



Resumés that Get Jobs

A Talentlab Job Seeker Guide

The Killer Resumé

A resumé is a self-marketing tool. It is designed with one purpose in mind—to “sell” your skills, knowledge, and experience to an employer so that he/she will invite you for an interview. A killer resumé speaks to the employer’s needs and requirements and demonstrates a match between what you have to offer and what they need.

It stimulates interest in you by summarizing information—unique qualities, well-developed skills, relevant work or academic experiences, or accomplishments that clearly differentiate you from the competition.

Preparation

In preparing to write your resumé, remember that you can only count on an employer to spend twenty seconds scanning your resumé before deciding whether to review it further or put it aside. The key is to design it in such a way that it leads the employer’s eye to the words that speak to his/her needs. Effective resúmes are developed by individuals who have thoroughly researched the organizations they want to work for, have identified the specific job they want, and have figured out what they have to offer. In addition, well-designed resúmes have these characteristics in common...

- Visual appeal, easy to read layout, and high quality reproduction.
- Highlights strengths and links them to employer’s needs; minimizes or excludes irrelevant experience.
- Presents the most important information first.
- Entirely free from any errors: spelling, typographical, punctuation, or grammatical.
- Succinct and organized; does not exceed two pages.

Types Of Resumés

The chronological and functional resumés, or some combination of these two formats, are the standard types of resumés used by job seekers in today's employment market. To select the type which best supports your needs, review the following information.

Chronological Resumé

In this type of resumé, job history is organized chronologically with the most recent information first. Job titles and organizations are emphasized and duties and accomplishments are described in detail. A chronological resumé is easy to read, since it highlights names of employers and job titles, and emphasizes career growth.

It is best suited to those whose career goals are clear and whose job objectives are aligned with their work history.

A chronological resumé is advantageous when...

- Your recent employers and/or job titles are impressive.
- You are staying in the same career field.
- Your job history shows progress.
- You are working in a field where traditional job search methods are utilized (e.g., Education, government).

A chronological resumé is not advantageous when...

- You are changing careers.
- You have changed employers frequently.
- You want to de-emphasize age.
- You have been absent from the job market.

Functional Resumé

In a functional resumé, skills and accomplishments developed through work, academic, and community experiences are highlighted. Your skills and potential can be stressed and lack of experience or possible gaps in work history de-emphasized. However, it is important to realize employers often view functional resumés more critically for the very same reasons.

The functional resumé is advantageous when...

- You want to emphasize capabilities not used in recent work experience.

- You want to emphasize personal qualities relevant to the job such as industriousness, cooperative attitude, related interests, and aptitudes.
- You want to focus on capabilities rather than lengthy employment history.
- You are changing careers/re-entering the job market.
- Your career growth in the past has not been continuous and progressive.
- You have a variety of unrelated work experiences.
- your work has been free-lance, consulting, or temporary in nature.

The functional resumé is not advantageous when...

- You have little work experience.
- You want to emphasize promotions and career growth.
- You are working in highly traditional fields, such as teaching, accounting, and politics, where employers should be highlighted.

Combination Resumé

This format combines the best elements of the chronological and functional types. It presents patterns of accomplishments and skills in a section headed “Areas of Effectiveness” or “Qualifications Summary.” It also includes a brief work history and education summary. This format is advantageous for those who wish to change to a job in a related career field.

Constructing Your Resumé

Ronald and Caryl Rae Krannich in their book, *Dynamite Resumés*, point out that the categories of information you include on your resumé should provide answers to these questions:

- Contact section: Who are you and how can you be reached?
- Objective statement: What do you want to do?
- Experience section: What can you do?
- Employment section: What have you done?
- Education section: What have you learned?

Sequence the categories according to what is most important to the employer and your career objective. A recent college graduate with limited experience should usually put the education section first since it is the most significant qualification. Education should also be listed first when, as in the case of teaching, law, medicine, or engineering, education is a qualifying requirement. In a situation where an applicant wants to emphasize significant work or extracurricular experience or when an employer seeks to fill jobs in fields such as sales, public relations, or merchandising, the experience or work history category may be listed first.

