Resume Writing

USC CAREER CENTER

WHAT IS A RESUME?:

A resume is a brief highlight of your work or activity experiences, educational background, and skills as they relate to the type of job you are seeking.

It should highlight your accomplishments to show a potential employer that you are qualified for the work you want. It is not a biography of everything you have done.

Did you know?

Employers initially spent 10 to 30 seconds reviewing your resume.

HOW IS A RESUME USED?:

A resume is most often used when applying for employment. It can also be used to apply for:

- Internships
- Co-ops
- Summer jobs,
- Graduate or professional school,
- Leadership positions in an organization.

The purpose of a résumé

A resume is designed to get you an interview, not the job! Know your target audience and market yourself effectively to your reader!

Visit our website: www.sc.edu/career

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

RESUME WRITING:

- **Your resume may take hours to prepare.** Give yourself time to write and rewrite.

- **A one-page resume is sufficient for most students.** Your resume doesn't have to list every position you've held or every activity in which you've been involved. If you have a lot of experience, only include what is relevant to the position for which you are applying. Go to two pages only if absolutely necessary.

- **Avoid templates/wizards.** Resume templates or wizards may seem helpful, but it can be very hard to make changes or move things around when using one. It is important to customize your resume to best represent your strengths. We recommend using a blank MS Word document that will leave you the flexibility you need.

> **Stop by the Career Center for feedback on your resume.**

- **Custom design your resume for each position.** You should change your objective with each position for which you apply, and if necessary, change the content and/or the format so that it best compliments each individual position.

- **Catch your reader's eye.** Readers prefer statements that begin with bullets, **bold print,** and indentions to guide their eyes quickly to the main points. Stick to one font so that your resume doesn't look cluttered, and organize the information so that it is visually appealing and easy to follow.

- **Accentuate the positive.** Your resume is the first impression most employers will have of you, and how well you write indicates what type of employee you might be. Highlight accomplishments, not mere duties. Don't just list what you did; show how it contributed to the organization. Quantify your statements with numbers, statistics, and percentages when possible.

- **Use action verbs** (e.g. created, delegated) instead of passive verbs (e.g. took, had). For past activities, use past tense verbs (supervised, developed). For activities you're currently engaged in, use present tense verbs (supervise, develop).

- **Do not include on a resume:** religion, race, gender, high school information (unless applying for an internship and it is relevant), marital status, height/weight, birthplace, date of birth, or a photograph.

RESUME APPEARANCE:

- Use light colored resume paper (white, ivory, or beige) that will copy cleanly.

- Use the same paper for your resume and cover letter.

- Maintain reasonable margins. In general, one inch margins are preferred. Apply to cover letters also.

- You may use simple lines to create a border. If you are interested in graphic design, use your resume to display your design skills.

KRISTI JACKSON
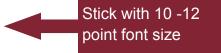kristij@gmail.com

Current Address:
USC PO Box 0000
Columbia, SC 29208
(803) 544-0000

Permanent Address:
9274 Whisper Lane
Greenville, SC 29301
(864) 574-4970

OBJECTIVE
An internship in the Armstrong Forensic Laboratory

> Stick with 10 -12 point font size

EDUCATION
University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC
Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice, May 2014
GPA 3.4

HONORS
Deans List, Multiple Recipient
Presidents List, Multiple Recipient
Palmetto Fellows Scholar

RELATED COURSES
Introduction to Forensic Chemistry   Research Methods in Criminal Justice
Descriptive and Elementary Statistics   Criminal Law
General Chemistry I & II   Criminal Courts

CRIMINOLOGY EXPERIENCE
Lexington County Sheriff's Department, Lexington, SC
Major Crime Unit Intern   June 2010 - August 2010
- Worked with the drug chemist in the laboratory with testing unknown illegal substances
- Worked alongside seasoned detectives on active cases including homicide, rape, criminal domestic violence, robbery and missing person cases
- Worked with Victim's Advocates in their duties of communicating with victims and helping victims understand the court process
- Participated in Bond court proceeding and Criminal Domestic Violence Court proceedings as a victims advocate representative

MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE
Lane Bryant, Columbia, SC
Supervisor   June 2009 - Present
- Trained and supervised up to four employees per shift
- Motivated staff to achieve weekly and monthly sales goals
- Increased leadership and conflict resolution skills
- Responsible for all operations of the store including, opening, closing, and inventory
- Provided quality customer service to all patrons

> When describing your previous experiences, lead with strong action verbs and use industry-related terms.

SKILLS
Language: Fluent in Spanish   **Computer:** Microsoft Products
Equipment: Dictaphone, Camera, Microscope, Ultra Violet and Infra red technology

Heading

Cap the top of your resume with:
▪ Full name (can put nickname in parenthesis if you wish)
▪ Complete address (may include both permanent and present address)
▪ Home phone number (can list work phone number as well - designate each with an "H" and "W")
▪ E-mail address
▪ Personal website (if appropriate)

Objective

The objective is an ***optional*** category that indicates the type of work you are seeking. Employers prefer objectives that are specific and concise (see examples below). If you know the exact position you are pursuing or field that you are considering, you may include an objective. Otherwise, you may omit this category.

