Guidelines for Writing an Effective Resume

A résumé (also spelled "resume") is a marketing document outlining your education, skills, and experience. It creates the first impression for potential employers, so a polished and compelling presentation is crucial. Here's why your résumé matters:

- **Stand out from the crowd**: With limited time per application, employers quickly scan for qualifications. A well-formatted resume with strong keywords will grab their attention.
- **Showcase your value**: Highlight your skills and experience in a way that effectively communicates your fit for the role.
- **Open the door to opportunity**: Secure that interview! By demonstrating your professionalism and qualifications, you increase your chances of landing a "Let's chat" opportunity.

Remember: Every detail counts. Ensure your résumé is free of typos, uses clear formatting, and targets the specific job requirements.

Types of Résumés

There are different types of résumés, and the best format depends on your specific situation. The two most common formats are chronological and skills-based. These styles may also be combined to create a hybrid version.

Chronological Résumés

A **chronological résumé** format showcases your career progression, highlighting how your skills and responsibilities have increased over time. Typically, the chronological résumé is the most familiar type of résumé. As the name implies, this format presents a history of your work/education accomplishments in reverse chronological order (latest first). This can be particularly beneficial for demonstrating your ability to take on more complex tasks or leadership roles.

- Consider a chronological résumé if you have a particularly strong and relevant work history.
- You have been working for some time and are seeking a job in the same or similar field.
- You are pursuing a career that is directly related to your background and/or major.

Skills-Based Résumés

Skills-based résumés prioritize showcasing your transferable skills and abilities. They typically organize these skills into clear categories (e.g., Technical Skills, Soft Skills) for easy scanning. While this approach effectively minimizes employment gaps, the less traditional structure can sometimes make it challenging for Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) to automatically parse your work experience and achievements. Résumés with separate work experience sections or those

weaving experience descriptions into the skills section may require additional tailoring to ensure ATS compatibility.

Chronological and Skills-Based Hybrid Résumés

The **hybrid résumé** incorporates elements of both chronological and skill-based formats. Consider these factors:

- **Your experience**: If your experience aligns with your target job, a chronological résumé can showcase your growth. If your experience is more varied, a skills-based or combination style might be used.
- **Career goals**: If you're changing careers, both chronological and skills-based résumés can highlight transferable skills.
- **Employment dates matter**: Many of the online Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) that companies use require dates to correctly evaluate a résumé. If you create a résumé style that separates your duties from your roles, your experience and skills may not be evaluated correctly.

Summary Section

The Summary section of a résumé, also sometimes called a Professional Profile or Professional Highlights, is a concise overview placed at the top of your résumé. It's essentially a mini-elevator pitch that quickly grabs the employer's attention and highlights your most relevant qualifications for the specific job you're applying for.

How to Write a Summary Section

A strong Summary section in your résumé should include a compelling mix of the following elements, tailored to the specific job you're applying for:

1. **Your Title or Role**: Briefly state your current or target job title (e.g., Marketing Manager, Software Engineer).
2. **Years of Experience**: Mention your relevant experience level (e.g., 5+ years in marketing communications).
3. **Key Skills**: Highlight 2-3 of your most relevant skills that directly align with the job requirements (e.g., social media marketing, content creation, campaign management).
4. **Achievements** (Optional, but impactful): If possible, quantify a single achievement using a strong action verb and a metric to showcase your impact (e.g., "Increased website traffic by 20% through targeted SEO campaigns").

Here's an example of a Strong Summary:

Digital Marketing Specialist with 7+ years of experience in social media marketing, content creation, and email marketing campaigns. Increased website traffic by 20% through targeted SEO strategies.

Benefits of Quantified Achievements:

Including a quantified achievement adds credibility and demonstrates the value you bring to the table. It shows the employer the tangible results you've achieved in previous roles.

However, quantification isn't always possible: If quantifiable achievements are difficult for your specific role or experience, focus on highlighting relevant skills and how you've applied them in impactful ways. Here's a Summary example without a quantified achievement:

Public Relations Specialist with 5 years of experience crafting media pitches, managing client relationships, and building positive brand reputation. Secured media placements in top-tier publications for multiple clients.

Here are some key things to remember about a Summary section:

- **Length:** Keep it brief, typically 2-4 sentences, no more than 5 lines.
- **Content:** Focus on your key strengths, skills, and achievements that align with the job description.
- **Keywords:** Include relevant keywords from the job description to improve searchability by Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS).
- **Action verbs:** Use strong action verbs to showcase your accomplishments.
- **Impact:** Briefly mention the impact you made in previous roles (e.g., increased sales by 15%).

Write your Summary draft below:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

The Work Experience Section

Crafting a compelling work history for your résumé requires showcasing your achievements and impact, not just listing tasks.

- **Focus on Achievements**: Go beyond just listing duties. Highlight what you accomplished in each role.
- **Quantify Results** (whenever possible): Use numbers and metrics to showcase the impact you made (e.g., "Increased sales by 15%").

Action Verbs. Start each bullet point with a strong action verb that describes your initiative and contribution (e.g., "Developed," "Managed," "Spearheaded").

- Tailor to Job Description: Align your achievements and skills mentioned in your work history with the requirements of the specific job you're applying for.
- Specific Examples: Provide specific examples to illustrate your accomplishments. This makes your resume more impactful and believable.

Here's an example of a weak work history entry:

ABC Company, *Marketing Assistant* (5/2019-9/2023)
- Assisted with social media posts.
- Managed email campaigns.
- Contributed to marketing projects.

Here's how to improve it:

ABC Company, *Marketing Assistant* (5/2019-9/2021)
- Created and implemented engaging social media content calendars, resulting in a 20% increase in follower engagement.
- Managed email marketing campaigns for lead generation, achieving a 15% conversion rate.
- Contributed to the successful launch of a new product line by creating award-winning marketing materials.

By focusing on achievements, impact, and tailoring the Summary to the job description, you can transform your work history into a compelling narrative that showcases your value as a candidate.

Work Experience. Start with the most recent employer first (reverse chronological order).

1. Last job title held: _____

Name of Employer: _____

City, State: _____Dates (month/year): _____ / _____ to _____ / _____

List 3 to 5 job accomplishments, quantifying whenever possible:

1. _____

_____

2. _____

_____

3. _____

_____

4. _____

2. Job title held: _____

Name of Employer: _____

City, State: _____Dates (month/year): _____ / _____ to _____ / _____

List 3 to 4 job accomplishments:

1. _____

_____

2. _____

_____

3. _____

_____

4. _____

3. Job title held: _____

Name of Employer: _____

City, State: _____Dates (month/year): _____ / _____ to _____ / _____

List 3 to 4 job accomplishments, quantifying whenever possible:

1. _____

_____

2. _____

_____

3. _____

_____

Education and Advanced Training. Start with the highest level of education or training:

School name: _____

City/State: _____

Degree or certificate name: _____

Did you graduate? Yes _____ No _____ If yes, month and year: _____ / _____

Additional school's name: _____

City/State: _____

Degree or certificate name: _____

Did you graduate? Yes _____ No _____ If yes, month and year: _____ / _____

Certifications (List any relevant industry certifications that you hold):

_____

_____

_____

_____

Special Skills (examples – computer programs, foreign languages, etc.):

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Community Leadership or Professional Affiliations

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____