



HOW TO WRITE A RESUME

Why write a resume?

The main purpose of a resume is to help you get an interview. A well-written resume demonstrates how closely your skills and experience match the needs and expectations of the position. Because of this, you must tailor each resume and cover letter you send out. A resume is a marketing tool that highlights your most relevant skills, qualifications, experience, accomplishments and knowledge to prospective employers.

General resume information

There are three resume styles used for most job applications:

- **Chronological** - this is more accurately called “reverse chronological” because it lists your experience and education in reverse order, starting with most recent. It is useful if you want to show upward growth in a particular field or career. It works well if you’ve followed a fairly traditional career path.
- **Functional** - often called a skills-based resume, this format uses skill categories under which you list experiences as they relate to each category. The skills categories are then followed by your work history, which lists only the employers and dates.
- **Hybrid or Combination** - this format allows you to use the best features of the chronological and functional formats to highlight your top qualifications for the position. There are several ways to format a hybrid resume. One way is to evaluate your most relevant paid and unpaid experiences as they relate to the job description then list these skills in bullet points under a header such as “Relevant Skills”. This is followed by a work history section listing your work experience in reverse chronological order with bullets emphasizing your accomplishments. Another option is to list your work history in reverse chronological order and then list your skill categories under each job with bullets describing how you used that skill. Hybrid resumes can be tricky to write but often are a great way to show you have the skills employers seek, especially if you have followed a nontraditional career path.

Other “Rules”

There are few hard and fast rules in writing resumes. In general:

- Avoid making any grammar or spelling mistakes. Mistakes are often interpreted as lack of attention to detail.
- Arrange content starting with what is most relevant and your strongest skill or experience.

- Education can be listed at the beginning or after experience, depending on how long ago you obtained your education and how relevant it is to the job.
- You can go over one page—in general one page is the rule but if you have extensive experience or education, going to two pages is acceptable.
- How far back? We often get this question. In general, employers want to see about 7-10 years back but you could use older experience if it is relevant to the job.
- Make sure your resume is easy to read by using a font style such as Times New Roman, Calibri or Arial and a font size that is easy on the eyes. In most cases, 10 – 12 point fonts are best (except for headers which can be 14-16 point). Also, make sure there is some white space on the page throughout the resume.
- When submitting your resume and cover letter online, send it as a PDF.
- PROOFREAD! Get a few other people to read your entire resume looking for spelling, grammar, spacing or other mistakes. This is key!

Sections of a resume

Contact information – includes your name (often in a larger, bold font), address, cell phone number, and email address. It may also link to your LinkedIn page, blog, and/or online portfolio.

Objective – this section is optional. You will be submitting a cover letter with your resume so often an objective is not necessary. If you do include an objective, make sure it is concise, tailored to the position, and informative.

Summary – many people now include a brief professional summary instead of an objective. This can allow you to highlight specific skills or knowledge that the employer is seeking. Since this is often the first content, it serves to introduce you and encourage the reader to keep reading. You can tailor what you title this section to your needs. “Professional Summary”, “Highlights of Qualifications”...what works for you?

Experience - again, this heading can be tailored to your situation. If you say “Work Experience”, it implies paid work but if you say “Experience”, you can list unpaid experience as well. Each entry should include: 1. The organization name (or your title-depending on what you want to emphasize), 2. Your title (or the organizations name), 3. Location (City, State), and 4. Dates of employment (month and year started and ended. It is also acceptable to list only the years). If you are still working at the business, state end date as “Present”

Example:

University of Wisconsin – Madison, Academic Advisor, Madison, WI August 2010-Present
OR

Academic Advisor, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, WI August 2010-Present

Use bold or italics to emphasize either the employer or the title. Whatever you choose should be consistent throughout the resume.

Under each experience, list 3-7 bullet points that describe your accomplishments or skills. Start each bullet statement using an action verb. See the handouts *“Your Resume Transformation: From Good to Great”* and *“Power Verbs”* included in this packet for help writing bullet statements.

