Resume Writing

You seldom get a second chance to make a first impression, and your resume and cover letter are often your first impression. The primary purpose of a resume is to get you a job interview. The resume also serves as the talking point during the interview itself. A resume should be designed in such a way to clearly show your unique qualifications for your chosen career, and to set yourself apart from the competition.

Resume Writing Tips – General

- There is no one way to write a resume. Although there are some basic rules, much of it has to do with style. Your resume should express your unique skills and personality in a professional manner.

- Employers spend seconds scanning your resume. It needs to be concise, customized and compelling to get their attention.

- Your resume is a "marketing" document. Out of all of the candidates applying for a position, why would I choose you for an interview? You need to "stand out" vs. "blend in."

- Employers predict future success through past performance. You need to transform your resume from a "job description" to a "performance summary."

Resume Writing Tips – Visual Appeal

- Limit your resume to one page (traditional college student) to two pages (more experienced worker) in length, with the exception of CVs (higher education and science/medical fields).

- Avoid resume templates. They're too rigid to develop a resume that uniquely expresses who you are. You want your resume to reflect an "original creation."

- Create a Microsoft Word or PDF document with .80/1.0" margins on the top, bottom, left and right. Your resume should look like a picture in a frame, with the white space around your content acting as the frame.

- Make sure there is ample white space between categories and text as well. Make it inviting to read.

- Don't use fancy fonts that are hard to read, and be consistent with your font type throughout the resume. Times New Roman or Arial are widely accepted font types.

- In terms of font size, use an 11 or 12 for your resume content. Your name should be a larger font size to get an employer's attention. Be consistent with your font size throughout your resume.

- Include design elements such as bullets, bolding, italics and lines to help guide the readers' eyes through the document, and to highlight important content.

- But use bold, italics and underlines sparingly; overuse takes away from the visual appeal of your resume.

Resume Writing Tips – Content

- Decide what categories would be most appropriate to address on your resume. Organize those categories in a logical fashion, from most important to least important.

- List all information with dates from most recent to least recent – reverse chronological order.

- Customize information to the career (not the job) you're seeking. Your cover letter should be customized to the specific job. Your resume is customized to the specific career.

- Keep descriptions clear and to the point; use concise bulleted statements whenever possible, and put them in a priority order. Employers don't read resumes; they scan them. Bulleted statements are easier to scan.

- Put a heavy emphasis on your quantitative and qualitative accomplishments and achievements – see our "Results-Based Statements" handout for more information on this. Remember, it's not so much what you know (knowledge) – it's what you can do with what you know (skill and will) and how you can prove it.

- Use action verbs to describe your key responsibilities, accomplishments and achievements – see our "Resume Action Verbs" handout for some sample action verbs.

- Make sure to include "keywords" (usually nouns) for your career and industry, specifically for resumes that are scanned electronically through Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS). Your resume should be rich with these keywords.

- Don't use abbreviations or acronyms, even if they're recognizable. They can be viewed as shortcuts.

- Be accurate, direct and honest – never exaggerate or misrepresent yourself on a resume.

- Always proofread your resume for spelling, punctuation and grammar; have several other people proofread it as well. They will add the value of "fresh eyes."

Resume Writing Tips – Do Not Include

The following information should <u>not</u> be included on a resume:

- Personal information such as height, weight, health, age, race, gender, sex, marital status, or ethnicity

- A photo of yourself

- Names or contact information for supervisors

- Salaries for present or past positions

- Reasons for leaving past positions

- The statement "References furnished upon request"

- Names and contact information for references

Resume Writing Tips – Other

- For hard copies use a heavier white or off-white bond paper for your resume. Print it using a laser printer.

- When saving your resume electronically, save it as "Last Name First Name Resume." For example, John Smith would save his resume as "Smith John Resume."

- Save your resume in multiple places to ensure it doesn't get lost.

- Also, prepare your resume for posting on the Internet (http://www.rileyguide.com/eresume.html) and in a Plain Text Format (http://www.rileyguide.com/eresprep.html).

- Always include a cover letter when sending your resume, unless the employer tells you otherwise.

