



South Seattle Community College
Career Development Services

Creating Your Targeted Resume

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OVERVIEW: RESUMES

Much preparation goes into an excellent resume. You will need to gather supporting materials and summarize your past employment-related experiences. Most importantly, **you will write, rewrite and edit your resume for every position that you apply for**. You must continuously work at keeping your resume up-to-date because as your experiences grow, your resume should grow too. In other words, its development should mirror your personal and professional development.

The hardest part about writing an effective resume is NOT deciding **what to put in**; rather, **what to leave out**. Do not overwhelm employers by providing more information than necessary. An attention-getting resume is focused, to the point and clearly identifies your qualifications.

RELEVANT RESUME TYPE: COMBINATION RESUME WORKS BEST

Regardless if you are a recent graduate, new to your industry, or have limited work experience, we recommend that you use a **combination type** of resume to highlight your skills. Combination resumes allow applicants not only to highlight their qualifications and their education, but target their resumes to every position quickly and easily. The combination resume is the most widely used resume type because it displays a chronological listing of employment while at the same time highlighting skills, accomplishments and experiences. It is also the most frequently asked for resume type by employers.

GENERAL RESUMES

Creating a **general resume** is one of the first steps in the job search process. The general resume is a non-specific reflection of your skills, abilities and work history designed to reach a broad range of fields. It is also a key step in creating the most effective resume of all: the targeted resume.

The general resume is most useful as a framework for creating your online profile. Sites like Go2WorkSource.org, careerbuilder.com and LinkedIn.com are the ideal location to post a general resume. Because employers will research your online presence, it is a good idea to have a resume readily accessible to them.

TARGETED RESUMES

A **targeted resume** highlights the key words, skills, abilities, education and work history as these are applicable to a specific job. Simply put, this kind of resume targets the requirements of a job description.

When applying to jobs, it is important that you target each resume to the position that you are applying for. You want employers to be able to quickly see that you match the exact qualifications they are seeking. You will want to research the companies to which you are applying and seek the following information:

1. Company **mission** statements
2. The **populations** they serve
3. What **services** they provide
4. How **long** they have been in business
5. **Who** works at these companies/organizations

The easiest way to target each of your resumes is to reflect the language, skills, and qualifications they are seeking in their job description:

- Highlight the **key words** and **phrases** in the **job description** and to use those same key words and phrases in your resume
- Make sure you **clearly save** your targeted resumes by name on your computer or thumb drive
- Build (and share) your **brand** – your “brand” is your unique story and set of experiences that show you are marketable to employers; the resume, is an extension of your brand.

TARGETED RESUME LANGUAGE

Resumes must be skills-based and clearly target your objectives and the needs of employers. Beyond this, there are many ways to present these skills. ***The goal of your resume is to show the employer that you match the exact skills and qualifications that they are seeking.***

What you say is important, but how you say it is even more important. To highlight your skills and qualifications, use **action words**, **transferrable skills**, **tasks**, and **outcomes**.

Action words are verbs that make statements stand out and can give the employer a picture of you performing a task.

Transferrable skills are skills that are not limited to a specific academic discipline, area of knowledge, job, or task; these are useful in any work situation (e.g. customer service, task oriented, organized, etc.).

Tasks are specific duties one performs at job (e.g. answering phones, updating databases, etc.).

Outcomes are results, achievements or both (e.g. 90 percent employee retention, saved company \$10,000, etc.).

TARGETED RESUME LANGUAGE (cont.)

Combining **action words** with any of the other concepts above provides the employer with a vivid mental picture of you performing specific functions.

For example:

- Organized an event which helped to raise \$500,000 for corporate philanthropy
- Cleaned and maintained rooms in a facility for 30 clients by being detail oriented
- Provided excellent customer service by answering all incoming calls supporting an office of 15 staff members

Notice the use of achievements and numbers to strengthen statements. It is one thing to say that you have a particular skill—it is another to proclaim that you have excelled in the performance of that skill. When writing the content (duties performed) for each of your jobs, consider the following:

1. Achievements are the strongest examples of proof that you can do the job.
2. If there are no specific achievements, use numbers.
3. If there are no numbers, describe the duties performed.

RESUME QUICK TIPS

The resume is like a preview of coming attractions—the goal is to win an interview. Below are quick tips for resume writing that address **appearance**, **consistency**, **content**, and **format**.

