



THE TOOLS TO MOVE UP
THE CANDIDATE TOOLKIT

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WRITING THE PERFECT RESUME
SECTION 1

I. THE RIGHT RESUME

Ultimate Staffing's guide to writing a resume

Your resume is the principal tool a potential employer uses to decide whether or not it is worth their time to interview you. Since it starts by being selected for an interview, your resume should be error-free and stand out from the others. The goal of your resume is to beat out the competition in obtaining that first interview. Are you **"Resume Ready?"**

HERE ARE THE TOP 10 DO'S AND DON'TS

DO:

1. Format your resume into recommended categories: Professional Experience, Education & Certifications, and Associations.
2. Utilize a Skills Summary at the top of the resume, not an objective statement.
3. List professional experience for the past 10 years.
4. Include one or two sentences describing the company, industry, size and relevant factors.
5. Create a short paragraph highlighting each position's scope of responsibility.
6. Use bullet points to highlight accomplishments, not tasks.
7. Clearly identify measurable results and accomplishments: dollars saved, percentage increases or decreases, time it took to accomplish the goals, etc...
8. Use action verbs: initiated, established, analyzed, executed, organized, etc...
9. List Education, Certifications and Associations last, unless you have less than 10 years of experience.
10. Keep your resume to 2 pages and print on white or off-white paper with basic fonts of 10 -12 points.

DO NOT:

1. Add personal information (height, personal descriptions, etc.), hobbies, or taglines (like "References Upon Request").
2. Advertise negative and unnecessary information: laid off, fired, reasons for leaving, or previous salaries.
3. Write in the first person – "I", "me", "my".
4. Embellish or stretch the truth regarding dates of employment, duties, accomplishments, or experience.
5. Allow spelling mistakes or grammatical errors on your resume, which shows a lack of attention to detail.
6. Use long, in-depth paragraphs to describe experiences.
7. Make your experience read like job descriptions – don't just list tasks and duties.
8. Use passive language that lacks action.
9. Complicate your resume with overly creative organization and formatting.
10. Use poor or flashy resume paper or MSWord background graphics.

John Q. Smith

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Summaries are a highly effective way to highlight.

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Proficient on MS Office Suite
- Excellent communication skills
- Typing speed approximately 60 WPM
- Experienced switchboard operator
- Proven reliability
- Excellent attention to detail

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Start with your Professional Experience if you have 5+ years of on-the-job experience; otherwise, start with your Education.

NUTS & BOLTS TECHNOLOGIES, INC.

A \$100 million publicly traded technology company, with locations throughout the United States, is the leading supplier of wing-ding... for the whatchamacallit industry.

Executive Secretary

Focus should be on your title, not your time frame. Note that the dates should be on the right.

Duties: Was the secretary and assistant to an executive in the Quality Control department. Specific tasks included dictation, word processing, some project planning, and the handling of all travel arrangements.

Results:

- Saved the executive 10-15 hours per week by taking over many of his phone and scheduling responsibilities. Eliminated travel and expense report errors that saved hours of executive time, and thousands of dollars in company costs.
- Improved and highlight your measurable accomplishments through Powerpoint presentations, improving the department's productivity.
- Optimized clerical processes that made executive's job much easier.

Keep your Achievements concise, and highlight your measurable accomplishments.

Note that all bullet points are only one sentence and are rich in number and recognized acronyms.

SILICON PEAKS & VALLEYS, INC.

A local reseller, specializing in the repackaging of thingamajigs and electro-knickknacks for the computer industry.

World Processor

Company Description should be one or two sentences, including industry, size, and other relevant factors.

July 2001 to May 2004

Duties:

- Word processing and spreadsheets for various departments within the organization.
- Transcribed and dictated documents from correspondence to procedural manuals to technical specifications.

Responsibilities should accentuate your specific contributions.

Results:

- Attention to detail reduced word processing errors by 10% throughout the department
- Processed the company's annual report ahead of deadline, saving thousands of dollars in printing and training costs
- Set a positive work environment that increased productivity throughout the department by 15%

Try to have each bullet begin with an action verb.

AUDITS R US, LLC

A "Big Four" CPA firm, special

File Clerk

List your Experiences going back further than a decade this way. Note that details are not necessary. Provide a very brief company description, job title, and dates.

industry clients.

Summer of 2000

KNEE DEEP, INC.

Pet supply distributor and rese

Inventory Clerk

1999 - 2000

THE PIGGY BANK

A regional banking company, serving the West Coast and Hawaii.

