



CENTER FOR PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE
ELMHURST COLLEGE

Enhancing Professional and Personal Development

Writing an Effective Resume



Career Education
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Resume Writing

A resume is a document that you—the jobseeker—uses to promote your skills, abilities, and knowledge to a potential employer. It uses your past experiences and accomplishments to position you for future opportunities. From an employer’s perspective, resumes are used to identify qualified candidates to invite to an interview. Resumes do not generate job offers, but well written resumes do facilitate interviews. They are a marketing tool. The resume is important, but just one of several steps that make up a successful job search.



Things to know before you get started:

- Your resume will be among a stack of resumes that will be viewed for no more than 30 seconds.
- Applicant tracking systems scan resumes for keywords that match the company’s job descriptions. Use words in your resume that match the job description. If the keywords/skills are missing, your resume may be rejected.
- Don’t be vague, you need to do more than simply list functions you had at a previous job. What did you accomplish? What problem did you solve? (see accomplishment worksheet)
- Don’t lie or embellish the truth (employers will check your references)
- Rules of the English language are forgotten
 - Avoid first person pronouns “I” “Me” or “We”
 - Keep sentences short. Sentence fragments are acceptable.
- Assemble all personal and factual information before you construct your resume.
- Work on your resume one section at a time.
- Use a dictionary or thesaurus to avoid repetitive wording.

Choose a standard font (Times New Roman, Ariel, Helvetica)

Keep the font size between 10-12 pt.

(10 pt. is only recommended to keep to one page)

Resume should be 1 page- every line is valuable real estate

Print resume on 24 LB Bond paper (white or cream)

Components of a good resume:

Personal Information

Your name, address, city, state, cell phone number and email address should be highly visible, centered at the top of the page. *Note: E-mail address and cell phone voicemail must be professional.

Objective (optional)

Not all employers require an objective. An objective identifies which position you are seeking. Place an objective on your resume when you are applying for a specific position.

Highlights of Qualifications

The qualifications section delivers an impact at the top of your resume – it's your first impression. The qualification statements should match your skills to the target job description. You want the employers to read the summary and say "we have to meet this person." Information in this section must be customized to fit each position you apply for. Place most important words first since the scanner may be limited in the number of words it reads. List hard skills not soft skills (see skills sheet).

Experience

Use separate headings for Internship and Work experience List in reverse chronological order, specifying employer name, city and state, job title, and dates of employment. Use action verbs (see sheet) to describe your tasks, highlighting your accomplishments and skills (review accomplishment sheet) and relating these to individual job requirements. If you have not completed an internship, you may consider adding a section titled "Career Related Experience".

Education

List all collegiate experiences (degree received) in reverse chronological order. Include school name, city and state, degree, anticipated graduation date, majors, minors, GPA (optional). You may also list relevant course work, Dean's List, and scholarships. Study abroad would also be listed under this section using the same format.

Activities

Employers have indicated that involvement in extracurricular activities demonstrates leadership, time management and organizational skills. The following is a list of activities that can be included in this section: organizations/associations, volunteerism, community involvement, and athletic teams, (if you have held a leadership position, be sure to include this with the activity). You may choose to have a leadership section if you have several experiences.

References

"Reference available upon request," can be omitted. It is understood that you will supply references. Create a separate reference page and bring it with you to the interview. Include the reference name, title, organization/company name, business address, phone number, and email of each reference. Include only those persons who have agreed to serve as a reference for you. List all your personal information at the top of this page.



SKILLS IDENTIFICATION WORKSHEET

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Explaining
Listening
Persuading
Speaking
Teaching
Writing

LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Administering
Coordinating
Deciding
Delegating
Initiating
Managing
Supervising

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

Advising
Cooperating
Confronting
Group facilitating
Interviewing
Negotiating
Researching

ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS

Prioritizing
Planning
Managing time
Budgeting

PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS

Investigating
Researching
Observing
Locating
Trouble shooting

MAINTENANCE SKILLS

Compiling
Handling details
Setting up
Updating
Carry out requests

JUDGMENT SKILLS

Appraising
Editing
Evaluating
Reviewing
Examining

CREATIVE SKILLS

Inventing
Designing
Entertaining
Innovating
Displaying

INTELLECTUAL SKILLS

Conceptualizing
Analyzing
Classifying
Questioning

(Adapted from Quick Job Hunting Map-The Beginning Version, by Richard N. Bolles and Victoria B. Zenof)

