

Successful Resume Writing



Career Destinations 2003

Information Resource: Quintessential Careers & State Farm
www.quintcareers.com & www.statefarm.com/careers/campus.htm

Preparing an ideal résumé for scanning

Preparing a scannable résumé is easy. Like the traditional résumé, your focus should be on format and content.

Many companies use a résumé database tool. Using document imaging technology, your résumé is scanned into the computer as an image. OCR (optical character recognition) software looks at the image to distinguish every letter and number and then creates a text file. Your résumé is then "read" by the computer, which extracts important information about you such as your name, address, phone number, work history, years of experience, education and skills.

The computer can search for just about anything in your résumé. Some systems review candidate résumés to match their skills with the job requirements of open positions other than the one they applied. You could be qualified and considered for jobs you never thought of.

Why is it important for you to know how to create a scannable résumé?

Because many companies use their system to help match the skills you list on your résumé with available career opportunities, it's important for you to have a "scannable" résumé. A scannable résumé is clean so the scanner can get a clear image. It also has standard fonts and crisp type so the OCR software can recognize every letter.

Format of your résumé

To maximize the computer's ability to read your résumé, provide a clean original on plain white paper and use a standard style.

The most difficult résumé for the computer to read is one of poor quality, that has unusual formats such as a newsletter layout, adjusted spacing, small font size, unusual fonts, graphics or lines, script typestyles, type that is too light, paper that is too dark, marbled paper, or heavy paper.

Maximizing the quality of your résumé

- Use white 8 1/2 x 11 paper, with black ink, printed on only one side.
- Text can continue on the next page for a maximum of two pages.
- Use a font size of 12 to 14 points.
- Use standard typefaces such as Arial, Courier New, Helvetica, Futura, Optima, Univers, Times, Palatino, and New Century Schoolbook.
- Do not condense spacing between letters.
- Provide a laser printer original or a typewritten original. Do not send copies or dot matrix printouts.
- Do not fold, staple, or paperclip your résumé.
- Avoid fancy treatments such as italics, underlining, shadows, and reverse images (white letters on black background).
- Do not use text boxes when submitting an electronic résumé.
- Don't use pictures, graphics, boxes, vertical lines, or borders.
- Avoid two-column format or résumés that look like newspapers or newsletters.
- Place your name at the top of each page.
- Include your e-mail address.
- Use standard address format below your name.
- Your name can be up to 28 points in size.
- Date ranges should be on the same line.
- Do not submit handwritten documents (letters or cover letters).

Content of your résumé

Recruiters may access the résumé database to search for your résumé specifically, or for applicants with specific experience. When searching for specific experience, they'll search for key words such as communication skills, typing, computer skills, customer service or city/state. For this reason, it's important for you to use words that describe all the skills you possess. For example, if your past job experience includes working as a server in a restaurant, you may want to include "customer service" as a skill on your résumé.

Resume Preparation Do's and Don'ts by Katharine Hansen

Here are the keys to successfully preparing and writing a resume. Follow these simple rules and you should achieve success in this important phase of job-hunting.

- **Do** consider a bulleted style to make your resume as reader-friendly as possible.
- **Don't** get overwrought about the old "one-page resume rule." It's good to keep your resume to one page, if possible, but if you have a lot of experience, two pages may be more appropriate.
- But **don't** go beyond two pages with your resume.
- **Do** consider a resume design that doesn't look like everyone else's. Many jobseekers use Microsoft Word resume templates and wizards. There's nothing wrong with them, per se, but your resume won't look distinctive if you use one; it will look like the resume of everyone else who used a Word template.
- **Don't** use justified text blocks; they put odd little spaces between words. Instead, make your type flush left.
- **Don't** ever lie on your resume.
- **Do** include as much contact information as possible -- any information that would enable an employer to reach you during business hours (cell phone number, e-mail address, etc.).
- **Do** give your resume as sharp a focus as possible. Given that employers screen resumes for between 2.5 and 20 seconds, you need a way to show the employer at a glance **what you want to do** and **what you're good at**. One way to sharpen your focus is through an objective statement. The objective statement can be very simple and straightforward; it can be simply the title of the position you're applying for, which can be adjusted for every job you apply for. Or you can embellish the Objective statement a bit with language telling how you'll benefit the employer. Something like: "Objective: To contribute strong _____ skills and experience to your firm in a _____ capacity."
- **Do** consider a section such as "Summary of Qualifications," or "Profile," which can also help sharpen your focus.
- **Don't** discount the possibility of a functional format for your resume. This format can be strategic for career changers, students and others who lack experience, those with gaps in their employment, as well as those re-entering the workforce. A functional resume is organized around functional skills clusters. After listing three to four skills clusters and showing how you've demonstrated those skills, you provide a bare-bones work history at the bottom. See the attached sample of a functional resume
- **Don't** use personal pronouns (I, my, me) in a resume.
- **Do** list your job information in order of importance to the reader. In listing your jobs, what's generally most important is your title/position. So list in this preferred order: Title/position, name of employer, city/state of employer, dates of employment.
- **Don't** leave out the locations of your past jobs (city and state). This information is expected, but many jobseekers unwittingly omit it.
- **Do** list your jobs in reverse chronological order.
- **Don't** mix noun and verb phrases when describing your jobs. Preferably, use concrete [action verbs](#) consistently.
- **Do** avoid the verb, "Work" because it's a weak verb. Everyone works. Be more specific. "Collaborate(d)" is often a good substitute.
- **Do** think in terms of accomplishments when preparing your resume. Accomplishments are so much more meaningful to prospective employers than run-of-the-mill litanies of job responsibilities.
- **Don't** use expressions like "Duties included," "Responsibilities included," or "Responsible for." That's job-description language, not accomplishments-oriented resume language that sells.