Teller

1998 - 1999

EDUCATION

1999 Associate Degree in Business Administration
Municipal Junior College

For Education, list your degree first, then your academic institution, unless the school is noteworthy, such as Harvard, Stanford, or any Ivy League college.

1978 Honor Student
Centerville High School

The year you graduated is important.

John Q. Smith

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EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT & TRAVEL MANAGER Over 5 Years of Proven Corporate Experience

Top notch Executive Assistant with extensive clerical, administrative, and travel planning experience. Industry experience includes technology, accounting & finance, and banking. Proven qualifications include:

Proficient on MS Office Suite
Excellent communication skills
Typing speed approximately 60 WPM

Experienced switchboard operator
Proven reliability
Excellent attention to detail

QUALIFICATIONS & CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Secretary and personal assistant for executive in Quality Control. Note exact tasks.

Specific tasks included dictation, word processing, scheduling, some project planning, and the handling of all travel arrangements.

Saved the executive 10-15 hours per week by taking over many of his phone and scheduling responsibilities.

Eliminated travel and expense report errors that saved hours of executive time, and thousands of dollars in company expense.

Improved the look & feel of the executive's Power-Point presentations, improving the department's standing throughout the organization.

Optimized clerical processes that made executive's job much easier.

Word processing and spreadsheets for various departments for the organization.

Transcribed dictation, word processed documentation ranging from correspondence to procedural manuals to technical spec sheets; assisted accounting department in data entry.

Attention to detail Note exact figures and percentages.
by 10% throughout the department.

Processed new procedural manual ahead of deadline, saving thousands of dollars in printing and training costs.

Set a positive work example, increasing productivity throughout the department by 15%.

WORK HISTORY

NUTS & BOLTS TECHNOLOGIES, INC.

A \$100 million publicly traded technology company and leading supplier of wing-dings and do-dads.
Executive Secretary May 2004 to Aug 2006

SILICON PEAKS & VALLEYS, INC.

A local reseller, specializing in the repackaging of thingamajigs and electro-knick knacks for computers
World Processor, July 2001 to May 2004

AUDITS R US, LLC

A "Big Four" CPA firm, specializing in major technology industry clients.
File Clerk, Summer of 2000

KNEE DEEP, INC.

Pet supply distributor and reseller.
Inventory Clerk, 1999 - 2000

THE PIGGY BANK

A regional banking company, serving the West Coast and Hawaii.
Teller, 1998 - 1999

EDUCATION

1999 Associate Degree in Business Administration
Municipal Junior College

1978 Honor Student
Centerville High School

Try to keep everything under 2 pages.



INTERVIEW READY
SECTION 2

II. THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

Ultimate Staffing's guide to the interview process

Congratulations! Your resume stood out and you have been invited to a job interview where you will have the opportunity to convey your interest in the position and company, and to present the skills you could bring to the company. The resume tells the employer what you have done; the interview enables you to tell the employer what you have achieved with your responsibilities. The interview is a two-way street. It is your opportunity to interview the company as well. It is a chance for both to assess the "fit" of the other.

PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

Know your resume and prepare yourself

- Think about your skills, interests, and values
- Understand your strengths & practice articulating them
- Be able to discuss your weaknesses & what you and the company can do to strengthen them
- Identify accomplishments you are proud of and things you might have done differently
- Speak to examples that demonstrate your strengths and accomplishments
- Articulate why you are interested in this field/company/position
- Define your short and long term goals

Research the employer and the field

- Research the company, the position, and the industry using your recruiter, the Internet, and various media
- Learn as much as you can about the position: match your skills and experience to position particulars
- Read current periodicals and trade journals to learn about current trends in the employer's industry & relevant company news
- Be familiar with the company's competitors
- Understand the company's organizational structure and where the position fits into that structure

Practice for the interview

- Meet with your Executive Recruiter to review your interview strategy
- Utilize Ultimate Staffing's VideoSelect™ technology to record a mock interview, which will help assess your presentation and interviewing skills
- Cite examples of your achievements and successes and how they transfer to this opportunity
- Confirm date, time, place and directions of the interview; consider parking and traffic conditions; leave plenty of time

Behavior-based interviews

More and more employers are now conducting job interviews that focus on experiences, behaviors and dimensions that are job related. Behavior-based interviewing rests on the premise that past behavior (performance) is the best indicator for future behavior (performance). Your answer to a behavior-based question must tell a story by giving a specific example of a situation you handled. To prepare for a behavior-based interview, analyze both your skills and those sought by the employer, and identify from your previous employment where you have successfully demonstrated those skills.

