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# Résumé tips for job seekers

The purpose of a résumé is not to get you a job. It is designed to interest the recruiter enough so that he/she invites you in for an interview.

Everyone's background is different. Because of this, there are different types of résumés. No one type will fit everyone's background and history to a tee. So which one is the best for you?



# Chronological Résumé

This is the most popular résumé format and works best for people with a solid, logical job history who are able to tie their past employment to the open position. It contains an objective and/or summary statement, a chronological listing of all your employers with specific (hopefully quantifiable) related accomplishments.

To create a chronological résumé, gather the following information:

1. Past employers with start and end dates (generally going back no more than 10 years)
2. Specific, quantifiable accomplishments associated with each position
3. Educational history, including continuing education or relevant coursework
4. Specific skills
5. Certifications, honors, awards and special achievements

Using that information, create a document with these sections:

## Contact Information

- ✓ Include your first and last name, mailing address, phone number and email address.

## Objective or Summary

- ✓ Describe how you are perfectly suited for the open position. Make it as concise and targeted as possible, so customize it for each job for which you apply.
- ✓ Many advise against an objective statement, but some hiring managers expect to see one. To decide whether or not to include one on your résumé, consider your industry and field. More progressive companies or industries might view inclusion of the objective as an indication that you're not keeping up with the trends. More traditional companies or industries might see the missing objective as an oversight.

## Professional Experience

- ✓ List your employers (starting with most recent). Include dates of hire and separation, starting and ending job titles and major accomplishments.
- ✓ Provide more than the typical list of job duties and responsibilities. Highlight quantifiable achievements and the benefits you provided for past employers.
- ✓ Quantify, quantify, quantify. Most (if not all) companies value workers who enhance profits and save time and money.

## Education

- ✓ This depends upon how recently you graduated and how relevant your studies were to your field of work. Students/recent grads can include GPA (if 3.0 or higher), honors and major areas of study. Job seekers with a longer work history can list as little as the names of educational institutions and degree(s) awarded.

## Certifications, honors, awards and special achievements

- ✓ Include any additional relevant experiences. For example, if you have participated in professional development/certification programs, relevant civic activities, or have received special recognition.

## Do not include the following:

- ✓ Personal information related to age, ethnicity, marital status, children, religious affiliation or physical appearance. Make sure your email address does not inadvertently disclose personal information.
- ✓ Salary information
- ✓ Handwritten changes or updates
- ✓ Any mention of references - There is no need to say that "references are available upon request". Provide a list of references on a separate sheet, if asked.
- ✓ Any irrelevant information

**\*NOTE: This and all other included samples are meant to be guides and not templates. Formatting a résumé effectively through the use of white space, tabs, bold and italic font goes a long way in making your résumé stand out.**

## Chronological Résumé –SAMPLE \*

**Name**  
**Address**  
**City, State, Zip**  
**Phone**  
**Email**

## JOB OBJECTIVE

Very concisely state what job you would like next.

## SUMMARY

- Write three or four bullet statements that summarize why you would be good at your job objective. Each statement should be no longer than two lines. Think elevator pitch.
- Your statements should highlight how you are perfectly suited for the open position.
- Prioritize the statements in this section so the most relevant one comes first.

**NOTE: For paragraph format, see "Combination Résumé" sample.**

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

**Company Name, City, State 20xx-present**  
**Job Title**

- Write two or more bullet statements about the work you performed on this job and what you learned or accomplished that's relevant to your job objective.
- Quantify results of your accomplishments when possible and appropriate: refer to how you positively affected the organization. Try to think in terms of revenue generated or costs saved.
- Mention on-the-job awards or commendations you received that relate to your job objective.

**Company Name, City, State 20xx-xx**  
**Job Title**

- Write two or more bullet statements about the work you performed on this job and what you learned or accomplished that's relevant to your job objective. Follow the tips mentioned above.
- Prioritize the statements under each Job Title section so the most relevant one comes first.

## EDUCATION

Name of School (list the City and State if desired)  
Degree, Major (GPA and year of graduation are optional but may be asked for by some employers)

## CERTIFICATION, HONORS, SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENTS

(Optional) – Certifications Earned, Organization, Date



# Functional Résumé

The goal of a functional résumé is to quickly convince hiring managers that your transferable skill sets and competencies make you worth an interview. This is done by strategically grouping key skills and qualifications into different categories. By focusing on skills vs. employment history, you are able to emphasize your strengths and soft-pedal.