1. Contact Information

Begin your resumé with your name by capitalizing or using bold type.

- Include street address, city, state, and zip code.
- Include phone number(s) where you can be reached weekdays, 9am-5pm. Designate your home phone with an “H,” and work number with “W,” or a “Messages” number.

2. Career/Job Objective

This component of the resumé can be very challenging to write. The purpose of the objective statement is to inform the reader of your career goals and qualifications. The statement should be written specifically enough to let the reader know that you have a focus to your job search. If you are considering a variety of objectives, you may want to relay the relevant objective in an accompanying cover letter.

A good objective includes...

- Type and/or level of position.
- Environment (i.e., Type and style of organization).
- Skills/qualifications.

Pros of including a career/job objective

- Identifies your specific interests and where you would fit in the organization.
- Presents the impression of a focused, self-confident person.

Cons of including a career/job objective

- May be too broad and meaningless, reflecting indecision.
- May be too exclusive, eliminating you from job your might consider (or be considered for).

Examples...

Project assistant in a mid-sized public international organization involved in economic development.

Desire entry-level electrical engineering position in the telecommunications industry.

3. Qualifications or Experience Summary

A brief summary of qualifications can condense an extensive background by emphasizing experiences and accomplishments in brief phrases. The qualification summary is accomplishment-oriented and provides an overview of your work experience. A summary is most appropriated for someone with substantial experience, for someone who is changing careers and wants to demonstrate transferable skills, or for someone with an eclectic background.

Examples...

*Accomplished editor, news reporter and promotional writer.
Demonstrated skills in project management and staff development.*

Two years' experience as office administrator; four years' teaching experience living abroad; two and one-half years' high school teaching experience; MBA in International Business and Information Systems; BA, Mathematics; French language fluency.

4. Education

Consider the following...

- Start with your most recent degree or the program in which you are currently enrolled. List other degrees or relevant education in reverse chronological order.

- Highlight your degree by using bold type, capital letters or underlining.
- If the degree is relevant to your job objective, begin with degree and emphasis, followed by university, location of university, and date of graduation or anticipated date of graduation.

Example...

M.S., Communications Engineering, The George Washington University, Washington, DC, May 1995.

- If degree/program is not directly related to current job objective, begin with the university, followed by the location, degree and emphasis, and graduation date.
- If you are within two semesters of graduation, do not use “expected” or anticipated” with month/year of graduation.
- If you have a high GPA, include it on your resumé. You may want to highlight your GPA on a new line, or in an educational highlights section. Note: Some employers believe no GPA on a resumé indicates an extremely poor GPA.

Example...

The George Washington University, Washington, DC, BA, Political Science, May 1995. GPA 3.4.

- If your education relates to your objective and is within the past three years, it should be the first section. If not, education should follow the work experience section of your resumé.

5. Educational Highlights

This section is most effective when you have experiences from your education that are impressive and/or directly relate to your objective. Adding this section is useful when you have developed skills and specific knowledge through your education rather than work experience. This section can be used to highlight coursework, research, or special knowledge that complements your objective.

Consider listing relevant coursework under the appropriate degree.

Examples...

*Investment and Portfolio Management
Advanced financial Management
Capital Formation*

Marketing Research
International Banking

An alternative to highlighting courses is to list the skills and knowledge acquired through important courses and research.

Examples...

Developed model investment portfolio for Fortune 500 company.

Analyzed stock market trend using state-of-the-art computer simulation programs.

Invested innovative capital formations strategies at metropolitan Washington area investment firms.

Designed promotional campaign for new consumer product in a targeted market.

You may want to describe research of design projects.

Examples...

Design Projects: RF radio control, Laser and Microwave Amplifiers, Transmission Lines.

Research: "Brazilian Economic Policies Beyond the Coffee Exports: U.S. Foreign Policy: Transition in Latin America"

6. Employment Experience

Compiling a Chronological Resumé...

- Begin with your current/most recent position and work backward, chronologically. Devote more space to recent employment.
- If your job titles relate to your current job objective, start each position description with job titles. If not, begin with the organization.
- Follow job title and organizational information with the organization's city and state.

Example...