Appearance:

- Maintain a visually appealing format that is neat, well-organized and professional
- Use adequate “white space”
- Save space—your name and contact information should be no more than two lines at the top of the page

Consistency:

- **Correct all typographical, grammatical and spelling errors**
- Arrange dates in a neat column on the right-hand side of the page
- Avoid using multiple tenses throughout the resume

Content:

- Resumes are not literary—they are promotional
- Complete sentences are not necessary
- Avoid the use of “I”
- Avoid long narratives
- Use measurable outcomes, values and percentages (hard numbers)
- Make sure that your qualifications, skills, and achievements are relevant to the position

Format:

- **DO NOT** use resume templates (online or in word processing software)
- Use word processing software to save the resume as a document and a plain text (.txt) file (for when cutting and pasting the resume online)
- Keep it brief (**1 page only**) and use standard size paper (8 1/2" x 11")
- Lead with a “HIGHLIGHTS” or “QUALIFICATIONS” section that introduces your strongest qualities that **TARGET** the job or goal

RESUME EVALUATION QUESTIONS

When you have finished assembling your resume, take a moment to ask yourself each of the following questions. If you are able to answer these questions without hesitation, you are ready to start the application process.

1. Does the appearance of my resume look professional without reading it?
2. Did I target my resume to the job qualifications?
3. Are keywords and phrases easy to identify?
4. Can I easily read my resume by scanning over it in 10 seconds?
5. Has my resume been checked carefully for grammar, spelling, and typing errors?
6. Will the content of my resume capture the employer's interest?

SUBMITTING A COVER LETTER

Occasionally an employer will require the submission of a cover letter along with the resume. The reason employers ask for cover letters is to measure an applicant's writing ability. With that in mind, the cover letter must conform to accepted standards of business documents. When crafting your cover letter, apply the same principles used in creating your resume, especially targeting qualifications to the job and the employer.

COVER LETTER QUICK TIPS

- If an employer does not ask for a cover letter, do not send one.
- Keep it brief, usually no more than one page with three to five paragraphs.
- Include your contact information at the top of the cover letter (use the same header on your cover letter as your resume).
- If possible, address your letter to a specific person. You can use employer or business directories to get this information. In some large organizations you may not always be able to identify the name of a specific person. In this case, send the letter to the title of the recipient (e.g. Office Manager, Human Resources Specialist, Hiring Manager, Search Committee, etc.).
- Be sure to state your interest in the job. Why are you applying? Why do you want to work for that employer?
- Make sure your cover letter is relevant to the position for which you are applying, and use your research to support your argument.
- Describe yourself in terms of the *contributions you can make* to the employer.
- Mention your skills, education, special training and work experience that match with the position's job description, but as opposed to restating the information on your resume, elaborate further on that information.
- Eliminate all spelling and grammatical errors.
- Always have someone proof read your cover letter before submitting it to an employer.
- Individualize each letter. Do not send out the same letter to each employer.
- State that you will call the employer to follow-up with your application.
- Tell the employer that you look forward to meeting with him/her for an interview.
- Sign your letter if you provide a hard copy to the employer.

ACTIVITY SHEETS

Pages 5 to 12 are resume (and cover letter) writing activities designed to assist you in the job search.

USING A JOB POSTING FOR TARGETING YOUR RESUME AND COVER LETTER

Use the following strategies to target your resume and cover letter to a job posting:

- Read through the posting thoroughly.
- Highlight the keyword skills and qualifications in the job posting (these are typically listed as “required” and “desired” qualifications or “job requirements” or “essential job duties”).
- Using the job posting’s language, build the required and desired qualifications you possess into your resume, ideally in the “QUALIFICATIONS” section of your resume.
- Go to onetonline.org to obtain more keywords and learn more about the position.
- Refer to the “Internet Essentials for Starting Your Job Search” packet for more information on searching for job postings.
- Use the activity pages that follow to assist you in designing your resumes and cover letters.

SAMPLE ACTION WORDS

From the list of verbs below, circle those that are most applicable to the kind of job(s) you have held in the past.

