



Marine Corps Logistics Command
Albany, Georgia



HOW TO WRITE A RESUME





What is a Resume?



- The resume is a tool with one specific purpose: to gain “consideration” or to win an “interview.” A resume is an advertisement, nothing more, nothing less.
- A resume is a one or two page summary of your education, skills, accomplishments and experiences.
- A great resume doesn't just tell them what you have done but makes the same assertion that all good ads do: **If you buy this product, you will get these specific, direct benefits. It presents you in the best light.** It convinces the employer that you have what it takes to be successful in this new position or career.



Three Basic Formats of a Resume



- Reverse Chronological Resume Format
- Functional Resume Format
- Combination Resume Format



Reverse Chronological Resume Format

- Most traditional format and focuses on time and continuity.
- Easy to organize, write, and read, and it is the most commonly used type of resume and the one preferred by most employers.
- Present your most recent job first, then trace backwards in time (reverse chronological).
- Most important job duties and accomplishments are described succinctly under each employer's name and location.
- Allows you to emphasize your career growth and progression and, therefore, is most favorable to those whom have worked in one field and have been steadily promoted to higher level positions.



Functional Resume Format



- Focuses on professional skills, responsibilities, and accomplishments while it de-emphasizing dates and specific work experiences.
- Organized by functional titles that explain general areas of expertise. Under each function heading is a brief explanation of accomplishments in that particular area. One can tailor the functional resume to highlight specific skills.
- Often recommended for recent graduates, liberal arts majors, career changers, and people with limited work experience or interrupted careers.

Major drawbacks:

- Most employers do not care for this type of format because it hides the chronological work history that they want to see when reading a resume.
- Employers are not stupid, and the idea that one could fool them by using this format is rather silly. In fact, most employers will immediately realize the applicant is trying to hide something by omitting a chronological work history and toss the resume out.
- For this reason, it is recommended that you not use this format unless you have no work history.

Numerous resume writing books and even professional resume writers continue to suggest the use of the functional format for those in the situations stated above, but human resource professionals urge you not to use this format. Always include dates of employment on your resume and address any inconsistencies in your work experience at the job interview when asked. If you do have a damaged work history, consider using the combination format.



Combination Resume Format



- Incorporates both the chronological and functional formats.
- Can tailor the explanation of your job history to fit the types of jobs for which you are applying.
- Can show continuity in your job record or history, while highlighting your accomplishments and achievements.

Major drawbacks: There are no major drawbacks associated with this format type; except for the fact that some employers will think you're trying to schmooze them. Of course, that's exactly what you're trying to do.

This format is favored by resume writers because chronological work dates, as well as skill sets, are highlighted. This format sells the skills and abilities of recent grads, liberal arts majors, career changers, and people with limited work experience or interrupted careers. In fact, it is a great format that everyone can use because it will help your resume stand out from the crowd. Most of the sample resumes use both chronological and functional elements to highlight specific skills and experience.



Sections of a Resume



- Contact Information
- Objective/Summary of Qualifications
- Work Experience
- Education
- Other Information
- References



Sections of a Resume - Contact Information

- Name - avoid nicknames
- Address
- Telephone/Cell phone
- Record neutral greetings on voicemail/answering machines
- E-mail addresses - professional one

Do not write the word "Resume" at the top of the page unless your job search is confidential. If this is the case, insert "Confidential Resume" at the top.



Sections of a Resume - Objective

- Clear career direction
 - Your resume should be pointed toward conveying why you are the perfect candidate for one specific job or job title. Good advertising is directed toward a very specific target audience.
- Target your resume
 - Be absolutely clear about your career direction. Design your future career so you have a clear target that will meet your goals and be personally fulfilling. A nonexistent, vague, or overly broad objective statement says that you are not sure this is the job for you.

The way to demonstrate your clarity of direction or apparent clarity is to have the first major topic of your resume be your OBJECTIVE.