Telecommunications Engineering Aide, Center for telecommunications Studies, Washington, DC, September 1987-January 1993.

- Use the first and last month and year to describe dates of employment.
- Describe the last three to five positions in detail. Summarize earlier positions unless relevant to your objective.
- Do not show every position change with each employer. Only list the most recent and describe promotions.
- Do not repeat skills that are common to several positions.
- Within each listed position, stress the major accomplishments and responsibilities that demonstrate your competency. It is not necessary to include all responsibilities, as they will be assumed by employers.
- Tailor your position descriptions to future job/career objectives.
- One-page resumés are preferred for entry-level positions.
- Two-page resumés are acceptable as long as the information on both pages demonstrates the skills and/or experiences relevant to your chosen profession.

Compiling a Functional Resumé...

- Use two to four sections to summarize each area of functional skill or experience.
- Develop the functional skill heading based on the areas you want to emphasize to employers and/or are most related to your job objective.
- Describe your skills in short phrases and place under the appropriate functional skill categories.
- Rank the phrases within each category and place the most important skill or accomplishment first.

Example...

Writing

- *Reported on-the-spot news stories for suburban Washington newspapers.*
- *Provided in-depth coverage of Capitol Hill issues, including unemployment compensation and merit pay for teachers.*

- *Researched and wrote an article on job opportunities for a national magazine with readership of three million high school seniors.*
- *Edited and marketed a brochure for a cultural/educational program designed to focus on life in London.*
- Do not identify employers within functional skills sections.
- List a brief history of your actual work experience at the bottom, giving job title, employer and dates. If you have had no work experience or a very spotty work record, leave out the employment section entirely (but be prepared to talk about the subject at the interview).

Resumé Checklist

1. Overall Appearance

- Makes an immediately favorable impression.
- Is inviting to read.
- Is easy to read.
- Looks professional.

2. Contact Information

- Is clearly presented at the top.
- Includes address information; permanent and temporary.
- Includes telephone number(s) where you can be reached from 9am to 5pm.

3. Objective (Optional—use if yours is specific)

- Includes type and level of position sought.
- Includes type and size of organization sought.
- Emphasizes strongest qualifications and skills pertinent to desired job.

4. Organization

- Highlights strongest qualifications or credentials.
- Uses headings to help establish common ground with employer e.g., Graduate business education, professional social work training, retailing experience.
- Is brief—usually one page unless you have 5-10 years experience.

5. Content

- Demonstrates ability to do the job and speaks to employer's needs.
- Supports and substantiates objective.
- Stresses transferable professional skills, accomplishments, and results.
- Contains only that personal data relevant to your objective e.g., Language skills, computer skills.
- Omits racial, religious, or political affiliations unless a bona fide occupational qualification.

6. Education Section

- Most recent degree or program in which you are enrolled; date of graduation or anticipated date.

- List of other degrees or relevant higher education, training certificate programs, licenses, or short courses.
- Name and location of university, college, or training institution
- Major, minor, and/or area(s) of concentration or interest.
- Relevant coursework, skills, or knowledge acquired through research or projects.
- Gpa, honors, and awards.
- Percentage of educational expenses earned.

7. Extracurricular Activities Section (Optional)

- List of most impressive offices held, including title and organization.
- Leadership roles and transferable skills.
- Pertinent professional memberships.

8. Experience Section

- Each paid, volunteer, extracurricular, intern, or co-op experience relevant to your objective, includes: title held, organization name, city, state, or country location.
- Dates position held.
- Position description that stresses transferable skills, previous accomplishments, and effectiveness (rather than a mere summary of past duties and responsibilities).
- Specific examples of successes and results supporting your objective.
- Examples that quantify results or successes (e.g., Increased sales by \$50,000, reduced turnover by 25%).

9. Language

- Is expressed in succinct manner.
- Uses action verbs to begin phrases.
- Has short action-oriented phrases instead of complete sentences.
- Is free from grammatical, spelling, and punctuation errors.
- Is in active rather than passive voice.
- Uses vocabulary of working world e.g., Sales and marketing, employment, budgeting experience.

10. Layout & Space

- Is crisp and clean.
- Separates sections and incorporates enough blank space for easy reading.

