

How to build a winning Resume

*"A sharp resume is
vital for a successful
job search"*



Business

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Writing Your Resume

Creating a resume is arguably the most valuable way to begin a job search for several reasons:

- You will have a clear picture of your accomplishments committed to paper.
- The skills and abilities listed on your resume will be a confidence booster at the beginning of your job search.
- Your resume is a “talking paper” which you may refer to during an interview.
- A resume is an excellent marketing tool. It will sell you when you can't do so in person. Your resume often creates an employer's first impression of you. If it is done well, it probably won't be their last impression.

Getting Started

1. Know what you are applying for. Writing a resume is similar to writing a paper, and one of the main requirements for a good paper is a focused, concise topic statement. So it is with a resume. The more specific you are about the type of job you are applying for, the easier it will be to write the rest of the resume.
2. Gather information about the job. If you are lucky enough to have a description of the position, then you can match your education, qualifications and work experience with the information on the job description. If you do not have a formal job description, informational interviews are an ideal way to learn more about a particular position. Ask family, friends, professors and professionals in your field of interest. Use the internet to seek job descriptions and information from similar companies.
3. Tailor your resume to each job. To be most effective you need to write a new resume for each job you apply for. Remember, computers and word processors make this suggestion less difficult and time-consuming than it may seem. Plus, it will make your job search much more effective, and therefore worth the extra work.



Selecting a Resume Format

There are three basic types of resumes: Chronological, Functional and Combination.

As you'll see below, certain formats may be more appropriate depending upon the specifics of your situation. Which of these styles is most appropriate for your current job search?

Chronological

This is the most traditional and straightforward resume. Your information (education and experience) is listed in chronological order with the most recent first. It is best to use this format when you have a clear career path marked by a steady employment history which is directly in line with the job you are seeking. Easy to read, it includes names of past employers and gaps in work history are readily apparent. Because this format emphasizes dates and job titles, job seekers with a scattered employment history of unrelated short-term jobs, or times of no work may be better off using a different format.

Functional

This format allows you to emphasize transferable skills and focus the reader's attention on your abilities and accomplishments. Job titles, dates and employment history are less important, stated last or sometimes left off entirely. The important thing to remember is that underneath "experience," compile all related previous duties (paid or unpaid) and break them into three categories you believe will intrigue the employer. This format is appropriate for someone just graduating college, someone changing careers, re-entering the job market or someone with extensive volunteer/unpaid work experience.

Combination

This style of resume is simply a blend or "combination" of the chronological and functional formats. A combination resume is best used when you have a specific job objective. It lists only capabilities and supporting accomplishments that relate to the job objective listed. It demonstrates a strong understanding and ability in the specific area of expertise. Many combination resumes begin with a "summary of qualifications" section.

What about "Electronic" resumes???

Serious job seekers in the 21st Century will prepare two versions of their resume. A visually appealing format, using action verbs, is still a must for most employers, but the onset of the electronic age dictates the need for an Electronic resume as well. The Electronic resume is simply a modified format of your resume suitable for electronic submission to an employer who will later scan your resume into a computer database. An electronic resume is also suitable for cutting and pasting chunks of information into an online application. Special steps need to be followed in order for your resume to be transported intact via e-mail and for the maximum amount of "hits" (that is the number of times your resume will come up when an employer searches their database). For more information see electronic resume section.

Essential Resume Components

Contact Information: Name, Address, Phone, Email

Use one name consistently on all written correspondence, preferably the one you like to be called. Include your current address (state you are willing to relocate if you are applying out of the area). Indicate if the phone number is home, office or cell. Include your email address unless it is unprofessional and ill-suited for a job search (i.e. crazygurl@hotmail.com). Many email accounts are free and you may want to create a new one using your name as the address, specifically for your job search.

Objective (optional)

A specific career objective demonstrates that you know what you want and how it relates to your experience and education. A winning objective statement can be targeted toward a specific job. If your application packet includes a cover letter, an objective statement becomes unnecessary since you've already communicated this information to the employer.