- ✓ Gaps in your employment history
- ✓ Lack of industry knowledge
- ✓ A diverse work history.

However, be aware that functional résumés are not perfect. For example, they are not ATS (Applicant Tracking System) friendly.

To create a functional résumé, gather the following information:

1. Summary of your skill sets and/or competencies
2. List of selected achievements/experience, grouped by skill set or competency
3. Educational and/or work history
4. Certifications, honors, awards and achievements

Using that information, create a document with these sections:

## Contact Information

- ✓ Include your first and last name, mailing address, phone number and email address.

## Objective Statement

- ✓ This should show how you are perfectly suited for the open position. Make it as concise and targeted as possible, so customize it for each job for which you apply.
- ✓ Many advise against an objective statement, but some hiring managers expect to see one. To decide whether or not to include one on your résumé, consider your industry and field. More progressive companies or industries might view inclusion of the objective as an indication that you're not keeping up with the trends. More traditional companies or industries might see the missing objective as an oversight.

## Qualifications

- ✓ Summarize and highlight the skills/competencies that tell a hiring manager why you should be interviewed. Refer to your proven track record or history, using bullets for longer lists.

## Experience

- ✓ The information included here will be similar to what is listed on a chronological résumé, but you will group them by job type. Subsequent sections under "Experience" would reflect other job types regardless of employer, duration or the amount of time that has passed.
- ✓ Quantify, quantify, quantify. Highlight quantifiable achievements and the benefits you provided for past employers. Most (if not all) companies value workers who enhance profits and save time and money.

## Work History

- ✓ This section is optional but recommended. Given the résumé type, a brief list of employers with years of employment or attendance will be sufficient.

## Education

- ✓ This depends upon how recently you graduated and how relevant your studies were to your field of work. Students/recent grads can include GPA (if 3.0 or higher), honors and major areas of study. Job seekers with a longer work history can list as little as the names of educational institutions and degree(s) awarded.

## Certifications, honors, awards and special achievements

- ✓ Include any additional relevant experiences. For example, if you have participated in professional development programs, relevant civic activities, or have received special recognition.

## What not to include:

- ✓ Personal information related to age, ethnicity, marital status, children, religious affiliation or physical appearance. Make sure your email address does not inadvertently disclose personal information.
- ✓ Salary information
- ✓ Handwritten changes or updates
- ✓ Any mention of references - There is no need to say that "references are available upon request". Provide a list of references on a separate sheet, if asked.
- ✓ Any irrelevant information

Name  
Address  
City, State Zip  
Phone  
Email

## JOB OBJECTIVE

Very concisely state what job you would like to do next – in terms of career.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Write three or four bullet statements that summarize why you would be good at your job objective. Each statement should be no longer than two lines. Think elevator pitch.
- Your statements should highlight your relevant skills and qualifications. Prioritize the statements in this section so the most relevant one comes first.

NOTE: For paragraph format, see "Combination Résumé" sample.

## PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### Experience/Key Skill

- Write two or more bulleted statements about employment or volunteer activities in which you used this skill.
- For example, if you've had multiple customer-facing positions, you would create a "key skill" called "Customer Service" and create a bulleted list of your service related accomplishments or experiences.
- Quantify as many results as possible and when appropriate. Mention awards or commendations you received that required this skill.
- If you used this skill to solve problems, briefly describe the problems and results.

### Experience/Key Skill

- Write two or more bullet statements, following the tips mentioned under the first Key Skill section.
- Prioritize the statements under each Key Skill section so the most relevant one comes first.

## WORK HISTORY

Company Name, City, State, 20xx-present

### Job Title

- List all jobs for the last 10 years, or (if relevant) the last 15+ years.

## EDUCATION

Name of School (list the City and State if desired)

Degree, Major (GPA and year of graduation are optional but may be asked for by some employers)

## CERTIFICATION, HONORS, SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENTS

(Optional) – Certifications Earned, Organization, Date

# Combination Résumé

If the skills and experience that best support your career goals are not the most recent, the combination résumé can help highlight your strong points while also providing detailed employment history. A combination résumé leads with a description of functional skills and related qualifications – just like in the functional résumé, followed by a reverse-chronological employment history – just like in the chronological résumé.

To create a combination résumé, gather the following:

1. Summary of your qualifications
2. List of professional accomplishments
3. Detailed employment history including companies, dates, positions and responsibility
4. Education
5. Specific relevant skills, certifications and/or licenses

Using that information, create a document with these sections:

## Contact Information

✓ Include your first and last name, mailing address, phone number and email address.