- **Do** emphasize transferable skills, especially if you don't have much experience or seek to change careers.
- **Do** quantify whenever possible. Use numbers to tell employers how many people you supervised, by what percentage you increased sales, how many products you represented, etc.
- **Don't** emphasize skills and job activities you don't want to do in the future, even if they represent great strengths for you. In fact, you may not even want to mention these activities. Why describe how great your clerical skills are if you don't want to do clerical work in the future?
- **Do** remember that education also follows the principle about presenting information in the order of importance to the reader; thus the preferred order for listing your education is: Name of degree (spelled out: Bachelor of _____) in name of major, name of university, city/state of university, graduation year (unless you graduated more than about 15 years ago), followed by peripheral information, such as minor and GPA. If you haven't graduated yet, list your grad year anyway. Simply by virtue of the fact that the date's in the future, the employer will know you don't have the degree yet.
- **Don't** include on your resume your height, weight, age, date of birth, place of birth, marital status, sex, ethnicity/race, health, social security number (except on an international resume), reasons for leaving previous job(s), names of former supervisors, specific street addresses or phone numbers of former employers, picture of yourself, salary information, the title "Resume," or any information that could be perceived as controversial, such as religion, church affiliations, or political affiliations.
- **Don't** include hobbies or other irrelevant information on a resume. In most cases, they are seen as superfluous and trivial. An argument can be made that hobbies are interview conversation starters or that they make you seem well rounded, but they are generally seen as fluff or filler.
- **Do**, however, list sports if you're a student or new grad. Many employers specifically seek out athletes because of their drive and competitiveness, as well as teamwork and leadership skills. Collegiate athletes should even consider listing their sports background in the Experience section.
- **Don't** list references right on your resume. References belong in a later stage of the job search. Keep references on a separate sheet and provide them only when they are specifically requested.
- **Do** realize that the phrase "References available upon request" is highly optional because it is a given that you will provide references upon request. If you couldn't, you would have no business looking for a job. The line can serve the purpose of signaling: "This is the end of my resume," but if you are trying to conserve space, leave it off.
- **Do** proofread carefully. **Misspellings and typos are deadly on a resume.**

Sample: Functional Resume

Joe Bloe

Harris University
1111 College Way
Jacksonville, FL 32222
904-555-5551
JoeBloe@internet.com

OBJECTIVE	To contribute my education and health management skills in a position with a growing and dynamic firm.
EDUCATION	BACHELOR OF SCIENCE Harris University , Jacksonville, Florida, December, 2003 Major: Health Sciences Minor: Management
RELEVANT COURSES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Human Anatomy & Physiology I• Human Anatomy & Physiology II• Health Policy• Organizational Analysis and Health Care• Health Care Management• Human Resource Management
Health Management Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Served as Assistant to the Director of the Brian D. Bourgly Cancer Foundation.• Functioned as Public Health Representative for the Jacksonville Area Public Health Administration.• Coordinated, Harris University Public Health Awareness Week, 1999, 2001.
Communications Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Served as a phone-a-thon caller on several occasions, soliciting donations from Harris alumni and parents for Harris University.• Volunteered for a political campaign, distributing literature door to door, fielding questions and making phone calls to local constituents.
Management Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Handled all back-office management functions, including employee relations and accounting.• Oversaw client relations, order processing and routine upkeep of the business.• Coordinated efforts between customer needs and group personnel.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Designed all market research analysis and projects for our client.• Delegated suggestions and duties to other team members.• Presented market research results to client with suggestions of implementation.
Leadership Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participated in Youth Leadership Jacksonville, a group dedicated to developing leadership skills through diverse programming.• Served as formal/social coordinator for my sorority program council.• Elected Vice President of Risk Management for Panhellenic, a group that oversees and coordinates educational programming for Harris's Greek system.
Systems Abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Microsoft Office• HTML/Web Publishing• WordPerfect• PageMaker