Education/Training

List your educational experience in order of your most recent degree, school and location. Include college graduation dates within the last ten years. If your education is related to the position you are applying for and it is within five years list it near the top of your resume to increase visibility. If it is unrelated or more than five years ago, move it closer to the bottom to act as a foundation and show that you have attended school beyond high school. As a general rule, list your GPA if it translates to a grade of B+ (3.5) or higher.

If you are still in school or a recent graduate, you may want to create a section under Education that details any related coursework you may have taken.

Work Experience

Highlight the skills and abilities you have used and are currently using that relate to your job objective and the job duties of the position you are applying for. These can be found from job ads, full job listings in personnel departments, employer's Web sites, etc.

You need not distinguish between volunteer or paid employment or between part-time and full-time work. It all counts as experience. Explain specific work experience during the interview when you can sell yourself in person.

Use the past tense to list previous accomplishments relevant to your job objective. Use the present tense for your current position. Start each sentence with an action word. (See page 10)

Demonstrate accomplishments in measurable terms such as "increased, decreased, saved, reduced, expanded, grew" and include a time-frame when noting percentages and numerical amounts.

Be accurate! You are free to omit anything that looks unfavorable, but be scrupulously honest about what you commit to in writing.

Other Possible Headings

You may include other headings such as those listed below, but be sure to follow the same guidelines as in the Work Experience section. Make it relevant, make it measurable, show the benefits, and be accurate.

Professional Training & Development
Extracurricular Activities
Professional Memberships
Volunteer Experience
Related Coursework

Publications
Computer Experience
Languages
Licenses or Certifications

What NOT to Include

Negative information
Salary history and salary desired*
Date you are available to work*
References to race or religion
Reasons for leaving previous employment
or references to unemployment

Social Security number
Personal data (sex, marital/parental status)
Hobbies/Interests
The personal pronoun "I"

**If requested, address in your cover letter.*

Make It Readable

Maximum two pages (unless highly technical or on the Internet, see pg. 8.)
One page is preferable
Use 1 inch margins

Double space between sections
Single space within a section
Center or place headings in left margin
Capitalize and use bold print for heading

References

Do not include references on your resume. As an option you may state "Available upon request." If requested, mail your references on a separate sheet of paper using the same letterhead and format as your cover letter. Be sure to bring them with you to the interview. Include the names, titles, company names, phone numbers and addresses/emails of at least three "professional" references (supervisors, instructors or coworkers), basically anyone who can speak to your ability, experience and work habits.

Final Hints

Proofread! Have someone else proofread again for errors in typing, spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Don't rely on a computer spell-check. A word could be spelled correctly, but used incorrectly.

Remember the importance of appearance. Use white, off-white, ivory or light gray, high quality bond paper. Do not print your resume on bond paper with cotton fibers unless you know for sure it will not be scanned.

If at all possible, type your resume on widely compatible software like MSWord and keep your disk handy so it can be easily updated or quickly tailored to target future job opportunities.

The Career Center Library at Highline has numerous books, videos and interactive CDs which can provide many more examples and information to help with your resume!

CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME

DERRICK JACKSON

3616 Light Avenue
Des Moines, WA 98032

(206) 987-6543
DJackson@Yuno.com

OBJECTIVE Sales Associate position with Renton Honda that will capitalize on my business education, winning people skills and proven sales experience.

EDUCATION Associate in Arts, Business/Marketing emphasis
Highline Community College, Des Moines, Washington
Graduated: June, 2005 (GPA 3.75)

RELATED COURSEWORK

Principles of Salesmanship	Financial Accounting
Business Law	Business Ethics
Principles of Marketing	Public Relations

RELATED EXPERIENCE

Assistant Manager, Radio Shack, Kent, WA

June 2004 – Present

- Supervised sales staff, ordered merchandise, assisted customers, planned promotions and prepared displays.
- Expanded shelf space by 10%, which resulted in a 20% increase in sales for one year.