Accepted	Compiled	Engineered	Investigated	Rectified
Accounted	Composed	Enlarged	Issued	Reduced
Achieved	Computed	Enlisted	Itemized	Refined
Acquired	Conceptualized	Entered	Joined	Reinforced
Adapted	Condensed	Established	Launched	Reorganized
Addressed	Conducted	Estimated	Led	Repaired
Adjusted	Consolidated	Evaluated	Maintained	Reported
Administered	Constructed	Examined	Managed	Represented
Adopted	Consulted	Executed	Manufactured	Researched
Advised	Contracted	Exhibited	Marketed	Resolved
Advocated	Converted	Expanded	Measured	Retrieved
Allocated	Conveyed	Experienced	Mediated	Reviewed
Allotted	Coordinated	Experimented	Minimized	Revised
Altered	Copied	Explained	Modified	Scheduled
Analyzed	Corrected	Extracted	Monitored	Selected
Answered	Correlated	Fabricated	Motivated	Separated
Anticipated	Counseled	Facilitated	Negotiated	Set up
Applied	Created	Filed	Notified	Shaped
Appointed	Critiqued	Financed	Observed	Simplified
Appraised	Cultivated	Forecasted	Obtained	Solved
Approved	Defined	Formed	Operated	Sparked
Arbitrated	Delegated	Formulated	Ordered	Surveyed
Arranged	Delivered	Founded	Originated	Staffed
Assembled	Demonstrated	Gathered	Organized	Strengthened
Assessed	Described	Generated	Outlined	Studied
Assigned	Designated	Governed	Overcame	Succeeded
Assisted	Designed	Graded	Oversaw	Summarized
Audited	Detailed	Grouped	Participated	Supervised
Authorized	Detected	Guided	Performed	Surveyed
Awarded	Determined	Handled	Persuaded	Synthesized
Balanced	Developed	Headed	Planned	Tailored
Budgeted	Devised	Hired	Predicted	Taught
Calculated	Diagnosed	Identified	Prepared	Tested
Calibrated	Directed	Illustrated	Presented	Trained
Carried	Disciplined	Imagined	Presided	Transcribed
Catalogued	Discovered	Implemented	Prevented	Transformed
Categorized	Dispatched	Improved	Prioritized	Translated
Certified	Dispensed	Improvised	Produced	Tutored
Checked	Displayed	Increased	Programmed	Typed
Centralized	Dissected	Informed	Promoted	Unified
Changed	Disseminated	Initiated	Protected	Updated
Clarified	Distributed	Innovated	Proposed	Utilized
Classified	Drafted	Inspected	Provided	Verified
Cleaned	Edited	Installed	Publicized	Wrote
Coached	Elected	Instructed	Published	
Collaborated	Eliminated	Insured	Recognized	
Collated	Empowered	Integrated	Recommended	
Collected	Encouraged	Interpreted	Reconciled	
Communicated	Endorsed	Interviewed	Recorded	
Compared	Enforced	Inventoried	Recruited	

KEY PHRASES FOR POWERFUL RESUMES AND COVER LETTERS

Place a check mark next to any phrase you feel is applicable to you.

- ☐ Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- ☐ Long-term interest in _____.
- ☐ Well-organized and resourceful.
- ☐ Strong credentials in _____ and _____.
- ☐ Creative problem solver.
- ☐ Theoretical grounding in _____ and _____.
- ☐ A quick learner with ability to adapt to new challenges.
- ☐ Able to resolve conflicts in a diplomatic manner.
- ☐ Outstanding communication and presentation skills.
- ☐ Effective independently or as a member of the team.
- ☐ Highly motivated and goal oriented.
- ☐ Excellent references from _____.
- ☐ High level of professionalism.
- ☐ A finely tuned sense of _____ and its uses.
- ☐ Able to pinpoint problems and initiate creative solutions.
- ☐ Extensive public service in nonprofit organizations.
- ☐ Special talent for improving systems.
- ☐ Able to accurately establish priorities.
- ☐ Enthusiastic, creative and willing to assume increased responsibility.
- ☐ Effective at public speaking and media presentations.
- ☐ Extremely dependable in completing projects.
- ☐ High energy coupled with enthusiasm and dedication to _____.
- ☐ Familiar with _____ cultures and politics.
- ☐ Designed and implemented a highly successful employee.
- ☐ Skilled at developing rapport with all types of people.
- ☐ Managed a very successful _____.
- ☐ Completed assignments to clients' complete satisfaction.
- ☐ Well-versed in _____. A generator of creative ideas.
- ☐ Effectively interfaced with management from all levels.
- ☐ Trained by one of the area's most reputable _____.
- ☐ Succeeded in only _____ months to educate myself in _____ areas.
- ☐ Project a highly competent and professional image.
- ☐ Designed courses to train over _____ people.
- ☐ Excellent command of both _____ and _____ languages.
- ☐ Poised and competent as a professional representative.
- ☐ Communicate well with a wide range of personalities.
- ☐ Planned, managed and supervised events for up to _____ people.

TRANSFERRABLE SKILLS

Place a check mark next to any skills or traits you feel are applicable to you.

Communication Skills: the skillful expression, transmission and interpretation of knowledge and ideas.

- ☐ Speaking effectively
- ☐ Writing concisely
- ☐ Listening attentively
- ☐ Expressing ideas
- ☐ Facilitating group discussion
- ☐ Providing appropriate feedback
- ☐ Negotiating
- ☐ Perceiving nonverbal messages
- ☐ Persuading
- ☐ Reporting information
- ☐ Describing feelings
- ☐ Interviewing
- ☐ Editing

Teamwork: the use of interpersonal skills for resolving conflict, relating to and helping people.