Resume Format and Categories

Once again, there is no one way to write a resume. So what categories you choose to include on your resume, and how you decide to format them, is your choice. You simply have to remember that your resume needs to be visually appealing, clear/concise, and organized in a way that gets an employer's attention quickly and effectively.

A "sample" resume format can be found on the next several pages. Use this as a guide in developing or revising your resume.

Sample Resume Format

The following are simply suggestions regarding categories and format. There are many different styles, and you should choose the one that fits best for you.

NAME

Note: Put your name in caps, bold and larger (14 or 16) font size so it will stand out.

Current (College) Address	Email Address (school, professional or generic)
Permanent (Home) Address	Phone Number (one number only)

Notes:
- *Include your LinkedIn Profile URL (only if you have a dynamic LinkedIn profile) and/or your online portfolio URL (if you have one).*
- *At a minimum, you should include one address, phone number and email address.*

STATE YOUR CAREER OBJECTIVE HERE

Notes:
- *An objective is completely optional. Use one if it's needed to add "focus" to your resume.*
- *If you use one, keep it simple, direct and concise (e.g. FINANCIAL ANALYST).*

EDUCATION

Name of College/University, City, State
Name of Degree, Anticipated Month and Year (or just Month Year if graduated)
Concentration: If relevant   *Minor*: If relevant
GPA (Overall and/or Major): 3.5 or higher only
Honors: List any academic honors, if relevant

Thesis: Provide topic and brief description, if relevant.

MBA Capstone Business Plan: Provide brief description of business plan developed (with results), if relevant.

MBA Capstone Student Assessment Test: Indicate core areas of testing (marketing, management, finance, accounting, and strategic integration), and percentile score among peers, among all other MBA's who have taken the exam, and/or as a class (as compared to all other schools) – whichever one(s) best market you.

Study Abroad: Provide description of courses taken and/or projects completed, if relevant.

RELEVANT COURSEWORK

Course 1	Course 4	Course 7
Course 2	Course 5	Course 8
Course 3	Course 6	Course 9

Note: Include a listing of relevant courses <u>only</u> if you need to fill space on your resume. Relevant means related to your career objective.

GENERAL OR AREA-SPECIFIC WORK EXPERIENCE

<u>Note</u>: Your work experience can include internships, fellowships and/or part-time/full-time jobs.

Name of Employer, City, State
<u>Job Title</u>, Dates of Employment (Month and Year)
- List primary duties and responsibilities (with results, when possible), including accomplishments and achievements. See our "Results-Based Statements" handout for more information.

RELATED ACADEMIC PROJECTS (can include MBA Capstone)

Name of School Project – <u>Affiliated School and/or Employer</u> – Dates (Month and Year)
- Emphasize the nature of the project, how you applied your academic learning, the development/refinement/utilization of skills and the generation of specific results.

<u>Note</u>: List and describe related academic projects <u>only</u> if you lack sufficient work experience.

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

- Name of Leadership Position – Name of Organization – Dates (Month and Year)
  - Note any accomplishments or achievements as a result of your leadership role.

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

- Name of Activity – Name of Organization – Dates (Month and Year)
  - If you worked on a special project or held a leadership position, mention it here. Include any accomplishments or achievements.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

- Volunteer Role or Service – Name of Organization – Dates (Month and Year)
  - If you worked on a special project or held a leadership position, mention it here. Include any accomplishments or achievements.

HONORS/AWARDS

- Name of Honor/Award – Organization Presenting Honor/Award – Dates (Month and Year)
    - If the name of the honor or award is not self-explanatory, explain why you received it.

Note: If they are all academic honors or awards, you can attach them to your education (as opposed to putting them in a separate category). This will get them higher on your resume.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS OR MEMBERSHIPS

- Name of Professional Organization – Dates of Membership (Month and Year)
    - If you worked on a special project, were a member of a committee or held a leadership position, mention it here. Include any accomplishments or achievements.

TECHNICAL SKILLS

- Bullet your technical skills here.

Note: Go beyond the Microsoft Programs. Also, list career and industry-specific hardware programs, software programs, operating systems and other technology tools you have experience with.

LANGUAGE SKILLS

- Note any languages in which you are fluent or conversational – speaking, reading and writing.