

Resume Formatting 101

There is no *right* way to organize your resume. Different formats create different effects - and a different picture of you! Determine which format (Chronological, Functional or Combination) will put you in the best light.

Chronological Resume

In the chronological resume, job history is organized sequentially, with the most recent job listed first. Job titles and employers are emphasized and duties and accomplishments are described in detail.

Use the chronological format if:

- you have an impressive list of recent employers and/or job titles
- your job history shows progress
- you are staying in the same career field

Don't use the chronological format if:

- you have changed employers frequently and/or have gaps in your employment
- you don't want to emphasize your age
- you are changing career fields

Functional Resume

Functional resumes highlight skills and accomplishments developed through work, academic and community experiences. This approach lets you group your education, experience and activities into categories that support your job objectives.

Use the functional resume if:

- you have a variety of unrelated work experiences
- you want to market skills and experiences gained through academic coursework or volunteering
- you are changing career fields

Don't use the functional resume if:

- you have little work or leadership experience
- you are entering a traditional field (education, government, etc.) where employment history is important
- you want to emphasize your career growth

Combination Resume

The combination format merges the direct approach of the chronological format while stressing skills like the functional format. This format is great if your experience is limited, widely varied or not clearly related to your job objective.

The initial look employers will give your resume will be quick, so no matter what resume format you decide to use, be sure to put the most important points first. Craft the right resume, and it will get you noticed!

Building the Perfect Resume

A good resume is vital. It's your calling card to a prospective employer - one that lays out your qualifications and *hopefully* gets you a job interview. Remember, most employers will spend less than five minutes initially reviewing your resume. Follow these guidelines to make sure your resume gets you noticed!

Be sure to include these basics:

- **Contact information:** Full name, phone number, permanent address, e-mail address.
- **Education:** School, degree, date of completion, honors, special course work. If you're still in school, provide your expected date of completion.
- **Experience:** In addition to work history, include relevant non-professional experience, such as internships, extracurricular activities and significant volunteer work.
- **Skills:** List any computer systems, office equipment and software programs you are experienced with, as well as particular office skills (shorthand, typing speed, etc.).
- **Other categories:** *If they are relevant*, include publications, awards, leadership positions or other notable achievements.

There are many different ways to organize your resume. The most basic formats include:

- **Chronological:** To emphasize your work history, list your jobs and activities, beginning with your most recent experiences.
- **Functional:** To emphasize your skill sets, group your experiences under categorical headings, such as *Leadership* or *Technology Support*.

The key is to pick a format that presents your achievements most effectively - as well as being easy to read and comprehend. See below for samples of a number of resume formats.

Tips for a Winning Resume:

- **Keep it brief.** Limit your resume to one page. Instead of paragraphs, use bullet-pointed lists.
- **Provide meaningful descriptions of your experiences.** When detailing your job history, use short sentences or fragments to demonstrate your relevant experience.
- **Use strong action words** ("*developed and implemented* a new filing system"; "*created* two new membership programs").
- **Use formatting to help you out.** Capitalize and use boldface, italics or underlining to help organize the information.
- **Proofread.** Use spell-check, double-check your contact information, and make sure your formatting is consistent. Ask a friend or family member to proofread it as well.
- **Custom fit your resume.** Revise your resume for each job application to make sure it fits the opportunity at hand.

The final test: Take a look at your resume from arm's distance. Is it confusing and text-heavy? Or is it easy to find the information you need? Do whatever is needed to make your resume "reader-friendly."

Powerful Words for a Winning Resume

Whether it be your leadership skills, your ability to work with people or your creative talents, you need to use the right language to convey your credentials. Use active words like these to give your resume a powerful punch:

Verbs for Resumes

Here is a sample of action verbs that will be useful to you. Go through the list and see which ones you can use to make your resume more active and action oriented.

Accelerated
Achieved
Adapted
Administered
Advanced to
Analyzed
Applied
Approved
Arranged
Assembled
Assisted
Attained
Bought
Budgeted
Built
Chaired
Completed
Composed
Conceived
Conducted
Contracted
Controlled
Converted
Coordinated
Correlated
Created
Decided
Designed
Developed
Directed
Discovered
Displayed
Doubled
Edited
Eliminated
Employed
Enacted
Engineered
Enlarged
Established
Estimated

Evaluated
Examined
Executed
Exhibited
Expanded
Financed
Forecasted
Formed
Founded
Governed
Guided
Halved
Handled
Implemented
Improved
Influenced
Inspected
Installed
Instituted
Instructed
Introduced
Instructed
Integrated
Introduced
Invented
Investigated
Keynoted
Lectured
Led
Licensed
Located
Maintained
Managed
Manufactured
Marketed
Maximized
Motivated
Negotiated
Obtained
Operated
Originated

Perceived
Perfected
Performed
Pioneered
Placed
Procured
Progressed
Prompted
Proposed
Proved
Published
Reconciled
Reduced
Regulated
Reinforced
Reorganized
Reported
Researched
Reshaped
Resolved
Revamped
Reviewed
Revised
Saved
Served
Simplified
Sold
Sorted
Stimulated
Strengthened
Structured
Supported
Succeeded
Systematized
Tutored
Verified
Wrote

Nouns for Resumes

Here is a sample of nouns that will be useful to you. Go through the list and see which ones you can use to make your resume powerful.