- An internship in computer programming.
- A position in financial services.

Education

Degrees should be listed in reverse chronology. Include only those schools in which you earned a degree.
- Names and locations of schools or programs
- Graduation date
- Degrees or certificates
- Major, minor or cognate
- Grade point average (if 2.5 or above)
- Awards/Honors/Scholarships (consider a separate section if more than 3)
- Study abroad experiences

Example:
Master of Industrial Statistics, May 2011
University of South Carolina, Columbia SC

Bachelor of Science in Engineering, May 2009
Major: Chemical Engineering   *Minor:* Economics
University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC
- *Major* GPA: 3.4 *Overall* GPA: 3.2
- Dean's List, President's List

Related Course Work

This category is optional and can also be part of the Education section. It is mainly used when you are lacking related experience but want to demonstrate specific knowledge. List the titles of courses you've taken that relate to the position for which you are applying.

Experience

Include full-time and part-time jobs, summer positions, volunteer work, military service, internships, self-employment, research projects, and even activities if they are directly related to the position. In some cases you may wish to divide this category into two sections: one called Related Experience and one called Additional Experience. Experiences should be listed in reverse chronology.

Include:
- Your job title
- Employer name
- City/State of the employer
- Dates of employment
- Bulleted descriptions of your responsibilities

Honors, Activities, Research and Professional Affiliations

You may specifically want to list:
- Activities or leadership positions that demonstrate job related skills
- Honors or awards (Scholarships may or may not be relevant)

Skills

We recommend a separate section listing computer skills. Be specific, listing product names and version numbers if possible. Indicate your level of knowledge using such terms as "working knowledge of" or "proficient in."

Students seeking technology positions specifically should break this list down into subcategories such as programming languages, hardware, software, operating systems, databases, peripherals, etc.

If you speak more than one language, you should also list them here, indicating your level of oral proficiency in each.

Other

There is the option to add additional categories that reflect your uniqueness, such as interests or volunteer work, but consider the relevance that the category has to your objective and the position you are seeking.

Key Words are important!

Many companies use recruiting management software to screen candidates for job openings. Your key words should mirror the skills the employer listed in job description and duties.

Create a High Impact Resume

Use Optimal Resume, a web-based tool, free to current USC students.

Optimal Resume provides:
- Writing and formatting assistance
- Interactive examples
- Tutorial guidance

OPTIMALRESUME.COM
THE OPTIMAL FIRST IMPRESSION

REFERENCES:

- **Choose references:** Brainstorm a list of people who can speak highly of your past work performance, (job, class-work or research related). Ideally, your references should be those who supervised you or rated your performance, such as a previous boss or professor who knows you/your work very well.   In some cases a colleague can also provide a strong reference of your work performance, particularly if you worked on a team project together. In general, you should provide a minimum of 3 references, but no more than 5.

- **Ask references:** Contact those designated and ask if they will give you a positive reference. Never provide anyone's name to a potential employer as a reference without first doing so.

- **Gather contact information:** Make sure you have the proper spelling of your reference's name, company name, official job title, and the address and phone number. For your own use, you may also get an e-mail address.

- **Prepare references:** To help your references speak intelligently about your background and strengths, you should provide them with a copy of your resume. They should also know what your goals are and the types of positions you are seeking.

- **Keep references informed:** Notify your references about *each* position for which you apply so they might anticipate a call and prepare to "sell" you based on the specifics of each position.

- **Thank references:** Notify references when you accept a position and send a thank-you letter.

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kristij@gmail.com

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REFERENCES

Mr. Thomas (Tom) Smith
Director
Citizens Against Sexual Assault (C.A.S.A.)
8981 Harden Street
Columbia, SC 29205
(803) 252-8888

Mrs. Susan Brown
Director of Residence Life
University of South Carolina
Columbia, SC 29208
(803) 777-0000
E–mail: sbrown@csd.scarolina.edu

Dr. Phillip (Phil) A. Jones
Associate Professor
Department of Psychology
University of South Carolina
Columbia, SC 29208
(803) 777-0001
E-mail: pajones@csd.scarolina.edu

Ms. Francis Patterson
Summer Staff Coordinator
Camp Wildwood
P.O. Box 590
Kings Mountain, NC 28746
(803) 367-9862

COVER LETTER:

Covers letters have three basic paragraphs:
1. Why are you writing to them and who are you?
2. Why are you the best fit for their organization and this position?
3. How will you follow up with them from here?

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October 22, 2010

Mr. John Anderson
Vice President
Verizon Wireless
Columbia, SC 29208

Dear Mr. Anderson:

I am writing to express my sincere interest in entry-level sales opportunities at Verizon Wireless. Currently, I am a senior at the University of South Carolina and will graduate in December of 2002 with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology.

