

FY348

JobStart

Part 4 Preparing Your Resume



Resume is a French word that means summary. And that is exactly what it is, a short summary of your work, education and experience. A resume is a written history about you. It is usually one or two pages in length. Your resume will reflect you as a unique person, unlike any others. In this publication you will learn to prepare a resume that reflects you as a unique person.

Everyday hundreds of people get new jobs without the help of a resume. So why should you spend some of your precious time and energy just to create something that won't guarantee you a job? Why should you invest this same time and energy into something that you have never needed before to get a job? The answer, of course, is because a resume is the best method to sell yourself on paper when you can't be there in person.

There are many good reasons for writing a resume, but first lets look at two of the most frequently used reasons for not writing one.

1. Resumes are ineffective. While it's correct to say that good resumes won't get you a job, it should be mentioned that the purpose of a resume is not to get you a job, or even an interview for that matter. Many people send out dozens of resumes every week in the hopes of getting a job. While some years ago this was an accepted method for searching for work, it is no longer a good way to find a job. The resume is just one step of a multi-step plan for finding work.
2. I don't need a resume in my line of work. This statement is true of most unskilled jobs or entry-level jobs. You wouldn't expect the person applying for the entry-level job at a Wendy's restaurant to produce a resume with his or her application. However, if you are seeking a job where you want to rise above the competition, skilled or unskilled, a resume is a good way to set yourself apart from the others.

Now let's look at some of the reasons why having a resume is beneficial to your job search.

1. A good, well-written resume will indicate to the employer that you are serious about your job search.
2. A good resume represents you to the employer when you are not present. It serves as an easy tool the employer can use to scan over your education, experience, and skills easily.
3. Employers often ask for resumes. If an employer is hiring and asks you for a resume, it would be a good idea to have one.
4. Resumes increase your chances of getting hired. This is the bottom line. When you are searching for work it is a good idea to do everything that will increase your chances of winning the job that you want.

In this publication we are going to show you how you can create a resume that is simple and effective. We will give you some information on what to include and how to present it. You will be able to create your own resume that will increase your chances of winning the job you want.

There are as many different types of resumes as there are different types of people. Each one is created for a specific type of person looking for a specific type of job. The resume of a Civil Engineer will look entirely different from the resume of a full menu cook. However, all quality resumes include information that can be grouped into five categories. Those categories are as follows:

1. Who you are.
2. Your job objective.
3. Your education.
4. Your work history.
5. Other relevant information.

It is important that your resume include at a minimum the five categories listed above in order to make sure that you don't leave a piece of vital information out of your resume.

There are several different ways to organize the five categories listed above. There is the chronological resume, which organizes your work history by starting with the most recent job and works backward. There is the functional resume, which lists particular experiences first to highlight them for a particular job. There is also the creative resume, which might list skills first before going into work history. While all these have their place we will focus on the chronological resume here, because it is the most widely accepted and is the easiest for employers to use.

The chronological resume usually prioritizes the five categories in the same order as they are listed above, sometimes switching categories three and four. In the format that follows we will use the listed order.

Category 1. Who you are.

This information is regularly placed at the top of every resume. It includes your name, your address, your phone number, and your work number if you choose to include it. It is very important that this category be correct and complete. People involved in the hiring process are usually very busy and don't have time to look up phone numbers or find a correct address if it is omitted or wrong. Having a wrong phone number or address on your resume could cost you a job.

Category 2. Your job objective.

This is the part of the resume where you state what type of job you are seeking. It is important because if you send a resume to a company you want it to be filed in accordance with the position you want. If it is not stated what type of position you are seeking, then it is likely your resume will be filed in a general file never to be seen by the right persons. You should use position titles whenever possible in this category. It is better to say that you are seeking a secretary position than to say that you are looking for a job doing office work.

Category 3. Your education.

In this section you will include all formal schools that you have completed. High schools, trade schools, vocational colleges, business courses, correspondence courses, universities, or any other type of training that you feel is relevant to the position which you seek. You do not have to put down your grades, but you should put down what type of degree or certificate you received. You should also include any extra-curricular activities that you were involved with during your enrollment, like student government, professional groups, or clubs that are vocationally related.

Category 4. Your work history

This will be the largest section of your resume. It is the section that employers are most likely to scan first. They want to know what you have done for other companies so that they can better determine what you can do for them. Most resumes will start with the most recent job and work backward from there. This is the order many employers are used to and changing it would probably confuse them a bit and take the focus off of what you want them to know.