You may want to consider grouping similar experiences under a targeted skill section heading. For example *“Cross-Cultural Experience”* or *“Customer Service”*. This uses the hybrid or combination format. Remember you can list volunteer experience or unpaid experience (internships, placements) in addition to paid work.

Education – list the name of your college(s) or university, your degree and major or your program and graduation date.

Examples:

University of Wisconsin-Madison, Master of Science, Agricultural and Applied Economics, May 2015

University of Wisconsin-Madison, Capstone Certificate in Computer Science, anticipated 5/2019

Master’s in Business Administration, University of Wisconsin-Madison 12/2018

If you attended more than one post-high school institution, list the one from which you graduated. If you did not earn a credential, indicate the number of credits you earned or semesters you attended.

If you completed or have credits toward a master’s or other post-undergrad program, list this before your undergraduate program information—stick to reverse chronological order.

Other possible sections – This will vary from person to person and from job to job. You could have a *“Special Skills”* section that includes any languages you speak (other than English), or a section for *“Technical Skills”*, *“Community Involvement”* or *“Professional Memberships”*. Consider what makes the most sense for you and what is most relevant to the job.

What not to include- Personal information such as height, weight, age, date of birth, gender, race, photos, social security number, salary information, religious affiliation.

Resume writing resources

UW-Madison Writing Center (will work via phone, email, skype and face to face)

<https://writing.wisc.edu/>

Madison Public Library Writing Assistance-free

<https://www.madisonpubliclibrary.org/engagement/writing/madison-writing-assistance>

South Central Wisconsin Job Center

<https://www.scwijobs.com/> workshops and resume reviews.

Online resume websites

<http://blueskyresumes.com/> Free information and samples. You can also pay a resume writer but this tends to be very expensive. Use this site to learn how to do it yourself.

<https://acss.wisc.edu/career-and-educational-planning/resources/> Adult Career and Special Student Services resources page. Includes job search and career planning resources.

Your Resume Transformation: From Good to Great

Results-Oriented Bullets

In your resume, you probably highlighted skills that you developed through jobs, student organizations, and other experiences. While that makes sense for some bullet points, we need to dig deeper to showcase the *results*, *purpose* and *impact* of your actions. The structure for your bullets should follow this formula:

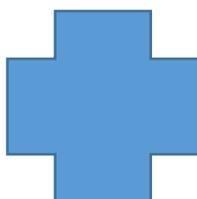
Action Verb + What You Did + How You Did It + Results/Purpose/Impact

(Pro-tip: the order of these elements may vary depending on your sentence structure)

- Ask yourself, “So what...why did this matter...what did my action(s) contribute towards?” Incorporating the answers into your bullet points makes your resume stronger and more attractive to recruiters and employers.
- Make sure to quantify wherever you can—numbers help give a more detailed description of the scope of your work/experience.

Action Verb

*Communicates:
Skill, knowledge, or
accomplishment.*



What you did, how you did it, and the result or purpose!

Context, detail and quantifiable information make stronger bullet points.

Examples Good Resume	GREAT Resume
Expanded Spanish communication skills through collaboration with Spanish-speaking employees	Collaborated with 7 Spanish-speaking colleagues to increase store efficiency and decrease merchandise order errors by 10%
Developed organizational and leadership abilities by leading committee meetings	Led bi-weekly committee meetings of 8 members by facilitating discussions and monitoring goal progression; planned fundraiser resulting in \$2,000 raised for Special Olympics
Attended bi-weekly sessions to become a Leadership Ambassador	Participated in bi-weekly professional development sessions on leadership, teamwork, and goal-setting that led to certification as a Leadership Ambassador

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Power Verbs

Working with People

The following lists are divided into categories to help you find some great, active verbs to help the descriptive lines on your resume stand out. Try to begin each of your descriptive lines with an active (or "Power") verb. Remember to use past tense verbs for previous experience. For current activities, you can also use the present tense (i.e. Supervise, not Supervising) if you prefer. This list is just a beginning - to give you ideas of where to start.