Sample behavior-based questions the employer might ask

- What are the most important qualities you look for in a company, position and/or manager? And why are they important to you?
- Tell me about the short and long term goals you have set for yourself.
- Do you trust people until they prove you can not or do people have to earn your trust?
- Tell me about a time you out performed others at work and how you did it?
- Do you prefer to work from a plan or go with the flow? And why?
- How do you organize your typical day?
- Do you prefer a slow, medium or fast paced environment? And why?
- Do you usually make decisions based on facts or intuition?
- All things being equal would you rather be part of a group or lead it?
- When is it acceptable not to follow up?
- Provide me an example of a time when you had to deal with conflict or opposition.

Sample work related questions the employer might ask

- Why are you currently seeking a change in employment?
- Describe one of your greatest accomplishments in a previous position.
- How would previous co-workers describe your strengths and weaknesses?
- In your current/previous position, describe how you rank among your peers?
- Describe a time when you were in a rapidly changing work environment.
- What professional skills are you currently working to improve?
- Describe your management style.
- Describe how you organize yourself to meet deadlines & goals.
- What are the key ingredients to maintaining successful business relationships?
- What has been your biggest challenge in a previous position?
- What is missing from your current employer?

Sample questions you might ask the employer

COMPANY FOCUSED

- How would you describe the culture of the company?
- Please share with me what the company is doing to stay ahead of the competition? (new products, technology, training, etc...)
- What was it about this company that made you want to work here?
- What are the pros and cons of this company?

DEPARTMENT FOCUSED

- Where does this position fit into the organizational structure?
- What concerns are facing this department currently?
- Whom would this position interact with most and what are those individuals like?
- What is the culture of the department and what types of personalities work well with in it?
- How would you describe your management style?

POSITION FOCUSED

- What should I expect during a typical day?
- What characteristics would the ideal candidate for this position possess?
- What performance goals have been set for the first year?
- What were the strengths and weaknesses of the person who held the position most recently?
- Who has been the best at this position and why?
- How is performance measured in this position?
- What areas of my background can I further clarify for you?
- How do you feel my experience and personality would fit for this position?
- What is the next step going forward?

THE INTERVIEW

Interview etiquette

- Arrive 10-15 minutes early
- Turn off your cell phone, or better yet, leave your phone in your car along with your briefcase or purse
- Introduce yourself to the receptionist
- Obtain a business card from each interviewer and clarify names that are difficult to pronounce
- Carry only your portfolio with copies of your resume and the prepared interview questions you want to ask, along with your list of references

Non-verbal communication skills

- First impressions matter; dress professionally yet conservatively, avoid flashy accessories, and keep make-up, cologne & perfume to a minimum if at all
- Greet the interviewer with a firm hand shake
- Maintain eye contact but avoid staring
- Use positive vocal qualities and facial expressions
- Sit still, lean slightly forward and demonstrate your interest and enthusiasm
- Be prepared to take notes on the most important information

Verbal communication skills

- Correctly pronounce the name of the interviewers
- Listen carefully to what is being asked and answer in a clear and concise manner – usually a direct answer followed by a brief example of your answer
- Pay attention to clues the interviewer may give you and adjust accordingly as to not appear overly cocky or too reserved
- Use proper grammar, avoid using slang
- Be specific and refer to concrete experiences that illustrate your skills
- Be the solution – uncover the company “pain” and position yourself as a possible solution
- Never bad-mouth former employers or co-workers
- Thank each interviewer for their time and express your interest in the company and this opportunity



POST-INTERVIEW FOLLOW UP
SECTION 3

III. THE FOLLOW-UP

Post-Interview

Self-assessment

- How did the interview go?
- What were my strengths in the interview?
- Was the position described as I had envisioned it?
- What would I do differently next time?
- What questions did I not get answered?
- How would I rank my interest level in this opportunity?
- What specifically did I like about the company, people, and position?
- What concerns do I have at this time?
- How did I interview the company?
- How does the opportunity compare to others I am looking at?

Follow-up

- Call your recruiter and supply your feedback based on your self assessment
- Send a thank you note to each interviewer within 24 hours of your interview

SAMPLE THANK YOU LETTERS

SAMPLE 1: HEAVY ON THE THANKS, LIGHT ON THE SELF-MARKETING

DATE

INTERVIEWER NAME

INTERVIEWER TITLE

COMPANY

ADDRESS

CITY, ST ZIP

RE: Interview Follow Up

Dear INTERVIEWER NAME:

I realize your day must be extremely busy, so please allow me a few more moments of your time in order to thank you for my interview on DAY, MONTH and YEAR.

I sincerely appreciate having been given the opportunity to interview at COMPANY NAME and specifically with you. I learned a great deal about the company during our time together, and remain deeply impressed by your organization's goals, culture, and opportunities.