Sections of a Resume – Objective (Example)

Suppose the owner of a small software company puts an ad in the paper seeking an experienced software sales person. A week later they have received 500 resumes. The applicants have a bewildering variety of backgrounds. The employer has no way of knowing whether any of them are really interested in selling software.

OBJECTIVE: A software sales position in an organization seeking an extraordinary record of generating new accounts, exceeding sales targets and enthusiastic customer relations.

This wakes them up. They are immediately interested. This first sentence conveys some very important and powerful messages: "I want exactly the job you are offering. I am a superior candidate because I recognize the qualities that are most important to you, and I have them. I want to make a contribution to your company." Secondly, this candidate has done a good job of establishing why they are the perfect candidate in their first sentence. They have thought about what qualities would make a candidate stand out. They have started communicating that they are that person immediately. What's more, they are communicating from the point of view of making a contribution to the employer.



Sections of a Resume - Objective

- An objective may be broad and still somewhat undefined in some cases, such as: "a mid-level management position in the hospitality or entertainment industry."
- Remember, your resume will only get a few seconds attention, at best! You have to generate interest right away. Having an objective statement that really sizzles is highly effective and it's simple to do. One format is:

OBJECTIVE: An xxx position in an organization where yyy and zzz would be needed (or, in an organization seeking yyy and zzz).

Xxx is the name of the position you are applying for. Yyy and zzz are the most compelling qualities, abilities or achievements that will really make you stand out above the crowd of applicants. Your previous research to find out what is most important to the employer will provide the information to fill in yyy and zzz.



Sections of a Resume - Summary of Qualifications

- Several concise statements that focus the reader's attention on the most important qualities, achievements and abilities you have to offer. These qualities should be the most compelling demonstrations of why they should hire you instead of the other candidates. It gives you a brief opportunity to communicate a few of your most sterling qualities. It is your one and only chance to attract and hold their attention, to get across what is most important, and to entice the employer to keep reading.
- May be the only section fully read by the employer, so it should be very strong and convincing. The Summary is the one place to include professional characteristics which may be helpful in winning the interview. Gear every word in the Summary to your targeted goal.
- What would make someone the ideal candidate? What qualities the employer will care about most? Then look at what you wrote about why you are the perfect person to fill their need. Pick the stuff that best demonstrates why they should hire you. Assemble it into your Summary section.



Sections of a Resume - Summary of Qualifications (Examples)

- Highly motivated, creative, and versatile real estate executive with seven years of experience in property acquisition, development and construction, as well as the management of large apartment complexes. Especially skilled at building effective, productive working relationship with clients, and staff. Excellent management, negotiation, and public relations skills.
- Commander- Chief Executive Officer of the U.S. Navy, Atlantic Fleet. Expertise in all areas of management, with a proven record of unprecedented accomplishment. History of the highest naval awards and rapid promotion. Proven senior-level experience in executive decision-making, policy direction, strategic business planning, Congressional relations, financial and personnel, research and development management, and aerospace engineering. Extensive knowledge of government military requirements in systems and equipment. Committed to the highest levels of professional and personal excellence.



Sections of a Resume - Work Experience

- List reverse chronological order (last job first)
 - Company's Name
 - Job title
 - Location of Employer (City & State)
 - Start and Ending Employment Dates
 - Job responsibilities (emphasizing skills & achievements)
 - Your most important job duties summarized as briefly as possible, followed by your most important accomplishments. Quantify your accomplishments using actual numbers, percentages and other statistics whenever possible.
 - List jobs in reverse chronological order. Don't go into detail on the jobs early in your career; focus on the most recent and/or relevant jobs. (Summarize a number of the earliest jobs in one line or a very short paragraph, or list only the bare facts not the position description.) Decide which is, overall, more impressive - your job titles or the names of the firms you worked for - then consistently begin with the more impressive of the two, perhaps using boldface type.

Include information about both paid and unpaid, part and full-time employment and internships in reverse chronological order.