Communication (Writing and Public Speaking)

Address
Clarify
Collaborate
Communicate
Compose
Correspond
Demonstrate
Document
Edit
Entertain
Exhibit
Explain
Express
Illustrate
Interpret
Interview
Investigate
Lecture
Perform
Plan
Present
Promote
Proofread
Read
Relate
Relay
Report
Review
Revise
Speak
Summarize
Survey
Translate
Transcribe
Write

Teaching/Advising

Advise
Aid
Correct
Counsel
Demonstrate
Display
Encourage
Enhance
Enlist
Ensure
Grade
Guide
Help
Influence
Instruct
Introduce
Lecture
Mentor
Program
Provide
Rate
Steer
Suggest
Support
Teach
Test
Train
Tutor

Public Relations

Advertise
Advocate
Attend
Coordinate
Convince
Deal
Dispense
Disseminate
Distribute
Fundraise
Handle
Influence
Lobby
Persuade
Poster
Publicize
Publish
Recruit
Screen
Seek Out
Sell
Service
Target

Interpersonal Relations

Acclimate
Accommodate
Adapt
Answer
Anticipate
Assist
Assure
Bargain
Care
Coach
Collaborate
Confer
Confront
Consult
Converse
Critique
Develop
Encourage
Familiarize
Form
Foster
Fulfill
Gain
Handle
Implement
Inform
Interact
Intervene
Join
Listen
Litigate
Mediate
Model
Motivate
Negotiate
Participate
Provide
Recommend
Reconcile
Rehabilitate
Represent
Resolve
Share
Suggest
Treat
Understand

Administrative/Management

Accelerate
Accomplish
Achieve
Act
Administer
Allocate
Approve
Assign
Assess
Attain
Benchmark
Chair
Commend
Compromise
Consolidate
Control
Delegate
Direct
Enforce
Entrust
Expedite
Govern
Head
Hire
Improvise
Initiate
Institute
Judge
Lead
Maintain
Manage
Moderate
Monitor
Officiate
Order
Oversee
Prescreen
Preside
Prioritize
Produce
Prohibit
Refer
Regulate
Run
Set-up
Start
Streamline
Strengthen
Supervise

Power Verbs

Working with Data and Things

General (Miscellaneous)	Act					
	Apply					
	Anticipate					
	Change					
	Check	Acquire				
	Contribute	Analyze				
	Cover	Classify				
	Decide	Collate	Abstract			
	Define	Collect	Account			
	Diagnose	Compile	Add			
	Effect	Conduct	Appraise			
	Eliminate	Deliver	Audit			
	Emphasize	Detect	Budget			
	Establish	Determine	Calculate	Appraise	Adjust	Activate
	Facilitate	Discover	Collect	Apply	Assemble	Complete
	Forecast	Dissect	Compute	Arrange	Build	Compose
	Found	Evaluate	Decrease	Balance	Compose	Conserve
	Give	Explore	Determine	Catalog	Customize	Construct
	Learn	Examine	Divide	Categorize	Develop	Contract
	Navigate	Formulate	Enter (data)	Connect	Design	Create
	Offer	Gather	Estimate	Coordinate	Devise	Discover
	Perform	Identify	File	Define	Enlarge	Draft
	Propose	Inspect	Finance	Edit	Format	Draw
	Receive	Investigate	Formulate	Establish	Implement	Engineer
	Refer	Locate	Increase	Facilitate	Improve	Execute
	Referee	Name	Insure	File	Innovate	Expand
	Register	Obtain	Inventory	Group	Install	Generate
	Reinforce	Observe	Invest	Issue	Invent	Inaugurate
	Resolve	Pinpoint	Market	Modify	Fix	Landscape
Respond	Prepare	Maximize	Orchestrate	Function	Launch	
Retrieve	Prioritize	Minimize	Organize	Make	Modify	
Save	Receive	Multiply	Overhaul	Manufacture	Mold	
Select	Research	Process	Place	Navigate	Produce	
Serve	Specify	Project	Prepare	Operate	Reconstruct	
Set	Survey	Purchase	Program	Propose	Redesign	
Simplify	Test	Record	Qualify	Refinish	Remodel	
Study	Trace	Reduce	Reorganize	Renovate	Shape	
Take	Track	Solve	Rewrite	Repair	Synthesize	
Travel	Verify	Quantify	Schedule	Restore	Transform	