| | | |
|---------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Acuity | Growth | Program |
| Approaches | Handbook | Projects |
| Art | Help | Recommendation |
| Assignment | Human resources | Records |
| Attachments | Ideas | Relations |
| Capabilities | Information | Reports |
| Catalog | Innovation | Requirements |
| Change | Input | Research |
| Charts | Investigation | Resolutions |
| Communication | Machines | Resources |
| Competition | Materials | Response |
| Conclusion | Methods | Self-starter |
| Controls | Operation | Service |
| Cost | Output | Solutions |
| Criteria | Performance | Sources |
| Data | Plan | Specifications |
| Designs | Policies | Standards |
| Duties | Precision | Strategy |
| Events | Presentations | Structure |
| Facts | Principle | Survey |
| Findings | Priorities | System |
| Fixtures | Problems | Technique |
| Framework | Process | Treatment |
| Goals | Procedures | Variables |
| Groups | Product | |

Adverbs and Adjectives for Resumes

These words describe how you do things. Go through the list and see which ones you can use to make your resume accurately reflect you and the way you do things.

| | | |
|-------------|--------------|---------------|
| Accurate | Experience | Penetrating |
| Adept | Extensively | Perceptive |
| Astute | Firm | Pioneering |
| Aware | Foresighted | Quick |
| Broad | Greatly | Readily |
| Calm | Highly | Reliable |
| Challenging | High-level | Repeatedly |
| Competent | Honest | Respected |
| Concerned | Imaginative | Responsible |
| Contagious | Improved | Sensitive |
| Creative | Innovative | Significant |
| Dedicated | Instrumental | Sophisticated |
| Dependable | Leading | Strongly |
| Diplomatic | Lifelong | Successfully |
| Discrete | Masterly | Tactful |
| Diverse | Natural | Talented |
| Driving | New | Trained |
| Dynamic | Objective | Uncommon |
| Easily | Open-minded | Unique |
| Effectively | Original | Unusual |
| Exceptional | Outgoing | Versatile |
| Expert | Outstanding | Vigorous |

Sample of a chronological resume

Kelly Williams
487 South Birch Street
Chicago, IL 60561
(773) 555-3554

Objective

To obtain a position in retail management that utilizes my skills in sales and marketing.

Education

B.A., Psychology, Marquette University, May 1998

Experience

Sales Manager, The Gap, Chicago, IL
1998-present

Managed three departments with annual sales of approximately \$7 million. Hired, trained and supervised a culturally diverse workforce of 8 full-time and 11 part-time employees.

Assistant Buyer, Crate & Barrel, Chicago, IL
1995-1997

Maintained inventory levels for two departments with annual sales of \$4 million. Developed more competitive system of vendor relations that reduced product costs by 7 percent. Worked closely with department managers in maintaining appropriate inventory levels for best-selling items.

Salesperson, Bath and Body Works, Milwaukee, WI
1993-1995

Responsible for improving sales in three departments with annual sales of \$3 million. Reorganized displays and instituted new customer service policies for improved customer relations. Sales initiatives resulted in a ten percent increase in annual sales. Awarded 'Employee of the Year.'

Extra-curricular Activities

Team leader, Alternative Spring Break
1994

Coordinated trip and volunteer efforts to work with the homeless in Philadelphia, PA.

America's Best
1993

Educated grade-school children on the dangers of drugs and alcohol.

References

Available upon request

Sample of a functional resume

Hugh Michaels
2389 Maple Drive
Baltimore, MD 21224
(410) 555-4573

Summary of Qualifications

Extensive and diverse health care experience in both primary care and research hospital settings. Knowledgeable of current regulatory standards and biomedical technology. Strong background in designing, implementing and directing patient care programs. Experienced with hospital care information systems.

Administration

- Oversaw in-service educational programs.
- Acted as liaison between medical and nursing staffs.
- Administered all operations for in-patient and ambulatory patient care units.
- Participated in auditing medical records for compliance with accreditation standards.
- Coordinated patient visitation volunteer program at University of Minnesota.

Research

- Incorporated findings into clinical applications.
- Compiled data for research studies.
- Collaborated in development of clinical investigations.
- Assisted in biomedical research at the University of Minnesota lab.

Health Care

- Planned, implemented and evaluated holistic care for diverse patient populations.
- Designed and directed teaching of hospital care information systems.

Education

B.S., Nursing, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN, May 1997

Employment

Crisp Regional Hospital, Cordele, GA
Clinical Nurse, January 1997-present

References available upon request

Sample of a combination resume

Peter Kay
239 Oak Road
Los Angeles, CA 91776
(202) 555-8236

Objective

To obtain a position that allows me to utilize my skills as a Web designer and HTML programmer.

Relevant Skills

- Programming languages:
C++, Cobol, HTML and PERL
- Systems:
Apple, IBM and UNIX
- Software:
Adobe Acrobat, Aldus Pagemaker, Adobe Photoshop, Corel Photopaint, Microsoft Word, QuarkXPress and Windows 98.

Experience

- Develop, design, script and program Web pages.
- Strong background in computer systems, hardware and software.
- Ability to develop and implement databases to aid in organization.

Employment

HTML Programmer
Myrtle Public Relations, Los Angeles, CA
November 1997- present

Graphic Designer
Myrtle Public Relations, Los Angeles, CA
May 1997-November 1997

Honors

Deans List
Alpha Lambda Beta
National Merit Scholar

Education

University of California in Los Angeles
BA in Communications, May 1999