Warehouseman, General Packaging Co., Seattle, WA

September 2002 – June 2004

- Handled packaging of orders, shipping & receiving and prepared daily and monthly status reports.
- Reduced lost orders by 15%, which increased customer satisfaction.

OTHER EXPERIENCE

Round Table Pizza, Federal Way, WA

June 2000 – August 2002

HONORS AND ACTIVITIES

Phi Theta Kappa member
Dean's List, Highline Community College 2003 (fall, winter)–
2004 (spring)
Vice President of Junior Chamber of Commerce,
Puget Sound Chapter, 2001-2003

REFERENCES *Available upon request*

FUNCTIONAL RESUME

MINA NGYUEN

7654 Market Street
Seattle, WA 98035
(H) 206-876-2387

PARALEGAL/OFFICE MANAGER

LITIGATION PARALEGAL

Over five years experience as a litigation case manager at a major law firm.

- Monitored cases from initial client interview to settlement or trial.
- Drafted interrogatories, responses and other discovery documents.
- Summarized over 140 depositions.
- Prepared 20 pages of testimony analysis.
- Created a total of 32 exhibits for various trials.

OFFICE MANAGEMENT

Managed office administration for employment firm with staff of 25.

- Converted all operations to computerized system.
- Maintained account information and files for over 300 clients.
- Trained 15 clerical staff on office computer procedures.
- Composed and processed correspondence, reports and proposals.
- Heavy phone work, up to 30% of daily activity.
- Excellent keyboarding skills (65 wpm) and 10-key by touch.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Developed strong rapport with attorneys, clients and employees.

- Effectively dealt with a diverse clientele while solving problems.
 - Provided quick and accurate follow-up on billing and client information.
 - Effectively coordinated a variety of activities in a fast-paced environment.
 - Fluent in English and Vietnamese
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EDUCATION

A.A.S. Degree - Paralegal Studies

Highline Community College, Des Moines, WA

Certificate - National Association of Legal Assistants (NALA)

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Paralegal, Smith and Day, Seattle, WA

Office Manager, Snelling and Dunn, San Francisco, CA

COMBINATION/TARGETED RESUME

CARYN C. ESSAR

6602 Marcus Lane
Newman, WA 98000

Cessar@AOL.com
(360) 863-1345 (Home)

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Six years of customer service experience
- Strong phone skills with superior listening and probing abilities
- Extremely articulate; clear and pleasant speaking voice
- Professional and personable in relating to clients and coworkers
- Ability to remain calm, patient, and productive in fast paced environment
- Effective in working with other departments to resolve problems

EDUCATION

Associate of Arts, Business Administration
Highline Community College, Des Moines, WA

SKILLS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Client Relations and Problem Solving

- Processed dental enrollments and changes for hundreds of corporate accounts with 50 to 3000 employees.
- Responded to over 100 phones calls per day, (on employer hotline) from benefit administrators regarding enrollment, eligibility and termination, etc.
- Received many requests from benefit administrators to personally handle their accounts.
- Consulted with underwriters, group representatives, and other hotline personnel to obtain additional information and resolve problems.
- Earned a "Bravo" letter of recognition for performance and helpfulness.
- Scored in 90-100% range for productivity and accuracy on quality reviews.

Product Knowledge

- Studied and learned details of dental insurance enrollment, eligibility and termination.
- Selected by supervisor to manage more complex accounts due to product-knowledge, professionalism, and problem-solving abilities.

Initiative

- Promoted from sales associate to service representative within a few months.
- Took control of problem situations swiftly and competently.

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Sales Representative, Elms Insurance Corporation, Seattle, WA 2003 – Present
Sales Associate, Barrington Clothing, Seattle, WA 2000 – 2003

ELECTRONIC RESUME

An electronic resume will be read initially by a computer instead of the human eye so it needs to be formatted differently. Use any of the preceding resume styles that best represent your skills. However, you will need to follow the tips below for it to be transferred and read accurately. These tips will also help you to maximize your resume's "hits" or the times your resume comes up for view by an employer.

Convert a word-processed resume to an on-line resume.