- Centers text with adequate margins.

11. Highlighting & Emphasis

- Uses bold type, underlining, different type styles and sizes, to emphasize key words.
- Is well balanced—does not use highlighting and emphasis too frequently.

12. Printing & Reproduction

- Paper is high quality; heavy weight bond.
- Paper is off-white, ivory, light tan, light gray, or other conservative and conventional color.
- Reproduction is clear, clean and professional.
- Print is letter quality, never photocopied.

Scannable Resumés

The job search is moving into the electronic age, so make sure your resumé is on the cutting edge. Employers who receive several hundred resumés for each advertised opening and a couple of hundred unsolicited resumés now have a better way to manage all the paperwork. How? By investing in electronic databases which store resumés and are quickly accessible by a few simple computer commands.

Resumés are entered into a system using an optical scanner and the images stored, thereby building a database of applicants and relevant skills. Employers then access candidates by searching the database for qualifications.

Your resumé is a place to express individuality and style. However, some fonts and style choices could present too much of a challenge for the scanner. If you follow the tips below, the system will be better able to extract your information accurately.

- Standard serif and sans serif fonts work best. Avoid ornate fonts and fonts where the characters touch. Font size is also important. Sizes between 10 points and 14 points work best.
- Italics and underlining may cause problems for the scanner, especially if combined. Use boldface for emphasis.
- Vertical or horizontal lines should be used sparingly. When used, leave at least a quarter of an inch of space around the line. Avoid graphics and shading or shadowing.

- Do not compress or expand the space between letters or lines. Also, do not double space within sections.
- The resumé you submit should be an original. It should be printed with a laser printer on white or light- colored 8.5 x 11 inch paper. Print on one side only.
- Resumés that have been folded, stapled or otherwise mutilated will not scan well.
- It is imperative that you describe your skills and accomplishments using the language of your (desired) profession.

These new systems search for applicants by using key words or phrases. So in order for your resumé to have appeal in your chosen career field, use the jargon of the field.

While sections that highlight experience, education, languages, technical skills and other categories are important, emphasize specific skills and achievements. Nouns are also more distinguishable than action verbs.

Remember the rules differ for unusual or different looking resumés. The fancy graphics used to catch an employer's eye will only confuse a computer, so keep it simple.

Key Resumé Phrases & Words

The following phrases and words may help with organizing your resumé statements. They convey involvement and accomplishments and make your resumé more readable.

Interaction with... Acted as liaison for/between... Edited... Established... Formulated... Handled... Initiated... Implemented... Maintained... Managed... Assigned territory consisting of... Promoted to/from... Instrumental in... Recipient of... Honored as... Proficient/competent... Initially employed... Specialize in... Temporarily assigned to... Direct/Indirect control... Served/ Operated as... In charge of... Familiar with... Assigned to... Contracted/Subcontracted... Installed... Remained as... Advised... Budgeted... Consulted... Delivered... Drafted... Evaluated... Gathered... Improved... Instructed... Investigated... Innovation resulted in... amounting to a total savings of... Proven track record in... to ensure maximum/optimum... Worked closely with... Acted/ Functioned as... Negotiated... Experience involved/included...

Successful in/at... Experienced in all facets/phases... Extensive training/involvement... Planned... Recommendations accepted by... Administered... Assisted with... Adept at... Analyzed/Assessed... Arranged... Coordinated... Conducted... Counseled... Delegated... Directed... Demonstrated... Developed... Organized... Performed... Presented... Recommended... More than ___ years experience in... Expertise and demonstrated skills... Knowledge of/experienced as... Provided technical assistance... on an ongoing/regular basis...

Additional Resumé Categories

To add relevant information to your resumé that focuses on special knowledge or skills, consider the following resumé headings.

- Professional affiliations
- Technical skills
- Accomplishments
- Internship experience
- Assets
- Cooperative education
- Honors
- Scholarships
- Travel
- Interests
- Publications
- Qualifications summary
- Presentations
- References
- Training
- Volunteer activities
- Leadership activities
- Languages

Sample Resumés

Note: The following are resumé samples only. They provide stylistic ideas and should not be copied verbatim.

