

How to Write a Professional Resume

by

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Preface

How long does it take to write a professional resume? Most top-notch resumes go through multiple drafts. There are times when you need a resume FAST, though. You don't have time to go through revision after revision. This book is written with one goal in mind: to write a professional resume in as little time as possible.

When you stop to consider that an employer scans a resume for about 30 seconds before making a "yes" or "no" decision, you will realize that making your resume as excellent as possible is essential. Spending a lot of time writing a resume seems like a waste of time when compared to how little time it actually gets read, though. In truth, it is because employers have a limited time and desire to review resumes that your resume has to be its absolute best. If not, the employer will give it a quick glance and put it in the "NO" pile. If it passes the 30 second scan, it will be read further to determine if you should be contacted for an interview.

In reality, most of us do not have the time it takes to revise a resume 7-8 times. How long it takes, though, is entirely up to you. You can spend as much or as little time preparing your resume as you like. Naturally, the more time you spend refining your resume, the better it will look. Sometimes, though, you need a resume NOW.

The resume is supposed to give an employer a brief, yet ample summary of who you are and what you are capable of doing. It must show the prospective employer that you will be an asset to the company. It should be positive, energetic and cause the reader to want to learn more about you, thus paving the way for an interview.

Something you should keep in mind:

An employer's specific needs are going to differ from position to position. For instance, good typing skills are expected of an administrative assistant and a minimum of a Bachelor's degree is required for an engineer. Other "universal needs", such as communication skills, planning ability and organization skills are needed by all employers. Your resume has to speak to both the universal and specific needs. Remember that the prospective employer doesn't know anything about you, so your resume will be speaking for you.

So, how do you make your resume speak to employers?

You will find everything you need to write a professional resume in this book. If you follow the steps outlined here and take the time to revise as described in the chapters ahead, you will have a resume that stands out when read and opens doors of opportunity.

YOU CAN DO THIS!

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INTRODUCTION

“How to Write a Resume in 30 Minutes or Less” is designed to guide you through the resume writing process quickly and easily. You will follow six carefully organized steps. Each step has two basic components: (a) a set of directions and (b) an example to illustrate those directions.

There is nothing on the market that offers what this book offers.

Instead of reading page after page of other people’s resumes or having to try to identify what an author is attempting to convey through words alone, you will follow one person’s application of this awesome step-by-step process – from start to finish.

You will see how one person begins with a blank piece of paper and follows the instructions one at a time until he achieves an amazing professional resume.

This book will provide you with the information you need to make logical decisions regarding your own resume. By starting at the beginning, you will understand what makes a resume look professional and what grabs the resume reader’s attention. In doing so, you will transform *your* personal history into a *marketing piece* that sells your qualifications in the best possible way.

The first part of this book is written very concisely so that you can get your resume written as quickly as possible. When you have time read the articles at the end of the book. (See Appendix A and Appendix B) The information in those articles is priceless and will afford you numerous opportunities to further enhance your resume.

The Resume Sections – At a Glance

The process of writing a resume takes a bit of effort. It is not complicated, though.

The information below is designed to help you understand the different sections of the resume and what they are meant to accomplish.

Think Ahead

The first thing you need to do is something that most job candidates fail to do. They fail to think ahead. Before you even begin to write or start tapping on a keyboard, you need to spend some time reflecting on what it is that you want to accomplish with the resume.

Yes, of course, you want to get a job. But, will just any job satisfy you or are you looking for a particular type of position? Get specific. Drill down your career choices until you know exactly what you are interested in pursuing.

The Heading

In all cases, you will list your personal "contact" information at the top of the page. Bolding your name is certainly advisable as you want to be remembered. Everything else can be aligned as you would like. That is not nearly as important as making certain that your name, address and phone number are typed correctly. Make a mistake in this area and it may cost you dearly. (The employer can't contact you if you don't list your phone number correctly).

The Objective Statement

Use an Objective Statement. Employers are not mind readers. Unless you identify the type of work you are seeking, you may not find what you are looking for. This is especially true if you are changing careers.

When you focus on this portion of your resume, be sure to keep the statement positive, concise and centered around the needs of the employer. The best resumes subtly sell their skills as a mean of benefiting the organization they are targeting.

Work Experience

The next area to spotlight is your work experience. One of the easiest ways to tackle this task is to write down the following things for each of your employers for the past 10 years (or past 3 employers – whichever you reach first):

Name of Company
Dates Worked
Responsibilities
Accomplishments

The best way to explain your accomplishments is to define HOW you succeeded in handling the responsibilities of your job. If at all possible, quantify your accomplishments by applying numbers to the rate of success you had (improved production efficiency by 15% or reduced turnover by 20%, for example).

Education

Your education is also important to employers, so you will want to present this information in the best way possible. Whether you received good grades or not, it is

vital to show the employer that you believe in the power of learning. If you do not have the best of grades, omit a reference to them. If you do have good grades, reflect it on your resume.

List the highest level of education you have received. Include the name of the institution, the dates you attended and the school's location. Regardless of your educational background, be it a high school education or a master's degree, direct the employer's attention to the course of study you pursued and especially highlight it if it is related to the position you are seeking.

Other Sections

This section covers everything else. This can include any or all of the following:

- Professional Affiliations
- Volunteer Work
- Activities
- Publications
- Awards/Honors
- Foreign Languages

This is not an exhaustive list, either. There are other possible sections that you may choose to include depending upon your own situation. You may or may not want to list the date or dates related to the "Other" section. If you held an office of any kind, refer to that as well.

If you want to list a "references" section, feel free to do so, but actually listing your references on your resume is rarely ever done by anyone in today's current job market. Simply put "available upon request" if you list this section at all.

You can create an amazing resume. Use these steps to guide you and success will be yours.

STEP 1

Before you actually begin writing your resume, review the resume formats that follow on the next three pages. These are accepted formats for organizing your qualifications: chronological, functional and combination. Each resume contains the same information. The difference, you will see, is in the way each resume is organized.

Each of these formats can be used to target your personal history in a unique way. To target a resume means the resume should focus all of the information to a specific position and employer. If your objective is to be a veterinary assistant, then everything in the resume should lead to that - experience, education and activities.

Do not plan to mass-produce your resume and send it to many companies. It does not work. In today's competitive marketplace, you have to seek out a specific position or a specific industry. You should target your resume by (a) choosing the appropriate format, (b) selecting the order of categories to be presented and (c) deciding which responsibilities and tasks are most important and listing them first.

The format you choose will target certain aspects of your background. For example, John T. Martin, in the functional format, highlights his capabilities and achievements more than his job titles and employers. (See the next three pages for each the examples mentioned here.) This works well for someone with excellent skills, but hasn't worked for a well known firm. It also works well to de-emphasize the dates of employment.

The format can highlight certain qualifications, as well. For instance, John listed his education before experience in the chronological resume. These can be reversed if your experience is more impressive than your education. Any format can be structurally altered, but be careful not to make too many changes. The more you tamper with the structure, the more likely you will end up with a poor looking resume.

The format also highlights specific qualifications in different ways. In the combination resume, John listed his ability to supervise temporary staff workers before he listed his creation of an orientation program for new employees. By listing this first, the reader sees his abilities to supervise and work with others before anything else. This is directly in line with the job objective stated at the top of the resume. Depending upon what John was looking for in his next position, those two might be reversed.

The objective in tailoring your resume is to get the employer's attention. To do this, you must emphasize your good qualifications and de-emphasize your bad ones.

Now, take a look at the resume examples that follow.