DEVELOPING A WINNING RESUME

A resume is a written document that is used to market your background to potential employers. The purpose of a resume is to obtain an interview with a prospective employer. Therefore, it is important that you have a resume that is organized, well written and highlights your education, experience, skills, and accomplishments.

Before writing your resume, it is helpful to write down your activities and accomplishments with regard to your education, employment, activities, special projects, etc. Then ask yourself what you actually did in each of those activities. Your answers to what you actually did are the sets of skills that you have to offer to an employer.

After identifying your accomplishments and the accompanying skills, you will need to write down some ideas about what you want to do with those skills and accomplishments. This will become your objective on your resume.

Now you are ready to begin building your resume.

Outline for a Resume:

Heading/Contact Information

- Your name is your heading. It should be bold and in larger print than the rest of the resume.
- Contact information includes your permanent and campus address, your permanent and campus telephone numbers with area codes (remember to use a professional message on your voice mail), your email address, and your web address, if you have one. Remember to check your email often.

Objective

- Your objective should focus on your desired job title. Concentrate on what you can bring to an employer, not on what you hope to get out of the position. Use phrases such as "To obtain an internship in accounting or finance" or "Seeking full-time position in engineering design, research, or development."

Education

- Include colleges/universities where you have obtained, or are working on getting, a degree. List the official name of your degree and/or certification that you have obtained, or will obtain, the month and year of your graduation, and your major and minor(s). You may also list you overall or major GPA in this section.
- A brief description of your coursework, independent studies or research should be included in this section, along with computer, language, and other skills developed through your education.
- Omit high school information unless you are a freshman or sophomore in college or unless you had a significant accomplishment related to your field.

Experience

- This section could be labeled a number of things—Experience, Work Experience, Related Professional Experience, etc. List your job title/position, the name of the organization for whom you worked, the dates of employment, the job title, and an active, descriptive

summary of job duties. Be sure to include important keywords, or hot topics, that are relevant to your field in your job descriptions. Also be certain to mention skills used and developed.

- If you have had unpaid experiences which relate to your desired objective, be sure to include them in this section as well.

Additional Sections

According to your background, there may be other sections, which you will want to add to your resume. These sections could include:

- Activities
- Honors
- Interests
- Hobbies
- Community Service
- Computer/Foreign Language Skills
- Professional Memberships
- Volunteer Experiences

Creating Your Resume

- Once your rough draft has been written, you are ready to create your resume. Start with a blank word document on the computer rather than using a resume template. Resume templates often do not use formats that are conducive to loading into electronic databases or for emailing.

Scannable Resumes

- Many organizations are using scanners to manage the resumes, which they receive. When resumes are scanned into databases they are often scanned for multiple positions by using keywords, skill sets, and any other number of criteria they may be wanting in an applicant.
- For a scannable resume, it is important to use nouns to concretely describe your knowledge and experiences. Use industry jargon, key words, phrases, technical terminology and any other items important to your field. Keep your resume free of bullets, italics, underlining, or graphics. These features make resumes unscannable, therefore leaving your resume out of the database.

Resume Formats

There are many kinds of formats that can be used in writing a resume. Three formats will be presented here. They are:

- The Chronological Resume
- The Functional Resume
- The Combination Resume

Chronological Resume: The chronological resume is the most commonly used format. A chronological resume is written in reverse chronological order—with your most recent education and experiences listed first. This is the easiest format to write. Chronological resumes are good to use when your most recent experience or education is advantageous to the kind of position you are seeking, you have had job growth within the same company, or you are staying in the same field as your prior experience.

Sections on this type of resume would include Objective, Education, Work Experience, and Activities.

Functional Resume: In a functional resume your skills and abilities are highlighted rather than where and when your education and experience took place. This is a good format to use if you have developed a set of skills over a wide variety of experiences, or if you have developed skills over a wide variety of experiences within the same organization or activity. This is a good resume if you are entering the job market after a long absence or if you are entering the job market for the first time with little related experience but a lot of skills.

Section headings in this kind of resume would include Management, Leadership, Training Skills, Computer Skills, Technical Experience, Research, Sales, etc.

Combination Resume: A combination resume contains the best of the chronological and functional formats. This format is usually used by applicants who have a strong background related to their objective.

Sections on this resume would include Education and Experience as well as skills that you want to emphasize.

Conclusion:

There are many different ways to make a resume. What is important is that your resume should make a good impression and it should tell a potential employer what you have to offer. Remember – your resume will not get you a job, but it will hopefully get you an interview!

For assistance with your resume you can contact the Center for Career Opportunities at (765) 494-3981.

(https://www.cco.purdue.edu/student/manual.shtml)