Should you have any additional questions for me, I will be pleased to answer them as I look forward to speaking with you again.

Finally, thank you for the privilege of learning more about COMPANY NAME, the POSITION TITLE opportunity and you.

Sincerest regards,

YOUR NAME

SAMPLE 2: A BALANCE OF THANKS AND SELF-MARKETING

DATE

INTERVIEWER NAME
INTERVIEWER TITLE
COMPANY
ADDRESS
CITY, ST ZIP

RE: Interview Follow Up

Dear INTERVIEWER NAME:

Please allow me to thank you for my interview on DAY, MONTH and YEAR.

During my interview I discovered COMPANY NAME's unique mission, culture, and impressive accomplishments. I feel privileged to have had this opportunity to be considered, and look forward to learning even more about COMPANY NAME, the POSITION TITLE opportunity and you.

Given my unique experience and qualifications, I am excited about the prospect of a career at COMPANY NAME. If I can facilitate your decision-making process with additional information, then I would certainly welcome the opportunity to meet with you again.

Many thanks and sincerest regards,
YOUR NAME

SAMPLE 3: LIGHT ON THE THANKS, HEAVY ON THE SELF-MARKETING

DATE

INTERVIEWER NAME
INTERVIEWER TITLE
COMPANY
ADDRESS
CITY, ST ZIP

RE: Interview Follow Up

Dear INTERVIEWER NAME:

Please allow me to thank you for my interview on DAY, MONTH YEAR.

Given my unique experience and qualifications, I am excited about the prospect of a career at COMPANY NAME. Having learned even more about your organizations mission, culture, and accomplishments, we seem like an ideal match. I am eager to be offered the privilege of proving that to you.

If I can facilitate your decision-making process with additional information, then I would certainly welcome the opportunity to meet with you again.

Sincerest regards,
YOUR NAME



ACCEPTING THE OFFER
SECTION 4

IV. ACCEPTING THE OFFER

You've just verbally accepted your new position – Congratulations! Now is the time to follow through on your decision, demonstrate your commitment and professionalism, and ensure a smooth transition. Let us look at what it means to accept an offer.

1. **Prepare a written Letter of Resignation.** This should be a brief letter expressing gratitude for the opportunity, a clear indication your decision to move forward in your career and a definitive date of employment. Your Ultimate Candidate Toolkit has three sample letters for your reference.
2. **The Truth Behind Employer's Counter Offers.** Does more money, a new title, and/or different responsibilities truly resolve the reasons your resigning? Statistics say NO. Consider the motives of an employer who discounts your career decision to move on by applying pressure to stay. Read Countering the Counter Offer in the Ultimate Candidate Toolkit for more on this.
3. **Notify your additional resources that you are officially off the market.** This is an excellent opportunity to thank them for their time and assistance. It's important to deliver a clear message that you have made a definitive decision about the direction of your career and thus have finalized your search activities.
4. **Remove your resume from the Internet.** This sends a direct message to the marketplace and your new employer that your decision is final and your search is complete. You want to avoid sending unintentional mixed messages to your new employer and other resources by leaving your resume on any resume/career board.
5. **Contact your Human Resources Department.** We recommend you confirm your benefits grace periods, continuation provisions and your COBRA rights. With this information, you can make the most informed decisions on transitioning the necessary coverage to your new employer's plan.

THE DO'S AND DON'TS OF RESIGNING

DO:

- Write a professional resignation letter and hand deliver it to your immediate supervisor, with a copy given to the human resources manager
- Resign from your current position gracefully & professionally
- Give proper notice – typically two weeks
- Make the transition as easy and smooth as possible
- Offer to help in finding/training your replacement, if appropriate
- Finalize or transition all major assignments and leave a detailed progress report for your supervisor or successor
- Stay productive during your notice period
- Leave on good terms with your co-workers & supervisors whenever possible

DON'T:

- Burn any bridges by making any statements or express any opinions that you might regret later
- Say anything negative about your supervisor or co-workers, even in an exit interview
- “Check out” during your notice period – missing work, tardy, uninterested, etc...
- Feel guilty about leaving – focus on the fact that you are leaving to accept a great career opportunity
- Provide details of your new company and new opportunity
- Consider a counter offer to stay – statistics show that the 90% of employees ultimately leave the employer within 1 year of accepting a counter offer to stay, usually for the same reason they resigned in the first place

Basic Resignation Letter Outline

First Paragraph: State your intention of resigning your position and leaving the company.

Optional Second Paragraph: State your reason for resigning and your appreciation for the opportunities you have had with this employer.

