Learn How to Create a Great Resume

Presented by: Teresa Flores Roberts

Assistant Director, Career Services

Agenda

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- Steps for Writing your Resume
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WHAT IS A RESUME?

- A resume serves as a tool to interest prospective employers in offering you an interview.

- It summarizes your work history (both paid and unpaid), relevant academic experiences, skills, and accomplishments in a concise and readable format.

- It also clearly demonstrates your ability to produce results in areas of interest to potential employers.

Steps for Writing your Resume

- **1. Conduct a personal inventory**
  - List your college education including relevant coursework.
  - Include high school information if you are first or second year student.
  - List your jobs, internships, activities, achievements, volunteer activities, special projects, honors, involvement in professional organizations, skills, interests, etc.
  - Include everything at this point, you can edit later.
  - For each work experience, emphasize and quantify your accomplishments. Include transferable skills such as organizational, teamwork, communication.

- **2. Identify potential employers/industry**
  - It is important to start writing a resume with a particular employer or industry in mind.
  - In the best case scenario, you will need to target all of your education and experience to that particular employer, industry, and job or internship opening.

STEPS FOR WRITING YOUR RESUME

- **3. Categorize your information**
  - Organize your information into appropriate categories.
  - You may omit some of the sections if they are not applicable to you.
  - Review the resume samples included in the Resume guide for examples of possible ways to present the information.

- **4. Refine and revise**
  - The objective is to get your resume to one page.
  - A one page resume may not happen on your first, second, or even third draft but it is a crucial component to getting you that interview.
  - According to Job Choices for Business & Liberal Arts Students: 2012 (2011) "It's critical for a very recent graduate to have a one-page resume… longer resumes are acceptable only for experienced applicants or those with advanced degrees. It signals your ability to communicate concisely" (p. 27).

Resume Categories

- **Contact Information**
  - Include Name, Address, Zip Code, Telephone, and Email Address at the **top** of the resume.

  - For current students, you may list a single address if you are applying to positions around Pitzer College.

  - You can also list a permanent and current address. This may be helpful to the employer if you are applying to positions closer to your home.

  - Include a phone number that you will be able to receive calls from employers. Make sure to have a professional sounding voice mail message. It's better to include a cell phone number than a land line number.

  - Include an email that you are checking readily. Make sure the email address name is simple and professional. Make sure that it doesn't expire after graduation.

  - If you have a LinkedIn profile you can include that website in your heading. Also QR barcodes can be included in your heading.

RESUME CATEGORIES

- **Education**
  - For current Pitzer College students, this is always is listed first - College name, Location, Degree, Major/minor, Graduation Date is critical!

  - Study Abroad – College name, Location, and Semester and year attended

  - Relevant Courses (Optional) –List classes that are directly related to the position/industry in which you are applying to. Create a separate category if necessary

  - Senior Thesis and Independent Studies – State thesis title

  - Grade Point Average (Optional) - List if favorable (typically 3.0-3.2 or above). Carry out to 2 decimal places. Ex: 3.25. Students can also list Major GPA if it is higher or more relevant than overall GPA

  - High School Experience – Only list if you are a 1st year or sophomore student. You may want to list if your school is top ranked in the location you are from and the employer will know of it. Also you may want to list it if you obtained a significant honor. Ex: Valedictorian, Senior Class President

- **Honors & Awards**
  - Include academic honors, scholarships, honor societies, or awards. It's important to include the dates you earned these awards. Semester and year is sufficient.

RESUME CATEGORIES

- **Experience**
  - Potential title of this section can be "Experience," "Work Experience," "Employment," "Professional Experience," "Leadership Experience," or "Additional Experience."

  - For targeting your resume to a particular job/industry you may include special titles. **Ex:** Nonprofit Experience; Environmental Experience; Entertainment & Media Experience; Cross Cultural Experience; International Experience.

  - List your current or most recent employment first.

  - Include full and part-time work experiences, volunteer work, significant class projects outside of the classroom, elected positions, and internships.