- ☐ Developing rapport
- ☐ Being Sensitive
- ☐ Listening
- ☐ Conveying feelings
- ☐ Providing support for others
- ☐ Motivating
- ☐ Sharing credit
- ☐ Cooperating
- ☐ Delegating with respect
- ☐ Representing others
- ☐ Perceiving feelings, situations
- ☐ Asserting

Attention to Detail: the day-to-day skills that assist in promoting effective production and work satisfaction.

- ☐ Implementing decisions
- ☐ Cooperating
- ☐ Enforcing policies
- ☐ Being punctual
- ☐ Managing time
- ☐ Meeting goals
- ☐ Enlisting help
- ☐ Accepting responsibility
- ☐ Setting and meeting deadlines
- ☐ Organizing
- ☐ Making decisions

Problem Solving/Analytical Skills: the search for specific knowledge and the ability to conceptualize future needs and solutions for meeting those needs.

- ☐ Forecasting, predicting
- ☐ Creating ideas
- ☐ Identifying problems
- ☐ Imagining alternatives
- ☐ Identifying resources
- ☐ Gathering information
- ☐ Solving problems
- ☐ Setting goals
- ☐ Extracting important information
- ☐ Defining needs
- ☐ Analyzing
- ☐ Developing evaluation strategies

Leadership: the ability to supervise, direct and guide individuals and groups in the completion of tasks and fulfillment of goals.

- ☐ Initiating new ideas
- ☐ Handling details
- ☐ Coordinating tasks
- ☐ Managing groups
- ☐ Delegating responsibility
- ☐ Teaching
- ☐ Coaching
- ☐ Counseling
- ☐ Promoting change
- ☐ Selling ideas or products
- ☐ Decision making with others
- ☐ Managing conflict

Additional Skills

- ☐ Flexibility
- ☐ Creativity
- ☐ Willingness to Learn
- ☐ Reliable
- ☐ Responsive
- ☐ Courteous
- ☐ Competent
- ☐ Dependable
- ☐ Follow through
- ☐ Manages Stress

BREAKING TASKS DOWN TO TRANSFERRABLE SKILLS

Think on previous positions you have held and the tasks you completed in those positions. Write the tasks down on the left column. In the right column, identify transferrable skills that might be associated with those tasks. Two examples are already provided to help you get started.

TASK	TRANSFERRABLE SKILL(S)
<i>Used computers</i>	<i>Knowledge of computer software</i> <i>Adaptable to new software</i>
<i>Answered phones</i>	<i>Customer service</i> <i>Ability to multi-task</i> <i>Task oriented</i> <i>Ability to prioritize</i>

Using the information below, practice writing job duties that begin with an action word followed by transferrable skills, tasks, and/or outcomes.

Transferrable skills are skills that are not limited to a specific academic discipline, area of knowledge, job, or task; these are useful in any work situation (e.g. customer service, task oriented, organized, etc.).

Outcomes are results, achievements or both (e.g. 90 percent employee retention, saved company \$10,000, etc.).

Provided excellent customer service by answering all incoming calls supporting an office of 15 staff members

[illegible]

COMBINATION RESUME FORMAT

The format below serves as a framework for arranging your resume. Feel free to write notes or fill in the blanks on this sheet to start putting your resume together.

NAME

Contact Information (phone number, email, street address, city and state)

SUMMARY OF SKILLS/QUALIFICATIONS/HIGHLIGHTS

-
-
-
-
-
-

EDUCATION (*Note: If your work experience is more relevant to the position,
the **EDUCATION** section should come after the **EXPERIENCE** section.)

Institution, City, State

Date(s)

Degree/Certificate/Courses

Academic-related achievements (like Dean's List, but this section is optional)

RELATED/RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

Title:

Date - Date

Employer:

City, State

-
-
-

Title:

Date - Date

Employer:

City, State

-
-
-

SAMPLE COVER LETTER FORMAT

The information below provides a framework for writing your cover letter. Note that the same header is used on the cover letter as the resume.

NAME

Contact Information (phone number, email, street address, city and state)

Date

Individual's Name (or simply start with a job title if no name could be found)

Job Title

Name of Organization

Street Address

City, State Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms. _____:

First Paragraph: Why you are writing

- State the position title you are applying for and the company name.
- Explain where you heard about the job (from friend, Internet, College Career Specialist, etc.).
- Include the most important reason for applying to the position (connect this to the employer's values).

Second Paragraph: Describe the value you will add to the employer

- Expand on the information on your resume; demonstrate your skills by stating when and where you have used them.
- Highlight skills that are relevant to the job (see the job description for this information); include something special or unique about yourself that shows the value you will add to the employer.

Third Paragraph: Request an interview

- Politely request an interview to discuss the position.
- Be sure to communicate your plan to follow-up with the employer.
- Finally, thank the employer for his/her time and consideration.

Sincerely,

(Your Signature in blue or black ink)

Your Name Typed

Enclosure: Resume