When listing your present or past employers you should include the dates of your employment, the name and address of the company, the title of your position, a brief description of your duties, and anything that you accomplished while you were there.

If you have done any volunteer work, include that in this section. Cite the duties that relate to actual work activities.

Military service should never be overlooked as a relevant part of your work history. Treat this in the same way you would other work experience with the dates of service, branch, rank achieved and discharge date.

Category 5. Other relevant information.

This is the catch-all category. It is your chance to put down any information that does not fit into the above categories, but is useful information to an employer. If you have any skills that will make you more beneficial to an employer, like computer skills or fluency in another language, put them in this category. Also, any professional associations or organizations to which you belong should be mentioned in this category.

In the next section we will use this format along with other suggestions to help you begin creating a working resume. As you begin to create your resume, it will occur to you that you have already compiled much of this information in your personal inventory. Refer to that publication and use the appropriate information in the preparation of your resume.

The following suggestions will be helpful to you when you prepare your resume.

Helpful Hints

1. Keep your resume at one page. Two page resumes are cumbersome and too lengthy. Employers would rather have the vital information on one page where they can quickly scan it.
2. Use clear and precise language, using positive, action words and never using slang words.
3. Be consistent. Keep everything the same. If you use dates or addresses for one job, then you should use them for all your jobs. If you describe your duties for one job, then describe them for the others.
4. Always mention volunteer work or awards or accomplishments. Employers need to know if you have been recognized for your hard work.
5. Leave out personal information like your age, weight, height, etc.
6. Organize your resume on the page so that it is neat and orderly. Try to balance the information on the page.
7. It must be perfect. Your resume should be free from spelling and other errors.
8. Include a cover letter with your resume.

A sample of a very simple resume is included for your information. Notice that it is one page in length, lists the work objective, and shows the chronological order of the education and the work history.

Preparing Your Resume

The following section is a description of a person named Ronald Sampson. First read the description and then look at the resume example to decide if it is appropriate for him.

Ronald lives in Oakville, Florida at 1947 Magnolia Lane. His telephone number is 813-233-2000. He is 30 years old.

Ronald has been working since he was fifteen years old. He began working at Smiley's Grocery Store as a bag boy while he was in high school. While at Smiley's he was promoted to Stock Person and later to Frozen Foods Assistant. Two years after finishing high school Ronald was fired from Smiley's for eating cookies in the stock room without paying for them.

Ronald enrolled in the local community college for a couple of semesters, but never quite fit in with the college crowd. He worked part-time as a short-order cook at Pete's Hamburger Palace during these two semesters and decided that he would like to be food service employee. He enrolled at Careers Are Us, a vocational school, and began taking classes to become a full menu cook. While going to vocational school Ronald worked at the Lunchbucket, a local cafeteria, where his main responsibility was salad preparation. He also performed volunteer work at the Oakville Community Kitchen where he helped prepare meals for the homeless. Ronald also assisted the volunteer manager with various duties.

After Ronald completed his vocational training he began working as a full menu cook at Oakville General Hospital. There he excelled, increasing the efficiency of the hospital's cafeteria and adding several items to their menu. The other cooks at the hospital, as well as the kitchen helpers, responded to Ronald's leadership and encouraged him to seek a position as lead cook in a restaurant or as a food service manager.

Ronald is still employed as a cook at the hospital and is currently seeking a position as a food service manager.

Ronald B. Sampson
1947 Magnolia Lane
Oakville, Florida 32007
(813) 233-2000

Objective: To use my leadership, training, and experience to obtain a position as a food service manager.

Education:

09/8 06/85 Oakville High School
900 S. College Rd.
Oakville, Florida 32009

08/91-05/92 Careers Are Us Vocational Institute
1300 Right Track Court
Oakville, Florida 32002
Course of Study: Full Menu Cook

Work History:

06/92- Present Oakville General Hospital
3 Health Care Circle
Oakville, Florida 32091

Working as Full Menu Cook for evening and late night shift, filling in for Lead Cook on many occasions, making sure the cafeteria is operational.

07/91-06/92 The Lunchbucket Restaurant
290 W. Gourmet Avenue
Oakville, Florida 32003

Prepared the salad bar daily for buffet dinners and maintained it during business hours, sometimes assisting cooks in meal preparation.

07/90-06/91 Pete's Hamburger Palace
490 Mill Road
Oakville, Florida 32008

Excelled as short-order cook preparing hamburgers and french fries in a high volume fast food restaurant.