These directions work with MS Word 6.0 and up. Ignore any "lost formatting" warnings that occur during this process. WordPerfect users see Additional Notes.

1. Open your resume in your word processor
2. Go to the File Menu, and select SAVE AS. There is no need to rename your document. Next, on the SAVE AS dialog box, on the lower left hand corner, choose TEXT ONLY in the SAVE AS TYPE menu. Click on the SAVE button.
3. Now, close your resume document (not your Word Processor program!). Reopen your TEXT ONLY file that you just saved. (Make sure under File Types that TEXT FILES is selected when you try to reopen your files otherwise you won't see them). Your new file will have a .txt extension.
4. Set your left and right hand margins to 1 (one inch).
5. Highlight the entire document. Then change your font size to 12 and font style to Courier.
6. Edit your resume so that it looks good to you. Make sure all the lines end where you want them.
7. Re-save the document as a TEXT WITH LINE BREAKS file (follow steps 2 & 3 above, but select TEXT WITH LINE BREAKS instead of TEXT ONLY.) If you don't do this step some people will receive your resume as one long line of text!
8. To see the result, close the document, then reopen it.

Additional Notes

WordPerfect Users. Skip steps #3 and #6. Saving your resume as a TEXT ONLY file will put the necessary line breaks in the document, and there is no need to close and reopen the file for those changes to take effect.

Formatting Tips for Electronic Resumes

1. If you want to move a word or heading to the center of the page, or create indents use the space bar.
2. To emphasize a word or words, draw attention by using CAPS.
3. You can use the asterisk*, a hyphen-, small o, or a plus sign for bullets.
4. Horizontal lines can be achieved with a hyphen-----, or an underscore_____.

Tips for Maximizing "HITS" on your Resume

1. Use enough key words to define your skills, experience, education, and professional affiliations, etc.
2. Describe your experience with concrete words rather than vague descriptions. For example, it's better to use "developed data base used to track sales" rather than "know computers."
3. Use more than one page if necessary. In fact, the average electronic resume is two to three pages in length. The computer can easily handle multiple-page resumes, and it uses all of the information it extracts from your resume to determine if your skills match available positions.
4. Use jargon and acronyms specific to your industry (spell out the acronyms for human readers).
5. Increase your list of key words by including specifics, i.e. list the names of software, and technical experience, etc. Some resumes have a separate heading for "Keywords."

USE POWERFUL WORDS TO “GRAB” THE READER’S ATTENTION

When writing your past experience, do not speak in a general, understated manner. Remember, you’re trying to sell yourself so be specific! Quantify! Tell the reader exactly what your past responsibilities were by beginning each statement with a power word. If possible, try to “mirror” the language used by the organization in their job announcement.

Ably	Contrived	Formed	Mastered	Reduced
Accompanied	Controlled	Faultlessly	Meaningfully	Refer people
Achieved	Conveniently	Favorably	Mediate	Regulated
Acquired	Converted	Financed	problems	Related
Actively	Coordinated	Formulated	Memorize info	Relentlessly
Adeptly	Correlated	Founded	Motivated others	Reorganized
Administered	Counseled			Reported
Advanced	Created	Gainfully	Negotiated	Researched
Advised		Generated	Nominated	Resolve
Aggressively	Decisively	Governed		problems
Ambitiously	Decreased	Graduated	Obtained	Resourcefully
Analyzed data	Delegated		Officiated	Responsibly
Appropriately	Demonstrated	Halved	Operate	Routinely
Artfully	Designed	Handily	equipment	
Arranged functions	Devised	Handled money	Ordered	Satisfactorily
Assembled	Discovered	Headed	Organized	Satisfied
Assess situations	Displayed	Implemented	Originated	Secured
Assisted	Directed	Improved	Overcame	Securely
Authoritatively	Doubled	Increased		Served
Avidly	Drew	Initiated action	Participated	customers
	Earned	Innovated	Perceived	Serviceably
Beneficially	Easily	Inspect products	Perfected	Serviced
Budgeted	Educated	Inspired	Performed	Significantly
Built	Effected	Installed	Persuade others	Simplified
	Effectively	Instructed	Piloted	Skillfully
Calculate numbers	Effectually	Instructively	Pioneered	Solved
Capably	Efficiently	Insured	Placed	Soundfully
Clarified	Effortlessly	Integrated	Planned	Strategically
Commanded	Employed	Intensified	Practically	Structured
Competently	Enacted	Interviewed	Prepared	Substantially
Compiled statistics	Encouraged	Invented	Produced	Succeeded
Composed	Enhanced	Justified	Professionally	Tactfully
Compute data	Engineered	Keynoted	Proficiently	Tend equipment
Conceived	Established		Profitable	Trained
Conducted	Evaluated	Led	Progressively	Transferred
Consistently	Executed	Licensed	Promoted	Transformed
Consolidated	Exhibited	Located	Prompted	Translated
Constructed	Expanded	Maintained	Proposed	
Consulted	Experienced	Managed people	Proved	Unified
	Expertly	Manufactured	Provided	Uniformly
	Facilitated	Marketed	Readily	Usefully
			Reconciled	Wrote