Sections of a Resume - Education

- Degrees awarded
- Name of school, City & State
- Major/Minor area of concentration
- Graduation Date





Sections of a Resume - Other Information

- Licenses, Certifications, Awards
- Special Skills (computer skills, language etc.)
- Leadership experience
- Community Involvement, Volunteer Work
- Publications/Presentations
- Papers and Research
- Speaking Engagements
- Extracurricular Activities
- Special Accomplishments
- Miscellaneous Skills
- Continuing Education Courses
- Seminars and Workshops
- Memberships and Associations



Sections of a Resume - References

- DO NOT include references on the resume
- References will be furnished upon request
 - Have four references available
 - Use professionals for references



Power Verbs



The following is a list of “power verbs” or "action verbs", as they are often called, to help you think of your skills, experience and achievements as you create a resume. Try not to use the same word over and over. Use a synonym instead.

Examples: accomplished, achieved, advised, aided, allocated, answered, assigned, balanced, broadened, budgeted, calculated, collaborated, completed, contributed, controlled, coordinated, created, defined, delivered, demonstrated, directed, edited, eliminated, enabled, enhanced, fabricated, facilitated, finalized, gathered, generated, guided, justified, launched, listened, maintained, managed, manipulated, navigated, negotiated, obtained, offset, operated, participated, performed, persuaded, qualified, quantified, quoted, recommended, reconciled, rectified, reorganized, repaired, scheduled, secured, simplified, solidified, taught, tested, testified, undertook, underwrote, unified, updated, upgraded



How to Write a Cover Letter

- First Paragraph: Tell the reader why you are writing -
 - For example, you are applying for X position or inquiring as to whether there is an opening with the company, etc. Try to open your letter with something original and natural rather than using the standard opening found in cover letter manuals. Most people open with something like: "Please accept this letter as my application for the position of _____ advertised in the XYZ Newspaper." Instead, be yourself, and open with something like: "When I read your advertisement for a _____ I knew I was perfect for the position because . . ."
- Second and third Paragraphs: Aggressively market yourself -
 - You can best do this by answering the question: How are you qualified for the position and why should you be hired? Show how you are qualified by applying your training and/or experience to the position for which you are applying. Point out your practical work experience, specific achievements, and unique qualifications.
- Final Paragraph: Refer the reader to your resume -
 - You might also want to state that you are interested in interviewing for the position and offer two or three dates when you are available to interview. If appropriate, add a sentence informing the recipient that you will be phoning in a week or two to discuss the possibility of an interview. Always end the letter by thanking the reader for his time.



Cover Letter Example



- Job Advertisement: "Office Manager: Immediate need for an office manager with 5 or more years experience. Will supervise small staff, manage human resource functions, insure compliance with legal and regulatory agencies, provide administrative support to operations manager, complete expense reports, supervise AP/AR clerical staff, provide monthly status reports to finance and operations management. Proficient in Access, QuickBooks, MS Excel, PowerPoint, and MS Word."
- Cover Letter Example: "I am very interested in the office manager position advertised in last Sunday's Name of Paper. I believe that my background and qualifications are just what you're looking for. Highlights of my experience are as follows –
 - *Human resource management.* For the past eight years I have managed a 10-member staff as head of the HR department for Acme Industries, including supervising the clerical staff in charge of AP/AR.
 - *Regulatory and report compliance.* I have expert knowledge of all laws and regulatory agencies affecting human resource management with a proven record of compliance. In my present position, I am responsible for completing all reports, including expense reports, financial-related reports, and monthly reports to management.
 - *Computer skills.* I am proficient in the use of Access, QuickBooks, Excel, PowerPoint, and Word. I use all of these applications on a daily or weekly basis.

I have enclosed a copy of my resume, which gives you more specific information as to my background and accomplishments. I look forward to meeting with you in person to discuss my qualifications. I will give you a call in a few weeks to see if there is any other question I can possibly answer."



Resume Check



Do:

- Spell check
- Check for grammatical errors
- Have someone proofread
- Use white or off-white resume paper
- Print on one side
- Use font size 10-14
- Mail in large envelopes

Don't:

- Use multiple font styles
- Underline or italicize
- Use graphics or shading
- Staple or Fold