Sample Functional Resumé

Tania Y. Henry
501 G Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20006
(202) 222-1111

Summary of Qualifications

Extensive and diverse health care experience in both acute care and research hospital settings. Knowledgeable of current regulatory standards, biomedical technology, and medico-legal considerations. Strong background in designing, implementing, and directing patient care programs. Experience with hospital information systems.

Administration

- Administered all aspects of operations for in-patient and ambulatory patient care units
- Managed unusual incidents related to personnel functions and medical care.
- Acted a liaison between medical and nursing staffs.
- Supervised two to four para-professionals.
- Participated in auditing medical records for compliance with accreditation standards.
- Administered in-service educational programs.

Research

- Collected data for research studies and protocols.
- Incorporated findings into clinical applications
- Collaborated in development of clinical investigation.

Health care

- Assessed, planned, implemented, and evaluated holistic care for diverse patient populations.
- Designed, administered, and directed teaching programs.
- Worked extensively with biomedical technology.

Education

- Master of Health Services Administration, The George Washington University, Washington, DC, January 1997.
- BS in Nursing, Hampton Institute, Hampton, VA May 1976.

Employment

- The National Institutes of Health, Warren Grant Magnuson clinical Center, Bethesda, MD, Clinical Nurse (May 1980-present).
- Machael Reece medical Center, Chicago, IL, Staff Nurse (May 1979-April 1980).
- University of Chicago Medical Center, Chicago, IL, Staff Nurse (September 1976-May 1979)

Affiliations

- Member, The George Washington University Health Services Administration
- Associate, American College of Hospital Administrators Association

References

Available upon request.

Sample Chronological Resumé (Entry Level)

Stella Starlight
2100 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20037
(202) 222-1111

Education

- The George Washington University, Washington, DC. B.A. International Affairs; May 1994, concentration—International Politics.

International Experience

- The Overseas Development Council, Washington, DC. Research Assistant, May 1992—May 1994
- Instrumental in the selection of potential donors and obtaining over \$50,000 in funding for projects and publication of 501(c)3 international research organization. Responsible for the drafting of aid request letters and project summaries.
- Researched current issues involving the relationship between the developing and the developed world.
- The World Bank; Sahelian Africa Department, Infrastructure Division, Washington DC. Staff Associate, May 1991–December 1991.
- Performed research on the feasibility and implementation of infrastructure projects in the Sub-Saharan African region.
- Provided assistance to professional staff in bilingual office utilizing French language skills. Proofread, edited, and translated reports. Drafted and delivered aid documents for signature. Initiated contact with ambassadors, country officials, and Bank executives for discussion of project proposals.
- American Field Service (AFS), Exchange Student to Iceland, 1987.
- Utilized diplomatic, communication, and adaptability skills while living, working and experiencing the culture in a foreign country.

Work Experience

Have held the following positions in order to finance 30% of educational and living expenses.

- The George Washington University, Career Center, Washington, DC. Staff Assistant, January 1991—May 1994.
- Earned progressively more responsibility over three years of experience.
- Currently assist in the planning, implementation, and management of innovative Job Hotline computerized job database.
- Devised new filing system for better advertisement of full-time job listings.
- Established and maintained confidential credential files, performed computerized resumé referral searches for employers, assisted customers on a walk-in basis, and managed Credentials department while supervisor was on extended sick leave.
- Assisted patrons in job searches and maintained job listings in Career Resource Library.
- The U.S. Senate; Sergeant at Arms, Washington, D.C. Security Personnel, Summer 1990.
- Assisted Senators and staff throughout the Senate facilities.
- The George Washington University; Lisner Auditorium, Washington, DC. Usher, Summer—Fall 1990.
- Directed patrons to assigned seating, sold and accounted for concessions.

Skills

Language

- Competency in written and spoken French.
- Familiarity with basic written and spoken Spanish and Portuguese.

Computer

- Competent in the use of Apple Macintosh and IBM PCs.

- Working knowledge of WordPerfect 5.1, Lotus 1-2-3, Paradox, Condor, SAS, MS Works, MS Excel, Dbase III, DOS Windows, Internet, and E-mail.