ACTION WORDS

| | | | | | | |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| Accelerated | Closed | Developed | Explained | Inventoried | Pinpointed | Reviewed |
| Accomplished | Coached | Devised | Facilitated | Lectured | Placed | Revised |
| Achieved | Collected | Diagnosed | Fired | Led | Planned | Scheduled |
| Acquired | Compiled | Directed | Formulated | Lobbied | Posted | Screened |
| Adapted | Completed | Discovered | Found | Logged | Presented | Selected |
| Adjusted | Conceived | Dispatched | Founded | Made | Processed | Simplified |
| Administered | Conducted | Displayed | Generated | Maintained | Produced | Sold |
| Advertised | Consolidated | Distributed | Guided | Managed | Programmed | Solved |
| Advised | Constructed | Documented | Headed | Manufactured | Promoted | Steered |
| Analyzed | Contacted | Earned | Hired | Mastered | Proposed | Streamlined |
| Appraised | Controlled | Edited | Identified | Modified | Provided | Studied |
| Approved | Coordinated | Elicited | Implemented | Monitored | Purchased | Suggested |
| Arranged | Copyrighted | Eliminated | Improved | Motivated | Recognized | Supervised |
| Assembled | Corresponded | Engineered | Increased | Negotiated | Recommended | Supplied |
| Assisted | Counseled | Enhanced | Influenced | Obtained | Reduced | Taught |
| Audited | Created | Enlarged | Initiated | Operated | Referred | Tested |
| Augmented | Cultivated | Established | Inspected | Ordered | Reinforced | Trained |
| Authored | Debugged | Estimated | Installed | Organized | Reorganized | Transcribed |
| Balanced | Decreased | Evaluated | Instituted | Originated | Repaired | Translated |
| Budgeted | Delivered | Examined | Instructed | Packaged | Replaced | Utilized |
| Built | Designated | Executed | Interpreted | Patented | Reported | Vended |
| Calculated | Designed | Expanded | Interviewed | Performed | Represented | Wrote |
| Catalogued | Determined | Expedited | Invented | Persuaded | Restored | |

Accomplishments Worksheet

The best measurement of the future is to show what you have accomplished in the past. Hiring professionals already know what the job duties are; your resume should highlight *your accomplishments* in that position.

As you evaluate your past experiences, work or otherwise, consider the following:

1. Try to list accomplishments that are specific and measurable.
2. Quantify whenever possible. (Examples: Increased sales by 50 percent over the previous year; Built a customer base of 150, the largest in the firm's customer-service team.
3. Use superlatives and "firsts." Use words such as "first," "only," "best," "most," and "highest."
4. Consider the "so-what factor." For every accomplishment you list, ask yourself, "so what?" Does the item you've listed truly characterize your abilities and your potential for contributing to your next employer's success?



A series of **brainstorming questions** are asked below to consider when evaluating experiences from your work history. Respond to as many of the questions as you can for each job.

- ◆What special things did you do to set yourself apart? How did you do the job better than anyone else did or than anyone else could have done?
- ◆What did you do to make this job your own? How did you take the initiative? How did you go above and beyond what was asked of you in your job description?
- ◆What special things did you do to impress your boss so that you might be promoted? And were you promoted? Rapid and/or frequent promotions can be especially noteworthy.
- ◆List any awards you won, such as Employee of the Month, President's Club?
- ◆What are you most proud of in this job?
- ◆What tangible evidence do you have of accomplishments -- publications you've produced, products you've developed, software applications you've written?
- ◆How did you contribute to operational efficiency in this job, such as through cost reduction percentages? How did you help this employer or a part of the organization to save money, save time, or make work easier?
- ◆How did you contribute to productivity, such as through successfully motivating your team?
- ◆How did you build relationships or image with internal and/or external constituencies? How did you attract new customers or retain existing ones?
- ◆If you had to ghostwrite a letter of recommendation about you from your boss, what would be in it?
- ◆How did you solve one or more specific problems in this job? What were the problems or challenges that you or the organization faced? What did you do to overcome the problems? What were the results of your efforts? Hint: Use the SAR or PAR technique, in which you describe a Situation or Problem that existed in a given job, tell what Action you took to fix the Situation or Problem, and what the Result was.

Vague Claims vs Accomplishments

- “Experience working in fast-paced environment”
“Registered 120+ third-shift emergency patients per night”
- “Excellent written communication skills”
“Wrote jargon-free User Guide for 11,000 users”
- “Team player with cross-functional skills”
“Collaborated with clients, A/R and Sales to increase speed of receivables and prevent interruption of service to clients.”
- “Demonstrated success in analyzing client needs”
“Created and implemented comprehensive needs assessment mechanism to help forecast demand for services and staffing.”

