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Résumé Tips

This page is intended to serve as a reference for corporate related information, stressing the necessary preparations before the job hunt. This page is NOT intended to teach you how to find a job or where to look for a job. This page has been built with two assumptions in mind. Please keep them in mind as you read this page:

- 1) The audience has a clear idea of the type of job they want
- 2) The audience is aware of the skills that they possess, but would like tips on how to communicate this across in the job search.

Resume Rule: Never Lie

That's right – never lie on your resume. This cannot be stressed enough. It's the easiest way to lose an interview and is sufficient grounds for dismissal once on the job.

The first step in finding a job is having a resume that effectively communicates to potential employers why they should hire you. Unless you know someone in a company, the resume serves to get you an interview which gets you the job. As the saying goes, the resume gets your foot into the door. . .

In your resume, you want to emphasize certain things about you that will make someone want to hire you – whether it would be lots of prior experience, a special skill, or your ability to learn and adapt quickly. With this in mind, you must target your resume to the appropriate audience. You are selling yourself in your resume, cover letter and on the interview. To effectively accomplish this, you must know your audience. Do your research and know as much as possible about the job (responsibilities and qualifications), the company (main product, the big cheese, etc), and the industry (trends, mergers, etc).

It pays to put in the extra effort to make multiple resumes, each for a different type of position or industry. For example, many Stern undergraduates target the Information Systems and Finance industry; it would be most effective to have a resume customized for each industry, to stress the different skills of each. With these thoughts in mind, let's get to the resume!

Resume Format

Your resume should be pleasing to the eye and should have a natural flow. Too much white space is not good, but at the same time, you don't want to clutter your resume. There are many different styles of resumes that you can choose. The easiest way to select a format is to look at lots and lots of other resumes for ideas. I like my resume in a chronological order, with relevant sections grouped together. Don't bother putting in locations unless they are unique such as an international location or a difference between jobs that may need to be highlighted.



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Some resume formats to consider:

EXPERIENCE

Company Name, Title, Department Name

Date(s) of employment

- Description line here. Try to write to fill up the entire line if possible. Also, no cut-off orphans.
- Description line here. Try to write to fill up the entire line if possible. Also, no cut-off orphans.
- Description line here. Try to write to fill up the entire line if possible. Also, no cut-off orphans.
- Description line here. Try to write to fill up the entire line if possible. Also, no cut-off orphans.

OR . . .

Company Name, Department (or on next line)

Date(s) of employment

Title, Department (or Department, Title)

Location (if necessary)

- Description line here. Try to write to fill up the entire line if possible. Also, no cut-off orphans.
- Description line here. Try to write to fill up the entire line if possible. Also, no cut-off orphans.
- Description line here. Try to write to fill up the entire line if possible. Also, no cut-off orphans.
- Description line here. Try to write to fill up the entire line if possible. Also, no cut-off orphans.

OR . . .

EXPERIENCE Company Name, Title, Department

Date(s)

- Description line here. Try to write to fill up the entire line if possible. No orphans!
- Description line here. Try to write to fill up the entire line if possible. No orphans!
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Try to look at as many resumes as you can. Also, ask others for ideas and suggestions. . .

Bullets vs. Paragraph Style

We prefer bullet points as opposed to paragraph format because it allows each line to be emphasized. In a paragraph format, the reader (recruiter) sees a bunch of words, but none of it really stands out. Paragraph style should be used by manager-level and higher positions to describe how they managed people, whereas below-manager level people need to emphasize specific responsibilities. And this is accomplished more effectively through bullet points. Do not allow bullets to exceed one line.

Fonts

Standard fonts such as ARIAL or TIMES NEW ROMAN are recommended for a more traditional resume. We usually recommend a serif font since it is easier to read on paper. Non-serif fonts are easier to read on a computer monitor. Do not use crazy fonts (unless you are in the creative space and have a specific reason). For a very full resume with little blank space, we would definitely go ARIAL and non-serif route for legibility purposes.



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Length of Resume

Keep it to one page and be succinct. An exception to this rule might include a second page for any special projects or assignments that you would like to display, if applicable or necessary.

Make sure that the phone number that you put down won't be answered by a maniac and preferably has an answering machine. Beeper numbers should NOT be included; however, cell phones with an appropriate voicemail are ok.

The Heart of the Resume

• Contact Information

This section should include all the information necessary to contact you, whether it is by phone, snail mail, email or internet. Include the following:

Name

All relevant addresses (local & permanent)

Phone Number (day and evening)

Email address

Web page

• Objective

It is our opinion that objectives are a waste of time and only takes up white space that could be used for other important things. Your objective should be included in the cover letter. An objective should only be included if you know EXACTLY what you want to do.

• Education

List the schools that you have attended, with the most recent first. If you graduated from college, do not put in your high school, especially if it is not a well known school. If you are still in college, you can put in your high school if you'd like. Inclusion of high school is optional, based on personal preference as well as space availability on your resume. This section is a must.