## Objective Statement

✓ This should show how you are perfectly suited for the open position. Make it as concise and targeted as possible, so customize it for each job for which you apply.

✓ Many advise against an objective statement, but some hiring managers expect to see one. To decide whether or not to include one on your résumé, consider your industry and field. More progressive companies or industries might view inclusion of the objective as an indication that you're not keeping up with the trends. More traditional companies or industries might see the missing objective as an oversight.

## Qualifications

✓ Summarize and highlight the skills/competencies that tell a hiring manager why you should be interviewed. Refer to your proven track record or history, using bullets for longer lists. The point is to fully explain, but keep it brief. Think of an elevator pitch.

## Professional Accomplishments

✓ Use a bulleted list to make point-by-point highlights of your accomplishment. This sections needs to provide enough detail to highlight your value without being too long.

✓ Quantify, quantify, quantify. Highlight quantifiable achievements and the benefits you provided for past employers. Most (if not all) companies value workers who enhance profits and save time and money.

## Experience or Work History

✓ The information included here is a more concise version of what you would include on a chronological résumé. List past employers in reverse chronological order without as much detail around experience and accomplishments. Include the following for each position held:

- Company Name
- Job Title
- Location
- Beginning and ending dates of employment
- Job duties and responsibilities

## Education

✓ This depends upon how recently you graduated and how relevant your studies were to your field of work. Students/recent grads can include GPA (if 3.0 or higher), honors and major areas of study. Job seekers with a longer work history can list as little as the names of educational institutions and degree(s) awarded.

## Specific relevant skills, certifications and/or licenses

✓ Include any additional relevant experiences. For example, if you have participated in professional development programs, relevant civic activities, or have received special recognition.

## What not to include:

- ✓ Personal information related to age, ethnicity, marital status, children, religious affiliation or physical appearance. Make sure your email address does not inadvertently disclose personal information.
- ✓ Salary information
- ✓ Handwritten changes or updates
- ✓ Any mention of references - There is no need to say that "references are available upon request". Provide a list of references on a separate sheet, if asked.
- ✓ Any irrelevant information

## Combination Résumé –SAMPLE \*

Name  
Address  
City, State Zip  
Phone  
Email

## OBJECTIVE

Very concisely state what type of job you would like next – in terms of career.

## SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

Summarize your qualifications across all positions and industries without going into too much detail. Combine them into a polished statement. (NOTE: to see this bulleted form, please review the chronological and/or functional résumé)

### *For example:*

*Results-oriented, high-energy, hands-on professional, with a successful record of accomplishments in the software, hardware and wireless industries. Go on to craft a statement that includes your overall qualifications without going into too much detail. Think of this as an elevator pitch.*

## PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Use bullet format to make point-by-point highlights of your accomplishments. This should provide more detail without being too long. Quantify, quantify, quantify.

### *For example:*

*Developed core piece of the new platform that increased operating speed by 20%. Think about the things you've accomplished. Remember the SAM method (Saved, Achieved, Made) and list what you've done in these areas. If you haven't "Saved" your company or project any money, time or anything else, it's okay not to include that. Just use this as a guide.*

## WORK HISTORY

List all jobs with titles, company names and dates of employment.

### *For example:*

- Software Developer, XYZ Company, Oakland, CA: 2004 - 2008
- Programmer, ABC Corporation Oakland, CA: 2003 - 2004

## EDUCATION

Name of School (list the City and State if desired)  
Degree, Major (GPA and year of graduation are optional but may be asked for by some employers)

## CERTIFICATION, HONORS, SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENTS

(Optional) – Certifications Earned, Organization, Date



# Mini Résumé

A mini résumé is essentially a business card with your contact information, headline, career highlights and (ideally) a link to a complete online résumé. Its purpose is to support your professional networking efforts at a moment's notice; it should not be used for a formal, application process.

## It is designed to answer three basic questions:

1. Who are you?
2. What position do you want?
3. What qualifications do you have?

Your card design should be simple, tasteful and professional. Do not include too much information – a business card full of tiny, unreadable type and no blank space won't help your networking efforts.

Carry your mini résumés with you everywhere, just as you would business cards. Networking opportunities can occur anytime, anywhere.

