



The Connection

Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training



www.jobtrainingmn.org

Writing an Effective Resume

A resume is a sales tool to sell your skills and abilities to an employer for a specific position. A resume also introduces you, describes what you want to do, and clarifies what you offer to a prospective employer. You do not need to be a professional writer to write your own resume, just some knowledge of what your skills and abilities are. The greatest challenge will not be what to include in your resume, but what to leave out.

An attention getting resume must be targeted, to the point, and clearly identify your qualifications. It is critical that you target your resume to a specific occupational goal. The content of your resume should point to that goal. Without this focus, your resume will be mediocre at best. Keep your goals in mind as you are writing your resume. This will help you decide what to include, what to leave out, and what will help target your resume.

Resumes are not literary, they are promotional. The rules of grammar are modified from formal writing. Complete sentences are not necessary and, in fact, are discouraged. Avoid long narratives and use bullets and key phrases as attention getters. Also use action verbs to stress performance, motivation, and a desire for excellence – exactly those traits you want employers to know about you.

A résumé's sole purpose is to draw the reader's attention and create a desire to know more. The objective is to win an interview and an interview is where the job is won.

There are two primary formats of resumes:

1.) A **Chronological Resume** highlights recent experience, but tends to de-emphasize experiences further back in time. The format is organized by listing each of your employment positions beginning with most recent. This format is for those with a consistent work history where there are no gaps in employment, and who's past employment experiences are directly related to their current employment goals. A chronological resume can be enhanced with a section highlighting skills, accomplishments, and experience.

2.) A **Functional Resume** highlights skills, experience, and accomplishments without identifying specific dates, names, and places. The information is organized by functions or skills, advertising the specific qualifications needed for the occupation. This format works very well for people changing careers, those with gaps in their work history, or for those entering the job market after an absence or for the first time. Some "red flags" of using a *Functional Resume* are as follows:

- Contains no chronological listing of employment.

- Employers may be suspicious that the applicant may be trying to hide something.
- Employer may suspect a job hopper, lack of career progression, employment gaps, etc.

Functional Resumes can be strengthened with a chronological listing of employment experiences. You may call this the *combination resume* which takes the best parts of both the chronological and functional formats. It features a functional section that highlights skills, accomplishments, and experience. It also includes a chronological listing of employment, education, and employment-related experiences. This can help bypass the "red flags" of the true functional style.

Some design tips for writing your resume:

- * Place your name, address, and phone numbers with area code, below the top margin.
- * Font size shouldn't be smaller than 11 pt or larger than 12 pt, except for your Name and Headings.
- * Make sure that your skills and occupation-specific keywords match your objective.
- * Give priority to the skills on your resume. Place important skills at the beginning of the resume where employers can see them first.
- * Avoid graphics, unless you are in a creative field.
- * Proofread, proofread, and proofread again!

-Excerpts from the Career Connection

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The Marks of a Good Resume

- R**esults - Oriented
- E**ssential Information Only
- S**kills - Based
- U**nique - What Makes You Special
- M**arkets a Product - You!
- E**ffective - Gets You Noticed!

-Created by Barb Palmer for the Workforce Centers' Resume Workshops

Common Resume Mistakes

- * Needs an Objective or Title Heading
- * Resume does not support Objective (make sure there is a connection)
- * Lacks accomplishments / career achievements
- * Jobs are not in the proper order
- * Sentences are too choppy—five words per bullet (expand; make it interesting)
- * Wording is weak; statements are too simple (use action verbs and a thesaurus)
- * Too many typos and grammatical errors (read it backwards; have a friend proof-read it!)



- * Includes too much unrelated information (stay on track; keep the position in mind)
- * Uses pronouns — “I, He, She, His, Her” (not necessary or is understood)
- * Uses the full address for employers (list only the town and state)
- * Includes unrelated personal interests and hobbies such as “enjoy reading, long walks, music, travel, knitting, and puzzles” (include interests ONLY if it is related to your career Objective)
- * Includes personal information such as married, homeowner, two children (Leave off. It is unrelated to the position)

Reference: www.resume-resource.com

Take a Break and Smile “Resume Quotes”

Below you will find quotations taken from resumes and cover letters from all over the country. Take a break, smile and make sure you *don't* repeat these mistakes in your resume!

Resume Quotations

- “I’m a rabid typist.”
- “You will always find me to be an extremely trying person.”
- “I can play well with others.”
- “Previous experience: Self-employed — a fiasco.”
- “Education: College, August 1880—May 1984.”
- “Develop and recommend an annual operating expense fudget.”

- “Accomplishments: Completed 11 years of high school.”
- “Excellent memory; strong math aptitude; excellent memory; effective management skills; and very good at math.”
- “It’s best for employers that I not work with people.”
- “Here are my qualifications for you to overlook.”
- “Seek challenges that test my mind and body, since the two are usually inseparable.”
- “I was proud to win the Gregg Typing Award”



Excerpt from: <http://www.offshore-environment.com/takebreak>

15 Rules to Live By

This can be a hectic, confusing world we live in, but there are several rules to help you succeed at whatever you choose to do:

1. Embrace change and learn from new experiences
2. Ask questions—LISTEN
3. Take ownership of your education
4. No plan = No direction
5. Be honest with yourself and others
6. Don't agonize—organize—take action
7. Never, never give up
8. Help others
9. Manage your time or be mismanaged by it
10. Believe in yourself

11. Don't find fault—find a solution
12. Develop a positive “I'll Make It Happen” attitude
13. Good decisions—good results; poor decisions—poor results
14. Eliminate excuses and take more responsibility
15. Write your goals down, add action steps and a timetable

These rules will help you answer “yes” to this question:

“Did I give my best effort to today's activities?”

Reference: www.teachingmoments.com

A resume with errors will confirm that your job performance would be laden with errors and mistakes.

You have to love a nation that celebrates its independence every July 4, not with a parade of guns, tanks, and soldiers who file by the White House in a show of strength and muscle, but with family picnics where kids throw Frisbees, the potato salad gets iffy, and the flies die from happiness. You may think you have overeaten, but it is *patriotism*.
~ Erma Bombeck



...And I'm proud to be an American, where at least I know I'm free. And I won't forget the men who died, who gave that right to me.
~Lee Greenwood