Activities

- Member—Society for International Development (SID).
- Member—Metro Washington MENSA.
- Member/Treasurer—Student Residence Hall Council 1989—1991.

Sample Chronological Resumé (Education)

Tisha Aikens
2809 Cameron St., Apt. 227
Baltimore, MD 21224
(410) 222-1111

Education

- M.A. Elementary Education. The George Washington University, Washington, DC. Graduated Magna Cum Laude, May 1994..GPA 3.6, Dean's List—three semesters
- B.A. Special Education, Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA. (May 1992)
- Arapahoe High School, Littleton, CO (June 1980)
- Editor-In-Chief of The Calumet (yearbook)

Relevant Experience

Student Teacher, Garrison Elementary School, Washington, DC. Taught first grade class of over 20 students. Experience involved 15 weeks of independent teaching. Garrison is an emergent literature demonstration school consisting of a multi-cultural population including ESL and main-stream students. (1/94-4/94)

Pre-student Teacher. Amidon Elementary and Shepherd Elementary, both Washington, DC public schools. Experience involved 15 weeks of part-time supervised teaching for elementary and sixth grade classes. Created and implemented developmental-appropriate lessons following the Competency Based Curriculum guidelines. (9/93-12/93)

Teaching Assistant, Department of Biology, The George Washington University, Washington, DC. Planned and implemented weekly biology labs for 32 freshmen. Assisted in developing and administering lab practicums. Tutored hearing-impaired student. (8/92-12/92)

Student Teacher, Arapahoe High School, Littleton, CO. Participated in the Student Teacher Education Program in which select high school students assist a teacher in the local elementary school. Assisted in the design and implementation of stimulating thematic units for a combined fifth and sixth grade gifted and talented class. (8/90-12/90)

Related Experience

Teacher, Child Care Center, Arnold and Porter Law Firm, Washington, DC. Provided activities, stimulus, and care for children ranging from three months to 12 years of age. maintained records and prepared daily activity reports. (4/91-10/91)

Voluntary Teachers Aid, Chestnut Hill School for the Blind, Chestnut Hill, MA. Assisted in hands-on activities and classroom management for the visually impaired. (10/87-4/88)

Languages

- Basic knowledge of Spanish.
- Intermediate fluency in American Sign Language.

References

Available upon request.

Sample Combined Resumé

Amy Links
2600 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037
Bus: (301) 111-2222
Res: (202) 333-4444

Qualifications Summary

- Extensive knowledge of computer software design and implementation.
- Comprehensive management experience of professional teams and individuals.
- Expertise in program development for telecommunications and manufacturing fields.
- Skilled at communicating technical and non-technical materials to audiences, peers and administrators.
- Effective negotiator on contracts and with outside vendors.

Employment Overview

Management Systems Analyst, Provere Corporation, Manassas, VA Develop over twenty software programs to date to maximize user efficiency and communication. Supervise a staff of six technicians with responsibility for troubleshooting including program debugging. June 1989-present.

Technical Assistant, Pacific Bell Telephone, San Jose, CA Worked with other members of the technical staff to develop a data-network for overseas communication. September 1985-August 1987

Sales Associate, Handyware Technologic, San Francisco, CA June 1983-April 1985

Education

- M.S., Computer Engineering, The George Washington University, Washington, DC, May 1989
- B.S., Computer Science, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, June 1985

Experience

Design/Development

Review existing systems to enhance design of a Data communication Network. Interact with manufactures and other clients to develop interactive programs for users. Team-designed a hotline system utilized by four hospitals to maximize emergency care. Develop a comprehensive hands-on orientation program for new employees.

Administration/Support

Coordinate computer automation activities for a 150-employee company. Supervise 15 professional and support staff and schedule staff assignments. Assist Department Manager with long range planning goals and implementation. Plan negotiations with military and other prospective contractors.

Computer Systems/Languages

- IBM 370, VAX, PS/2; PC, FORTRAN, COBOL, ASSEMBLY

Professional Affiliations

- Association for Women in Computing, 1986-present
- Computer and Communications Industry Association, 1989-present
- Independent Computer Consultants' Association, 1989-present

References

References and further data available upon request.