VAGUE Example

Senior Commercial Loan Underwriter

September 2005 to Present

Lotsa Bucks Trust, St. Louis, MO

- Took commercial and construction loan applications
- Negotiated terms
- Five direct reports in commercial loans division
- Trained new hires on loan research methods
- Organized company softball team

GOOD Example

Senior Commercial Loan Underwriter

September 2005 to Present

Lotsa Bucks Trust, St. Louis, MO

- Processed \$10 billion in commercial construction loan applications for the top commercial lender in Eastern Missouri
- Managed a team of five junior underwriters who exceeded departmental goals consistently for past six months
- Facilitated professional training on loan research methods to shorten learning curve for new hires
- Applied professional team-building skills to development of successful company softball team, resulting in higher corporate visibility in local community and enhanced employee morale

There is no one single resume format. The information contained in this booklet was obtained from various resources and opinions acquired from a variety of hiring professionals. It should be used as a guideline in creating a resume that you are comfortable with.

BETTY BLUEJAY
477 Maple Drive, York, IL 60538
(630) 123-4567, bluejayb@net.elmhurst.edu

OBJECTIVE

To obtain a position in the field of marketing utilizing my creativity and communication skills to enhance the organization.

HIGHLIGHTS OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Exceptional oral and written communication skills with experience in public speaking
- Demonstrated creativity by initiating and implementing programs for residence hall
- Strong time management and organizational skills balancing full academic schedule, active participation in campus community, member of Women's Tennis Team, and working part-time
- Enhanced global perspective and language fluency strengthened through living and traveling abroad for a semester

INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

Kendall Publishing Company, Elmhurst, Illinois

Marketing Intern (June 2012 – August 2012)

- Developed package insert program for a new product line
- Assisted Creative Services in the redesign of new package insert materials
- Collaborated directly with advertisers to increase sales of new inserts by 22%.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Gail's Office Supply, Oak Park, Illinois

Customer Service Staff (2009 - present, part-time during school breaks)

- Facilitate tracking of "Frequent Buyers" program creating new customer incentives
- Design in-store displays to market merchandise; complete sales analysis to determine effectiveness in marketing plans

Elmhurst College, Elmhurst, Illinois

Residence Assistant (August 2011 – May 2012)

- Planned, marketed and implemented educational and social programs within hall budget parameters
- Created "Shirts for Sticks" program which raised \$3000 for local charities
- Led and administered functions in a coeducational residence hall housing approximately 200 students
- Provided informational counseling, assisted with crisis management, enforced campus policies, and conducted conflict mediation sessions

EDUCATION

ELMHURST COLLEGE, Elmhurst, Illinois

Bachelor of Science

Major: Communications

Concentration: Marketing

Anticipated: May 2013

Minor: Spanish

GPA: 3.75/4.00

Universidad De Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain

IES Abroad-Barcelona Center

August – December 2010

ACTIVITIES

- *Habitat for Humanity*, Elmhurst College, Sept 2011- present
Chairperson for spring trip to New Orleans to build homes
- *The Speakers Club*, Elmhurst, Illinois, September 2010 – present
- *Bacchus Peer Educator*, Elmhurst College, April 2010 – present
- *American Marketing Association*, Elmhurst College, August 2009 – present
Creative Committee Chair for national Marketing Research competition
- *Women's Tennis Team*, Elmhurst College August 2009 – present

RESUME SAMPLE

Bart Prospect

111 North Avenue, Apartment 3, Elmhurst, IL 60126
(630) 555-5555, bprospect@net.elmhurst.edu

OBJECTIVE

To obtain a summer marketing internship which would make use of proven abilities in sales and event planning.

EDUCATION & HONORS

Elmhurst College

Bachelor of Science

Specializations: Marketing, Minor: Economics, GPA: 3.7/4.0

Elmhurst, Illinois

Anticipated May 2014

Elmhurst College Academic Dean's List, Recipient

2010 - 2012

National Society for Collegiate Scholars

2011 - 2012

- Participated in volunteer and community service activities

RELATED ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Elmhurst College – Marketing Project

Fall Semester 2011

Team Leader

- Researched the historical background of Mrs. Fields' Cookies
- Developed a marketing strategy for the company to implement for further success

EXPERIENCE

The Body Shop

Chicago, IL

Sales Associate

August 2010 - Present

- Project and calculate daily and weekly sales reports for management review
- Aid and consult customers in a friendly manner
- Perform daily re-stocking and inventory counts of over 1,000 product types

Sawmill Golf Course

Stillwater, MN

Food and Beverage Services

Summers 2010, 2011

- Assisted in planning tournaments, benefits, and corporate events through the coordination of food service, marketing, and customer service during the event
- Inventoried food and beverage stock for re-ordering on a continual basis

Seasons Tique

Stillwater, MN

Sales Associate

May 2007–April 2010

- Interacted closely with management through weekly sales reporting and team meetings
- Established long-standing relationships with frequent customers
- Conducted annual inventory of all products including clothing and accessories totaling \$975K

LEADERSHIP

Elmhurst College, Student Ambassador

September 2011– Present

- Work at prospective student open houses to promote Elmhurst College