Chronological

RESUME DEMO
SAMPLE

SALES ASSOCIATE SAMPLE RESUME

234 East Speedway Blvd., Tucson, AZ 85719

(480) 452-5337

linda_brown@gmail.com

Sales Associate with 5 years of experience in retail environments. Recognized for ability to communicate with customers, providing exceptional service that ensure client retention and positive feedback. Proven ability to increase sales through upselling techniques as well as implementing processes that drive profitability.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

H&M

Sales Associate

Tucson, AZ
June 2013 – Present

- Assisted an average of 40 customers per day in finding or selecting items, and provided recommendations that generated \$8K in additional revenue
- Stocked, replenished, and organized inventory with accuracy and efficiency, completing function 10% faster than average associate
- Achieved an average of 140% of sales goals for three consecutive months
- Managed proper and attractive merchandise display, ensuring strategic placement of products that maximized purchases
- Provided outstanding customer service, receiving 96% in customer service feedback surveys

TARGET

Sales Associate

Phoenix, AZ
Oct 2010 – May 2013

- Helped an average of 50 customers per day by responding to inquiries and finding products
- Recommended better merchandise display to management, which was implemented and resulted in 35% improved sales
- Assisted team members when necessary in handling cash registers, organizing inventory room, labeling products, unloading merchandise, and cleaning up
- Aided Spanish-speaking customers, increasing repeat and loyal customers by 30%

EDUCATION

GATEWAY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Associate of Arts in Humanities, June 2008

Phoenix, AZ

- Member of Student Activities Management (SAM)
- Vice-President of Women's Forum

ADDITIONAL SKILLS

- MS Office
- Bilingual in English and Spanish
- Retail Software
- Social Media

CUSTOMER SERVICE (FUNCTIONAL)

534 Rainway Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 24542 • (433) 623-6234 • stef.johnson@gmail.com

QUALIFICATIONS SUMMARY

- **Experienced:** Customer service professional with 4+ years in call centers and hospitality services
- **Efficient:** Adept at handling various calls on a daily basis, while consistently resolving client issues in a short time span
- **Skilled:** Possess exceptional customer service skills, with customers regularly commending on received support
- **Bilingual:** English – Native ; Spanish – Conversational ; Able to provide clear customer service in both languages

RELEVANT SKILLS

Customer Service

- Handle 50+ customer interactions per day, giving detailed, personalized, friendly, and polite service to ensure customer retention
- Memorized all company products and services to be able to answer all customer questions quickly and efficiently, and make relevant upsells.
- Trained 3 new employees in customer service script recitation, conflict resolution, and data entry practices

Technical

- Receive source data such as customer names, addresses, phone numbers, credit card information, and enter data into various customer service software
- Perform data entry and retrieval with software such as Microsoft Office (Word, Excel) and Zendesk
- Able to set up laptop, headphones, microphones, Skype, or any other chat client service to converse with customers and forward calls to supervisors

Communication

- Conversational in Spanish (able to meet all customer service requirements with Spanish speakers)
- Remain cool during heated exchanges with irate customers and reach a peaceful resolution
- Persuade customers to listen to sales pitches and consider making 'upsell' purchases

WORK HISTORY

U-HAUL, Los Angeles, CA – *Call Center Representative*
ANDOLINI'S PIZZA, Columbia, SC – *Waiter*
CHICK-FIL-A, Columbia, SC – *Cashier*

EDUCATION

University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC
Bachelor of Arts in English, May 2005

