to facilitate meetings.

SKILLS

- Scheduling
- Policy and procedure modification
- 65 WPM
- CRM software
- Intuit Quickbooks
- Organization
- Communication
- Multitasking and team management

EDUCATION

BBA - Business Administration

University of San Diego // San Diego, CA // June 2018

CERTIFICATIONS

- Information Governance Professional - (2021)

ATS-Friendly Resume Checklist

- ➔ Simple, clean format
- ➔ Standard font and size
- ➔ Proper file type (.docx or .pdf)
- ➔ Relevant keywords incorporated
- ➔ Standard section headings
- ➔ Consistent styling throughout
- ➔ Quantified achievements
- ➔ Tailored to the job description
- ➔ Proofread for errors
- ➔ Tested with ATS scanner

Introduction to Cover Letters

- ➔ **Definition:** A cover letter is a one-page document that introduces you and your resume to potential employers.
- ➔ **Purpose:** To make a compelling case for why you're the ideal candidate for the position.
- ➔ **Importance:** Often the first impression you make on an employer.

Key Components of an Effective Cover Letter

- ➔ Header with contact information
- ➔ Formal salutation
- ➔ Opening paragraph (Hook)
- ➔ Body paragraphs (2-3)
- ➔ Closing paragraph
- ➔ Professional sign-off

Tailoring Your Application

- ➔ Research the company thoroughly
- ➔ Analyze the job description
- ➔ Identify key skills and qualifications
- ➔ Match your experiences to job requirements
- ➔ Use industry-specific language

Writing Techniques for Impact

- ➔ Use active voice and strong verbs
- ➔ Quantify achievements where possible
- ➔ Tell a story that aligns with the company's needs
- ➔ Be concise and focused
- ➔ Use keywords from the job description

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- ➔ Generic, one-size-fits-all letters
- ➔ Repeating your resume verbatim
- ➔ Focusing on what you want, not what you offer
- ➔ Typos and grammatical errors
- ➔ Excessive length (stick to one page)

Bad Example

Title: "A Generic Opening – Room for Improvement"

Dear Hiring Manager,

I am writing to apply for the position of Marketing Specialist that I saw advertised on your company website. I believe I have the skills and experience you are looking for, and I am excited about the opportunity to join your team.

I have a degree in Marketing and have worked in the field for three years. I am hardworking, detail-oriented, and a team player. I think I would be a great fit for your company.

Areas of Improvement

- ➔ Uses a generic salutation
- ➔ Doesn't mention the company name
- ➔ Focuses on what the applicant wants, not what they offer
- ➔ Uses clichés and vague statements
- ➔ Lacks specific examples or achievements
- ➔ Doesn't demonstrate knowledge of the company

Good Example

Title: "A Tailored, Impactful Opening"

Dear Ms. Johnson,

Your recent campaign for sustainable products caught my attention, and I was thrilled to see that TechGreen is seeking a Marketing Specialist to expand its eco-friendly initiatives. With my track record of increasing engagement by 40% through data-driven, sustainability-focused marketing strategies at EcoSolutions, I'm excited about the opportunity to contribute to TechGreen's mission of making technology accessible and environmentally responsible.

In my three years at EcoSolutions, I spearheaded a social media campaign that not only raised awareness about electronic waste but also led to a 25% increase in our recycling program participation. This aligns perfectly with TechGreen's commitment to reducing e-waste, as mentioned in your 2023 Corporate Responsibility Report.

Highlighted Points

- ➔ Uses a specific salutation (researched the hiring manager's name)
- ➔ Mentions a recent company campaign, showing research and genuine interest
- ➔ Aligns the applicant's experience with the company's needs and values
- ➔ Provides specific, quantifiable achievements
- ➔ Demonstrates knowledge of the company's recent initiatives
- ➔ Creates a narrative that connects the applicant's past with the company's future]

Tailoring Your Resume

- ➔ **Customize your professional summary**
- ➔ **Reorder your experiences based on relevance**
- ➔ **Adjust skills section to match job requirements**
- ➔ **Use similar language and keywords as the job posting**

The Importance of Research

- ➔ Understanding the company's:
 - Mission and values
 - Recent projects or achievements
 - Culture and work environment

- ➔ Using this information to demonstrate genuine interest and fit

Following Up

- ➔ When and how to follow up after submitting an application
- ➔ Preparing for the next steps (phone screening, interviews)

Key Takeaways

- ➔ Tailor every application to the specific job and company
- ➔ Focus on what you can offer, not what you want
- ➔ Use concrete examples and quantifiable achievements
- ➔ Proofread meticulously
- ➔ Follow up professionally

Q&A Session





THANK YOU