A couple notes on GPA:

Include your GPA if it is higher than 3.0

Emphasize higher GPA (major vs. overall)

• Relevant Courses

Only include this if your resume has too much white space, especially if you are new to the work force. Similar to our view on Objectives, we think this is a waste of time, but advisors and career counselors seem to advise students to include it. It's not practical in our opinion. Leave it out if you have more important areas to stress on your resume. This is what differentiates between a recruiting resume and a school/internship resume. You want a recruiting resume.

• Experience

Perhaps the most important part of the resume, this section describes your jobs. Big corporate names don't hurt. This is usually the most difficult and most time-consuming part of writing the resume. You do not have to include every job. Be selective and targeted with your resume!



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****** READ THIS SECTION ABOUT HOW TO STRUCTURE YOUR RESUME LANGUAGE******

Experience Section:

Before writing /revising your resume, first figure out the overall goal of the resume - what type of job is this resume trying to achieve? Then, tailor the resume.

For each worthwhile job experience, try to have four to five bullets for each description, definitely aim for give to six bullets for the most recent (and relevant position). Generally speaking, for more recent positions, a minimum of three bullets; however, sometimes we go down to two or one bullet or just the company name and title. Under no circumstances should you have more than seven bullets (i.e. max of seven bullets).

For each job description, answer these questions:

What did you do and why did you do it?

Start your first bullet with an overall role/job function. What were you hired for? How did you fit into the company overall? Shows that you understand the bigger picture. Be general here. What you want in your next job will determine how you phrase your responsibilities and how specific you get. Always start from general to specific, both in the overall flow of your bullets as well as within each bullet/idea.

How did you do your job?

Be specific here, list specific tasks and how you did it. List applications / programming languages, etc. Emphasize the soft skills, such as teamwork and communication and hard skills, such as technical skills. Use strong action verbs and don't use passive tense.

First Line

In the first line of the job description, give the big picture and say why you were hired. If you ended up having various duties than the original job responsibilities, then explain what your role was in the department and the firm. Be specific as possible and use the subsequent lines to describe what you did and how you did it. This is just like in elementary school and junior high school where the teachers tell you that an essay has a beginning, middle and end. The beginning is the intro, the middle is the body and the end is the conclusion. In this case, the first line is the intro.



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Body (next few lines)

The body (next few lines) support and back-up your intro. Limit the use of the word “the” and specify the applications that you used on the job, especially if it is unique. Companies want people who can “add value” to the job – will you just sit back and do what you are asked to, or will you go beyond that and take initiative to improve the overall process of the department and company? Would you hire yourself if you were a lazy person who doesn't take the initiative to learn and do new things?

Include the following:

Major accomplishments (quantify, if possible)

For example, if you received an award, then say something like 5 of 100 to receive award

Main responsibilities

Skills acquired, improved, and utilized

Any special knowledge gained

We find it helpful to answer the following questions:

What did you do? (execute corporate mergers & acquisitions)

How? (building and developing sophisticated models)

Incorporate specific tools utilized (comps, pre-pays, dcf, break-up, etc)

Another example:

What did you do? (design and build internet linked database system)

How? (analysis business process and design workplan)

Incorporate specific tools utilized (ODBC, SQL, VB, etc)

Use the Action Verb List (see next page).

These are powerful verbs that emphasize certain points and strengthen your resume.

Last Line: address value-added

If you weren't there, what WOULDN'T have happened? Sure, “anyone” could have been hired to do the job and do the job well. BUT, because it was YOU that was hired, what value-added projects or initiatives were accomplished because it was specifically YOU and not someone else.

• Activities

While some view this section as optional, I tend to view this as mandatory for a well-rounded resume, reflecting a well-rounded person. You definitely do not want to come off as all work and no life. Companies look for a well balanced person. Do note that some companies / industries such as Comp Sci, who just might be looking for people who can write code and don't care about anything else. Do your research. Target your resume.

Include any of the following activities, as applicable to your situation and level of experience:

Officer / Executive Board of any clubs / fraternities

Membership in any clubs / fraternities

Student government related activities

Volunteer work and community service

Athletic teams



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• **Skills / Computer Skills**

In today's digital world, it doesn't make sense not to include any computer skills that can make you more marketable. Include language skills, computer skills, other technical skills, such as typing, etc...

• **Interests / Personal**

This section is optional, but I feel that it is important in a well-rounded resume. Be prepared to talk in depth about whatever you write in this section. If you include golf, you should be able to talk about your handicap or I'll know you're bullshitting. If you include pool/billiards, you should be able to tell me what English is, at the VERY least, or else don't include it.

Action Verb List

These are powerful verbs that emphasize certain points and strengthen your resume:

accelerate	clarify	edit	increase	perform	revamp
accomplish	close	effect	incur	pinpoint	review
achieve	co-author	elect	inform	pioneer	revise
acquire	collaborate	eliminate	initiate	plan	revitalize
activate	collect	employ	innovate	prepare	salvage
actuate	combine	encourage	inspect	present	save
adapt	communicate	enforce	inspire	preserve	schedule
address	compile	engineer	instigate	preside	segment
administer	compose	enhance	instruct	prevent	select
advise	compute	enlarge	insure	process	sell
affect	conceive	enrich	install	procure	serve
allocate	conceptualize	establish	instill	produce	service

Don't forget **built, create, develop, design** and **structure!!!**