Closing Paragraph: Thank your supervisor and the company and end the letter on a positive note.

SAMPLE 1: FRIENDLY & COURTEOUS RESIGNATION LETTER

DATE

RECIPIENT'S NAME

COMPANY NAME

ADDRESS

ADDRESS

Dear [Recipient's name]:

Please accept this letter as my formal notice of resignation from [Company name], effective [date, two weeks from date above]. The associations I've made during my employment here will truly be memorable for years to come.

I trust the traditional two-week notice is sufficient to transition my responsibilities and commence the process of identifying a replacement. I am happy to assist in the training and transition of my replacement.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to work here.

Sincerely,

[Sign here]

[Your name, title]

cc [Names for copies]

SAMPLE 2: FORMAL & GRATEFUL RESIGNATION LETTER

DATE

RECIPIENT'S NAME

COMPANY NAME

ADDRESS

ADDRESS

Dear [Recipient's name]:

Please accept this letter as my notice of resignation, effective [date].

This was not an easy decision, as I am grateful for the rewarding employment I've had with [Company name]. Yet following many days of careful consideration, my decision is final and I appreciate your support in this career move.

Sincere thanks and best wishes for the future,

[Sign here]

[Your name, title]

cc [Names for copies]

SAMPLE 3: PROFESSIONAL

DATE

RECIPIENT'S NAME

COMPANY NAME

ADDRESS

ADDRESS

Dear [Recipient's name]:

Please accept this letter as my formal resignation from [Company name].

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for helping to make this a rewarding and educational experience. I very much appreciated your support and encouragement during my time at [Company name].

Please understand that I have made my decision after considerable thought. An exceptional opportunity presented itself that will significantly enhance my career and assist me in achieving my goals.

I am therefore resigning from [Company name] effective two weeks from today. In the interim, it will be a pleasure to work with you and the team to provide a smooth transfer of my duties.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to work and grow here at [Company name]. I wish you and the company continued success.

Sincerely,

[Sign here]

[Your name, title]

cc [Names for copies]

COUNTERING THE COUNTER OFFER

The Truth Behind Counter Offers

Consider what is at stake when your present employer begs you to stay and bribes you with money, titles, and/or different responsibilities.

Most Important: You should know that statistics compiled by the National Employment Association claim that over 80% of those people who elected to accept a counter offer with their present employer are no longer with their employer six months later, and nearly 90% of people leave within twelve months.

If they entice you with MONEY...

First, ask yourself: if I were worth a certain salary yesterday, then why am I suddenly worth more now, after I have given two weeks notice? Did my value to the company suddenly increase overnight? Perhaps it is not your worth that's the issue, but that it is cheaper to give you a raise than it is to replace you immediately.

Consider that your present employer could be merely "buying time" with a raise until they can locate your replacement. Suppose you were given an annual raise as a counter offer of \$12,000, then 60 days later they find your replacement. The actual cost to them is only \$2000 and they saved the cost of a temporary employee or consultant and the added training cost of that person.

The raise they are offering you now could simply be the increase you are scheduled to get with your next review. You should really ask yourself, is money the #1 reason I am

looking for a new job/career in the first place? If it is not your #1 reason for making a change, then focus on what is. Money follows top performance, and top performance follows the right opportunity.

REPERCUSSIONS of accepting a counter offer...

Do not become a statistic! Does a counter offer really offset the advantages of the new opportunity that looked so favorable when you accepted it? You could become a statistic.

Although they would never tell you this, employers often feel as though they have been betrayed or even blackmailed, and that their only recourse is to offer you a raise and/or additional responsibilities when you announced your decision to leave. Understand that now your every move will now be scrutinized as their trust level in you has changed. You are out of the inner circle now. The possibility of promotion is now limited as a company is less likely to risk giving significant responsibility to someone who was previously committed to leaving.

Should the company experience an economic down turn, do not be surprised to be one of the first to be downsized. You indicated your intention to leave, so it is only natural that you or your position would be eliminated first. By accepting a counter offer, you are indirectly showing your peers and your own staff that you can get what you want by simply resigning, or as they see it... threatening to leave.

The largest repercussion for accepting a counter offer and going back on your word and written agreement is that you have effectively smeared your name and trust with those involved in your search. Everyone will remember that you went against your word and written agreement. Additionally, you lose a valuable career resource in your Recruiter, and those you interviewed with.

We strongly urge you to carefully think about all the hidden truths surrounding counter offers. It is your career – your livelihood – your relationships. One imprudent mistake at this time could be very costly in anyone's career and turn you into a statistic.