  - Include job title, employer name, location, and dates of employment.

  - Use action verbs and skill words (see action verbs page) to detail and quantify your accomplishments, duties, and work responsibilities to show growth within the position and the organization.

  - All experience does not need to be included on your resume. Select carefully the experience you think will be helpful for the employer to make the decision to interview you.

  - Do not use personal pronouns such as "I", "Me", or "My" on your resume. The use of these pronouns is not considered standard practice in resume writing. Although, they are fine to use on a cover letter.

OPTIONAL RESUME CATEGORIES

- **Skills, Activities, & Interests**
  - **Skills**
    - **Computer** – list software programs and hardware indicate fluency and proficiency.
    - **Language** – include level of fluency and proficiency.
    - **Technical equipment** – list for some media, lab and science positions (see Scientific Resume Guide if needed).
  - **Activities**
    - List the organizations, positions held, and dates involved. If the involvement is related to the job/industry you are applying to, consider including it as an experience.
    - Types of activities could include student government, student clubs, and sports.
  - **Interests**
    - This can include travel, personal interests, and activities that can often serve as "icebreakers" in an interview.

OPTIONAL RESUME CATEGORIES

- **Publications**
  - List any publications that communicate your knowledge, interest, or expertise in an area related to the position. Use standard citation format.

- **Presentations**
  - List the dates and names of the programs/speeches and the organizations to which you presented.

- **Professional Affiliations/Memberships**
  - List your roles held in organizations or memberships that demonstrate your leadership abilities.

- **References**
  - References are listed on a separate page with your contact information (i.e. resume) at the top.
  - It isn't necessary to include your references with your resume and cover letter unless it is stated in the application process.
  - You do not need to state this on your resume. Ex: References available
  - Obtain permission from your references before you submit their names.
  - Typically you should have 3-4 individuals (work supervisors or professors) who can address your ability to do well in a work or academic setting.

RESUME LAYOUT

- **Grammar & Spelling**
  - Be aware that spell check does not catch all spelling and grammatical errors.
  - It is not professional to have these errors in business correspondence and especially in a resume.
  - Avoid abbreviations. Use present or past verb tense consistent with the time of your experience.

- **Margins** – .5"-1"

- **Font Type** – Times New Roman, Arial, Garamond

- **Font Size** – 10-12 point

- **Bold**
  - Use to emphasize school names and employer names

- **Bullets**
  - Use bullets when you want to emphasize your individual experiences not a category, job title, or employer.
  - If used correctly, bullets can be used in other resume categories as well. Use sparingly.

- **Length**
  - One page unless you are a senior level executive or using a CV for jobs in academia

EMAILING YOUR RESUME & COVER LETTER

- Most organizations have applicants email their resume and cover letter in separate documents.

- It is preferable to submit your resume and cover letter in PDF documents. Although you can use MS Word if an employer does not specify.

- In the subject line, state a specific intention of your resume and cover letter. **Ex**: Nonprofit Administrator Position – Cecil Sagehen

- When submitting a cover letter, either paste it in the body of the email or attach it as a PDF or MS Word document.

- If you are attaching your cover letter, state why you are writing and what's attached.

- **Sample Email Intro:**

  - Dear Ms. Smith:
    I am writing to apply for the **Nonprofit Administrator** position I saw on my college's online job database, PitzerLink. This May, I will graduate from Pitzer College with a B.A. in Sociology. I have attached a cover letter and resume that provide more details about my experience and education. Please let me know if you have any questions and I hope to speak with you soon.

    Sincerely,
    Cecil Sagehen

CREATING A SCANNABLE RESUME

- A Scannable resume is one that can be viewed by a computer using applicant tracking software.

- Nearly all major corporations use some component of this type of software.

- This software allows organizations to scan, sift, and cross-references large numbers of electronic resumes to identify appropriate candidates to match their job openings.

- **Keywords**
  - Organizations can query the resume database using criteria or "keywords"

  - Keywords are found in job descriptions, job titles, degrees, special skills or training, specific job responsibilities, professional associations, etc.