SHIFT MANAGER RESUME (COMBINATION)

141 Landover Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 42143 | (212) 258-1414 | james.bronco@gmail.com

PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

- **Shift Manager:** 5+ years of experience in fast food and customer service
- **Management:** Manage a team of 16 crew members to serve customers efficiently and maintain hygienic standards
- **Results-oriented:** Exceeded annual sales forecast by \$150,000 in third year as store manager
- **Achievement:** Awarded "Manager of the Month" by franchisor as a reward for strong sales and efficient management

SKILLS

- Trained in managing finance and expenses
- Hiring/Training/Management
- Expert at managing in-store logistics and inventory control, and food preparation
- Fluent in English | Business level Spanish

RELEVANT WORK EXPERIENCE

JACK IN THE BOX

SHIFT MANAGER | HOUSTON, TX | JAN 2012 – PRESENT

- Exceeded shift sales forecast by \$20,000 in first year as shift manager
- Minimized condiment usage and waste by \$1,000 per month by retraining store associates
- Trained two night shift managers in motivating and mentoring staff, writing reports, giving directions, and providing leadership
- Schedule employee shifts, delegate workload, audit accounting and finance
- Ensure quality control, maintain overall restaurant hygiene, and communicate with customers about how to improve the customer experience

HARDEE'S

STORE ASSOCIATE | FARMINGTON HOUSTON, TX | AUG 2009 – OCT 2012

- Received orders, swiped credit cards, accepted cash and served 100+ customers per day via the drive-through
- Trained a night shift drive-through worker in order process, including using POS Terminal, and troubleshooting common headphone/microphone and computer problems
- Bussed, mopped, swept, and polished tables at the end of every shift, and followed proper equipment cleaning procedures to meet Department of Health A-rating standards
- Volunteered frequently to substitute shifts for employees needing to take a day off or go on vacation

EDUCATION

JOHNSON COMMUNITY COLLEGE, HOUSTON, TX

ASSOCIATE DEGREE IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, MAY 2013

Cover Letter Format Guide

Resume Header

Today's Date

(Ms. or Mr.) Name of Recruiter
Title of Recruiter
Company Name
Company Address
City, State Zip

Dear (Ms. or Mr.) Name of Recruiter or Dear Hiring Manager,

Intro

Your opening sentence should create interest on the part of the reader—write something about yourself that stands out. Next, tell the employer why you are writing the letter, the exact title of the position you are applying for, as well as your background information (major, year, university). Give information to show your specific interest in the company. Do you have similar values? What appeals to you about their mission statement? If you have any personal connections, this is the place to include any company contacts you communicated with. In your last sentence, be sure to road map the rest of your letter and mention that what specific skills you will discuss.

Body

Your middle paragraph(s) should expand on the specific skills mentioned above to strengthen employer interest. Use one or two meaningful stories from your academic background, work experience, or involvement in activities that will show the reader why you should be considered as a candidate. Be as specific as you can about the skills you have that match the position but remember to show them, not tell them. Expand on what you have mentioned in your resume. If the employer is looking for a candidate with leadership skills, prove to them that you are a leader with active language and details. You may show your leadership experience by, for example, discussing how you coordinated an event for 200 pre-business students with a committee of 12, etc. Don't list all of your accomplishments, duplicate your resume, or make the reader try to guess what you would be interested in or how you are uniquely qualified. Tell the employer what you can do for the organization and why this particular organization interests you. It is very important to offer value to the employer, so that it what you should end with!

(The body of the cover letter may be anywhere from one to two paragraphs depending on the relevant content you would like to include.)

Closing

In your closing paragraph refer to your enclosed resume and ask for action. Express your unique interest and reinforce how your qualifications match the position. Be flexible to their schedule and encourage them to contact you at (phone number) or (email), but do not mention interviews—they will reach out to you if you are a qualified candidate. Lastly, be sure to express your gratitude and appreciation for considering you.

Sincerely,

[Your signature – if you are printing]

Type your name here

