

The Targeted Resumé

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This is the fourth article in our Career Zone, "Career Search" series and follows: "Know Yourself" (September), "Digging for Data-Narrowing Your Options" (October) and "Goal Setting" (November).

NOW that you are aware of the skills and attributes you offer an employer, have researched the types of companies that fit your values, and are clear about the parameters of the job you are seeking, you are ready to write your resumé.

Incorporating all you have learned will enable you to prepare a highly effective "Targeted Resumé" to help boost your career search. A targeted resumé is structured to respond to the requirements of the industry or company you are aiming to attract by aligning your skills, attributes, and experiences so companies can quickly recognize you have what they want and will interview you to learn more about what you can offer.

To achieve this end result, treat your resumé as your marketing brochure. Like a commercial for any product, it needs to be shaped to emphasize your most powerful features (attributes and qualifications), the benefits you offer your target market (employers) and effectively distinguish you from the competition.

There are a number of effective layouts for resúmes – no single format fits all



situations. They may be chronological or functional. Chronological resúmes present your experience in reverse chronological order, while functional types focus on professional background by first presenting skills, accomplishments and expertise crafted to fit the job. There are also specific purposes for using each. The chronological resumé highlights education, training and work experience, demonstrating progress, while the functional resumé emphasizes accomplishments, results and is recommended when there are gaps in work history or if there is a need to

strategically position yourself for a job. Regardless of what style you choose, a successful resumé must emphasize the key competencies and characteristics you will bring to the job, be accomplishment and results based, and demonstrate action and motivation.

Critical elements for all resúmes:

- **Heading:** professional in appearance, clearly identifying your name and how you can be reached
- **Objective:** forward-looking, clarifying where you want to go in your career¹
- **Profile:** provides a quick summary of who you are (skills, attributes, experience) helping the reader focus on your career objectives and major capabilities
- **Key words:** 5-7 words that capture your strengths for scanning technology
- **Education and training:** including courses and marks, degrees, diplomas or designations obtained, the educational institution and the year (to be) completed
- **Work/Volunteer experience:** employers, positions, and dates, the scope of the work and accomplishment statements
- **Professional and Community Affiliations**

When communicating your work experience it is critical to develop action statements focusing on the steps you have taken and the results you have achieved. Simply listing your job duties will not position you attractively to any employer. Beginning each accomplishment statement with a verb in the past tense (e.g., developed, created, organized...) is one way to leave the reader with a sense of what you have done.

Job objectives should be used with caution. They are most effective when undergoing a job change. Otherwise incorporate this information into the profile and/or cover letter

Tips and Checklist for your resumé

- ✓ Name, address, telephone number(s), and e-mail
- ✓ Visually appealing (white space but not sparse), readable
- ✓ Dates to the right -- only years unless inclusion of months clarifies an important point
- ✓ Accomplishment-based statements
- ✓ All information relates to work target
- ✓ No personal pronouns or abbreviations
- ✓ Appropriate technical jargon
- ✓ Take out "References available upon request"
- ✓ Include optional sections if they help your case: Travel, Languages, Affiliations, and Interests...
- ✓ Two pages maximum--one page is sometimes sufficient--check with the employer
- ✓ Proof read for typos, spelling, and grammar – ask someone else to edit
- ✓ Track where it's been distributed

Prepare a generic resumé and incorporate your research and strategic thinking as you adapt it to each role you are targeting. The "targeted resumé" purposefully addresses the needs of the hiring company, demonstrates to the employer that you understand and know how to do the job, and are a good fit. To do this, put yourself in the place of the reader, consider the industry or company, the skills and attributes they value in an employee, who you want to impress, and what experiences, strengths, and training you have that demonstrates how you meet their requirements.

Be both honest and astute – honest with the contents (it does not pay to exaggerate or be deceitful about your background), but astute regarding the substance of your resumé to position yourself to get the results you want. Give your resumé the time and effort it requires and be aware it will provide the interviewer with a guideline for the questions you will be asked. Be certain this is a resumé you're proud to send, that it will get noticed for all the right reasons and remember to make every point count! jjo

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