As you will note in my resume, I have strong language skills. My ability to communicate fluently in Spanish would allow me to conduct business easily with many of your international clients. Because I studied abroad for a semester, I am also aware of the cultural differences in Spanish-speaking countries. In addition to my language skills, I also have extensive experience working in fast-paced, dynamic environments. Not only does my current position require that I work with diverse groups of people, but I am also responsible for ensuring a standard level of service, training new advocates, and developing community education programs.

I will contact you in two weeks to confirm receipt of my resume and to discuss the possibility of meeting. I am excited about the opportunities at Verizon Wireless and feel confident that my skills will allow me to make an immediate impact on your organization. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kristi Jackson

Always find out the name of the person receiving your letter rather than using "To Whom It May Concern."

Be aware of using too many sentences in a row that begin with "I." Instead, vary your sentence style.

Instead of simply repeating your resume in the second paragraph, add more specific details about your previous experience and/or activities.

Be sure to sign your letter using black ink.

KRISTI JACKSON
kristij@gmail.com

Current Address:
USC P.O. Box 0000
Columbia, SC 29208
(803) 544-0000

Permanent Address:
9274 Whisper Lane
Greenville, SC 2930
(864) 574-4970

November 19, 2010

Mr. John Anderson
Vice President
Verizon Wireless
Columbia, SC 29208

Dear Mr. Anderson:

Thank you again for the opportunity to interview for the sales position at Verizon Wireless this past Thursday. I appreciated your hospitality and enjoyed meeting you and your staff, as well as taking the tour of your office.

The interview confirmed my initial positive impressions of Verizon Wireless, and I want to reiterate my strong interest in working for your organization.   I feel confident that my experiences combined with my education will allow me to become a successful part of your company.

Should you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 544-0000.   If I have not heard from you by next Friday, I will check back with you to see how your candidate selection is progressing. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Kristi Jackson

Thank-you letters should be sent to all individuals who interviewed you.

The letters should be sent within 48 hours of the interview.

A typed letter is the most professional format. Other options include a handwritten note on personal stationery or an email thank you, if you have previously corresponded with the interviewer(s) via email.

accepted
accommodated
accomplished
accumulated
achieved
acknowledged
acquired
acted
activated
adapted
adjusted
administered
advertised
advised
affected
analyzed
answered
anticipated
applied
appreciated
approached
approved
arbitrated
arranged
assembled
asserted
assessed
assigned
assisted
attained
attended
attracted
audited
augmented
authored
authorized
boosted
briefed
broadened
budgeted
built
cataloged
categorized
chaired
charted
clarified
classified
collaborated
commanded
collected
communicated
compared
completed
complied
computed
conceived

conceptualized
conciliated
conducted
confirmed
confronted
constructed
consulted
contracted
controlled
conveyed
convinced
cooperated
coordinated
corresponded
counseled
created
critiqued
decided
defined
decorated
delegated
delivered
demonstrated
described
designed
detailed
detected
determined
developed
devised
directed
discharged
displayed
dispensed
disproved

Tip

When possible, quantify your action verbs, e.g. supervised 10 people, increased sales by 45%.

distinguished
distributed
drafted
drew up
earned
edited
educated
effected
elected
eliminated
encouraged
endured

enforced
enhanced
enlarged
enlisted
entertained
escalated
established
estimated
evaluated
examined
exceeded
exchanged
executed
exhibited
expanded
expedited
experienced
explained
explored
expressed
extended
facilitated
familiarized
followed
followed through
formulated
fortified
found
founded
furnished
gained
generated
governed
grouped
guided

handled
hired
honored
identified
illustrated
implemented
improved
inaugurated
increased
indexed
influenced
informed

initiated
innovated
inspected
inspired
installed
instituted
instructed
integrated
intensified
interacted
interpreted
intervened
interviewed
introduced
investigated
invented
judged
led
learned
lectured
listened
logged
made
maintained
managed
manipulated
marketed
matched
maximized
mediated
merchandised
met
minimized
moderated
modified
monitored
motivated
multiplied
negotiated
obtained
operated
orchestrated
organized
originated
oversaw
participated
perceived
performed
persisted
persuaded

planned
polled
predicted
prepared
presented
presided
preserved
printed
processed
produced
promoted
proofread
proposed
protected
proved
provided
publicized
published
purchased
raised
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ranked
reached
read
realized
received
recognized
recommended
reconciled
recorded
recruited
rectified
redesigned
reduced
referred
refereed
related
remodeled
rendered
renewed
repaired
reported
represented
researched
reserved
responded
resolved
reviewed
revised
scanned

scheduled
screened
scrutinized
secured
selected
served
set in motion
settled
sketched
sold
solved
sorted
spoke
staffed
standardized
steered
stimulated
straightened
strengthened
studied
summarized
supervised
supplied
supported
surveyed
synthesized
systematized
talked
taught
tested
took
trained
transacted
translated
traveled
treated
transmitted
understood
updated
upgraded
used
utilized
volunteered
won
worked
wrote

UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH CAROLINA