COVER LETTERS

A cover letter introduces your application packet to the employer. Be sure to include a cover letter whenever you mail or fax your resume. Similar to an objective statement, the cover letter should tell an employer what position you're applying for and why you're the perfect candidate. Your letter should be succinct with an attractive design and content specific to that employer.

Jennifer Harding
2525 South Elm Street
Seattle, WA 98198

November 5, 2005

Jane Smith
Human Resources Director
Metro Center Hospital
957 First Avenue North
Seattle, WA 98102

Dear Ms. Smith:

Enclosed is my resume for the position of Human Resource Assistant listed in the November 2, 2005 edition of the Seattle Times newspaper. Metro Central Hospital is a leader in Northwest medicine and I would like to be a part of your team. My experience and skills include:

- Over three years of experience as a Human Resource Specialist
- An Associates degree in Business Administration
- Strong PC skills that include: Windows XP and Vista, MS Office - Word, Excel, and Access
- Excellent customer service skills with experience serving a diverse population.

I am very enthusiastic about this opportunity and firmly believe that my education, skills and knowledge base make me an excellent candidate for this position. I will contact your office next week to ensure that you've received my application materials. In the meantime, I can be reached at 206-747-4218 should you have any questions. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Harding

Enclosure - Resume

Career and Job Search Resources

Highline Community College provides a wide range of services to assist students and the community with their career development and job search.

Career & Employment Services

The Center provides computerized career inventories and Internet access to career information, job search information and college more.

Through books and videos in the Career Center Library, you may find a wide variety of materials on occupations, career decision-making, and job search tips. Questions? Call (206) 878-3710, ext. 3350. Job notices? On-campus and off-campus part-time and full-time jobs are posted on bulletin boards, in books and in computer databases, which are available on the Internet. Please stop by Building 6.

Career Counseling

Take advantage of personalized assistance and guidance in making career decisions that are right for you. To make an appointment, call the Counseling Center at (206) 878-3710, ext. 3353.

Women's Programs

Career counseling, training, and job search assistance is available to displaced homemakers and single parents through the Women's Programs. Call (206) 878-3710, ext. 3340.

Career Connections

A weekly career development workshop series offered free to both students and community members. Topics include interviewing techniques, resume writing and more. To view a complete schedule visit (http://www.highline.edu/stuserv/career/career_connections.html) or Call (206) 878-3710, ext. 3350.

Worker Retraining

If you have been laid off from your job, or were self-employed and negatively impacted by an economic downturn or are a displaced homemaker, you may be qualified for start-up funding for retraining. Call (206) 878-3710, ext. 3802.

Cooperative Education

Cooperative Education allows you to integrate your academic studies with on-the-job experience. Credit is earned for learning in your field attained at a work site. For more information call: (206) 878-3710, ext. 3803.

Supported Employment

Individuals with disabilities may receive assistance in their job search and support in their employment needs. Call (206) 878-3710, ext. 3349 for more information.