To create a mini résumé, gather the following:

1. Your contact information
2. List of career highlights and/or accomplishments
3. Education
4. Special Skills – if applicable

## What not to include:

- ✓ Personal information related to age, ethnicity, marital status, children, or religious affiliation or physical appearance. Make sure your email address does not inadvertently disclose personal information.
- ✓ Salary information
- ✓ Handwritten changes or updates
- ✓ Any mention of references - for example, there is no need to say that references are available upon request.
- ✓ Any irrelevant information

## Information for the front of the card should include:

- ✓ Your Name
- ✓ Headline (Job Title, Profession or Field)
- ✓ Email Address
- ✓ Phone Number

## Information for the back of the card should include:

- ✓ The 3 career highlights or accomplishments you feel are most likely to get the attention of a hiring manager, quantified.
- ✓ Your relevant education background, including place of study, degrees and subjects studied.
- ✓ Special skills listing.
- ✓ A QR code or online address directing people to your full résumé or LinkedIn profile.



The front of the card/résumé ▲

▼ The back of the card/résumé



# Targeted Résumé

Your successful job search depends upon your ability to communicate your value to potential employers. While you know that your skills are transferable and your personality would be a good fit for any organization, recruiters/hiring managers do not know that. They're looking for a particular candidate who possesses every needed skill.

A targeted résumé is one that is customized to specifically highlight the experience and skills you have that relevant to the specific job for which you are applying. If you want to stand out from the crowd, you have got to present yourself as the perfect candidate for their job; a generic one-size-fits-all résumé (regardless of its type) cannot do that.

Creating a targeted résumé is not that difficult, but it does require some thinking. Start with your generic résumé and follow these steps:

## Read

Learn your audience before you can speak to them. Read the job description thoroughly and make note of all the skills, experience and certifications that are needed. Identify keywords and phrases that you can use throughout when customizing your generic résumé.

## Research

If you are submitting your résumé to an employer who does not have an advertised opening, research everything you can about the company to learn how you can benefit them as an employee. Once you determine this you can begin to customize your résumé.

## Rewrite

Adjust your résumé's language so that it complements and supports the company's initiatives and the skills/cultural requirements of the position. Some examples are:

✓ **Objective** – Leverage this to show how you are perfectly suited for the open position. Make it as concise and targeted as possible, using the keywords and phrases you highlighted in your research/reading of the job description.

✓ **Title** – Target your title. Do not leave it generic. If possible, (and appropriate) use the exact title listed in the job posting. Many people do the exact same tasks in the workplace, but because they work for different companies, they just have different titles.

✓ **Quantify** – Instead of just listing your job skills, describe the benefits and results of your performance. What challenges did you face, and how did you overcome them? How did these actions benefit the company? Quantify, quantify, quantify. Companies value workers who enhance profits and save time and money.

✓ **Job Descriptions** – These need to be edited so that they are relevant to the posting for which you are applying. Look through the tasks that you have included on your generic résumé and highlight only those that correspond to the job. A hiring manager/recruiter will only be interested in those that are relevant to his/her job posting.

## Review

Are there aspects of your experience, skills and certifications you can further emphasize or clarify? Have you used all the keywords and phrases you identified? Look for things that will clearly convey to prospective employers your strengths as a candidate for the open position.

## Feedback

It's time to get a little help from your friends. Ask people you believe will provide honest feedback to review your résumé for grammar/punctuation/spelling errors as well as content.

# Which One is for You?

The type of résumé that is best suited for you depends upon your employment history, long term career goals and immediate objective. Depending on your situation, you could have more than one type ready to go at any given time. Having a clear understanding of the different types and their purposes will help you determine which is best for you at any given opportunity.

## Chronological

Lists employment history in order beginning with your current (or most recent) position.

- **Pros:** Commonly accepted format
- **Cons:** May not highlight the most relevant experience

## Functional

Groups accomplishments by skills and experience.

- **Pros:** Puts the spotlight on relevant experience and can mask gaps in employment
- **Cons:** May cause hiring managers to be uncertain about your employment history; not ATS-friendly

## Combination

Lists skills and experience first, then lists chronological employment history.

- **Pros:** Allows you to bring your most relevant skills to the top of the page while clearly showing history
- **Cons:** Varies slightly from the most common format; can draw attention to employment gaps

## Targeted

Written to support an application for a specific job.

- **Pros:** Clearly conveys to the hiring manager how your skills and experience qualify you for their open position and communicates your interest in that specific job.
- **Cons:** Can be time consuming

## Mini

A short snapshot of your career highlights for networking purposes.

- **Pros:** Easily available to distribute at a moment's notice
- **Cons:** Must be backed up by a full résumé

\*NOTE: Sample résumés provided courtesy of Talent Scout Consulting.