Other: Served as a volunteer cook for the Oakville Community Kitchen for the past five years, preparing meals for the homeless; assisted manager with various duties.

References: Available upon request.

Questions to Ask Yourself

- In Ronald's resume is his objective clearly stated?
- Did Ronald leave anything out of his resume that might have helped him?
- Did Ronald include anything in his resume that might have hurt him?
- Should Ronald have included his experience with Smiley's Grocery? Why?
- Does this style of resume work well for Ronald?
- Should Ronald have left the dates out of his resume?
- Did Ronald include any personal information on his resume?
- Should Ronald have listed any skills in the Other Information section of his resume?
- Does listing jobs in reverse order make the resume easier to read?
- Should Ronald have listed his work history before his education? Why?
- Do you think Ronald's resume will help or hurt his chances of getting a job?
- What would you change in Ronald's resume?
- Could you use the format that Ronald used to create a resume for yourself?

Positive Words to Use in A Resume

achieved
adapted
advised
aided
altered
arranged
assisted
assumed
attained
authorized
built
coached

combined
compared
completed
consulted
controlled
coordinated
created
delivered
designed
devised
directed
documented

edited
eliminated
estimated
evaluated
executed
expanded
generated
guided
improved
increased
initiated
instructed

invented
located
maintained
managed
merged
modified
motivated
obtained
operated
organized
planned
produced

published
reduced
removed
repaired
replaced
selected
solved
suggested
supervised
tested
trained
updated

Resume Worksheet

This sample resume worksheet is to be used as a guideline, keeping in mind that all the information will not be needed on every resume.

Name

Address

City, State Zip Phone

Education

High School

Name of School

Dates Attended

City , State Zip

College

Name of School

Dates attended

City , State Zip

Major

Continuing
Education

Name of School

Dates Attended

City , State zip

Major

Other Education

Name of School

Dates Attended

City , State Zip

Major

Work Experience

Job Title

Name of Company

Dates Employed

City , State Zip

Duties _____

Job Title

Name of Company

Dates Employed

City , State Zip

Duties _____

Job Title

Name of Company

Dates Employed

City , State Zip

Duties _____

Job Title Name of Company

Dates Employed City , State Zip

Duties _____

Skills

Objective

Other

After you finish your resume, check it against the following points.

Resume Checklist

Does your resume meet all of the following criteria?

- The content supports the objective.
- It emphasizes achievements.
- The information on education and work history are complete.
- The reasons for leaving employment are not given.
- There are no huge gaps in employment history.
- All relevant or useful skills are mentioned.
- Clear and precise language is used.
- The past tense is used for previous activities.
- The present tense is used for current activities.
- A consistent format is used.
- The paper is spotless and free of wrinkles.
- The paper is of a high quality.
- The appearance is neat and clean.

A Word about References

While it is commonly assumed that references aren't required on your resume, it is still important that we give you some guidelines for using references. First, you should only give an employer a list of references when the employer asks for it. Most employers don't spend time checking references until they have narrowed the list of candidates for a job down to a small number, usually three to five. They don't have time to call references on a large number of candidates. Second, you should choose a reference who is in a position to tell the employer what kind of worker you are. Employers don't need to know that you are a nice person who takes groceries to your grandmother twice a week or always gives to charities when they come asking for money. Employers need to know how they can expect you to perform on the job.

Here are some general rules for choosing a good reference.

- Managers, supervisors, or fellow workers make the best references.
- Professors, teachers, and coaches make good references.
- It is better to use a person that is employed as a reference
- Persons with whom you have served on committees or leadership councils make good references.
- Do not use doctors, dentists, or pastors because they know more about your personal life than your work habits.
- Do not use family members.
- Use persons who are good at communicating and will come across as knowledgeable.
- You should always get permission from a person if you are going to use them as a reference.

You should make and maintain a list of references. Update their addresses and phone numbers as needed and keep in touch with them. If your reference feels good about you it is likely to translate to a potential employer. Always give them notice when you think an employer might be calling them so that they can refresh their memory about you and your work habits. However, don't try to put words into their mouth, as this can backfire, causing a conversation that might sound rehearsed to a potential employer.

Finally, you should have a list of references that includes a minimum of three persons. Most employers will ask for at least three references and some will ask for more. The more references you can supply the better off you will be. If you have a list of ten references and an employer asks for five, then you can pick from your ten the ones that will be better suited to give you a reference for the type of position for which you have applied.

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