  - Consider including a separate section on your resume named "Keywords" where you input appropriate nouns and verbs that describe your skills.

- **Formatting**
  - Keep formatting simple since a computer is viewing your resume not a human.

  - Use a standard, single column resume style with headings. Use spacing to break up your headings.

  - Use boldface or all capital letters for section headings.

  - Instead of bullets use dashes and avoid indentation and tabulation.

  - Avoid italics, underlining, horizontal and vertical lines, boxes, and graphics.

  - Make sure your name is at the top of every page on its own line.

  - Use simple typefaces such as Arial or Times Roman. Font size should be between 10 and 12 points.

  - If including two phone numbers, list each one a separate line.

ACTIONS VERBS

- An effective and important way to describe accomplishments and skills.

- Use different "action verbs" often throughout your resume.

- Can give your resume power and direction

- **Ex**: Approved timesheets for 6 student workers

- **Ex**: Adapted curriculum to the level of each 2nd grade student in classroom of 30 children.

- Examples:
  - **Administrative**: Approved, Arranged, Cataloged

  - **Creative**: Acted, Conceptualized, Created

  - **Helping**: Assessed, Assisted, Clarified

  - **Research**: Collected, Critiqued, Diagnosed

  - **Teaching**: Adapted, Advised, Coached

  - **Technical**: Assembled, Built, Calculated

SPECIAL RESUMES

- **Graduate School & Fellowship**
  - Expand and highlight Academic and Research Experience
  - Longer list of scholarships, honors, and awards
  - Include longer list of extracurricular activities
  - Designed to enhance your personal statement or essay
  - Can break up activities into subgroups

- **Curriculum Vitae**
  - Include more detail on academic projects, publications, courses taught, and honors
  - Can be over 1 page
  - Commonly used in academic research environments

- **International Resumes**
  - Many require "personal information" such as a picture, health exam, date of birth
  - Consult country specific information for inclusion of extra information

Special resumes

- **Scientific Resumes**
  - Can be longer than 1 page

  - Research, tutoring, and teaching experience is highlighted

  - List Scientific meetings and presentations

  - References are included on the resume (unlike traditional resumes)

COVER LETTERS

- A formal business letter or that accompanies a resume and serves an introduction of you to potential employers.

- Serves as an effective marketing tool to match your experiences with their specific needs.

- Tailored to each employer by using their contact information.

- Check for grammar and spelling errors.

- **Tips**
  - Keep it targeted and customized to employer

  - Don't exceed 1 page or make it 1 paragraph

  - State the position

  - Explain why you want the job

  - Describe ways in which you will contribute using examples

  - Match but don't reiterate your resume

  - Keep content professional

  - Keep positive tone

  - Don't overuse "I" – focuses on you, personally not your skills

COVER LETTERS

- **Example**

  Date

  Your Street Address
  Your Town, State, Zip

  Name of Contact
  Title
  Name of Organization
  Street Address
  City, State, Zip

  Dear Ms./Mr._____:

  First Paragraph. State the specific position or type of work for which you are applying, and indicate how you learned of the opening (Career Services, internet, contact person, alumni, employment service, etc.).

  Second Paragraph. Indicate why you are interested in the position. Explain why you are interested in this particular organization, its products or services. Describe what you can do for the employer. Do not focus on how the job will benefit you. If you are a recent graduate, explain how your academic background makes you a qualified candidate. Emphasize specific skills you possess that are relevant to the job. Try to enhance and highlight the information found in your resume without simply repeating it. Refer the reader to the enclosed resume for more detailed information.

  Third Paragraph. State what you will do to follow up on your letter. If you are replying to a job listing, state that you look forward to hearing from them. If you are writing a letter to an organization that does not have a specific job listed, state that you will contact them by a certain date to set up an interview to discuss your qualifications in more detail. Conclude by expressing your willingness to answer any of their questions. Be sure to provide your phone number, e-mail address, and, if applicable, a fax number.

  Sincerely,
  Type your name