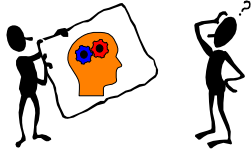


Chapter 6: The Resume

The Ol' Resume

Your resume will be extremely important to your job search campaign. Recruiters, hiring managers, boards of directors, and networking contacts will all read your resume to learn more about you. What you put in and what you leave out of your resume will determine how people view you; how they will judge your skills, your education, and even your personality. Based on what you put on that piece of paper, you will be chosen for further follow-up or eliminated from contention.



Simple or complicated?

There is a reverse kind of snobbery about resumes. People who earn less than \$45,000 a year or who have less than five years of experience out of college usually have one page resumes. Short, factual, easy to read– it says what they can do. People in this position often have great skills and experience, and are pretty easy to hire. Either they have what a company is looking for or they don't.

Similarly, candidates at the CFO level making \$180,000 and above often have one page resumes. They have had such a large amount of responsibility in their positions, that to say they are CFO of a company with \$50 million a year in sales pretty much says it all. The only

questions a recruiter will have initially is, "Have they taken a company public? Do they have good investment banker contacts? Have they worked in the software industry?" These experiences, along with a list of companies and some education details could easily fit into a one page resume and would be an impressive, discrete representation of what a person could do in a job.

Those people between these two levels have a harder time. They often have a diverse, broad background of experience that allows them more latitude in what job they pursue than the top or bottom people. This flexibility can make them seem to be all over the board, while the company is often looking for someone specific to solve specific problems. The trick for these candidates is to be extremely clear about what companies are looking for, and to be brutal about cutting out the extras from their resume. We often get clients who spend weeks and weeks redoing their resumes, trying to add more responsibilities and to make it look just right. This is a waste of time, and is often an attempt to avoid dealing with the real issue: am I hireable and desirable?

Think of your resume as a short brochure that presents you as the saleable product. List your features and benefits just like a salesperson would

list them for a product, make sure that there are no typos and that you are using a graphically pleasing format, and then spend the bulk of your time out there developing your contacts.

If the resume is not working, it might not be the fault of the resume, but of what you have to offer. Try reevaluating your skills in light of the feedback you have received from both companies, recruiters and your peers. Are your skills cutting edge? Have you achieved success in your jobs? Are you in a growth field? Are people in your job category in demand? Is there more job growth a step higher or a step lower? When the resume is not doing its job, it may be time for you to reassess and benchmark your skills and experiences, and sign up for some continuing education courses, or try to change industries.

professional ability and knowledge levels. A resume that represents your level of competence inaccurately may get you a phone screening or initial interview, but may eventually result in wasted time. You need to strike a balance between who you really are and a polished you. Sort of a “Sunday Best” you.

Don't Let Your Resume Leave Home Without...

A background summary
What you can do/want to do for a company
Your knowledge, skills, talents
Accomplishments, interesting projects
Positions held, companies, industries, technologies, platforms
Scope of responsibilities
Training and education



Your resume should accurately reflect who you are in terms of your

Here are some general resume guidelines:

Content Do's	Content Don'ts
<p>Position yourself accurately and positively.</p> <p>Include the minimum of relevant information to encourage an employer to find out more.</p> <p>List your most recent (ten years) positions in reverse chronological order. Focus on your strengths.</p> <p>Include brief descriptions of each company: size, sales volume, products, platforms, etc.</p> <p>Stress accomplishments. Include figures to quantify responsibilities and successes.</p> <p>Put education at the end unless there is a special reason to put it up front (e.g., applicant for a college teaching job.)</p>	<p>Don't include salary requirements. You don't want to over- or under-price yourself before the job is yours. (But have a very clear idea about your market worth to discuss during the interview.)</p> <p>Don't include references. Reference requests are made when there is actual hiring interest, not before.</p> <p>Don't use pronouns, abbreviations or buzzwords unless terms are widely known and accepted as in the case of RDBMS.</p> <p>Don't have someone else write your resume. (You can ask for advice, but you know yourself best and will have to defend the contents.)</p> <p>Leave out data that might result in discrimination (e.g., age, race, marital status, religion, etc.)</p> <p>Omit your photograph.</p>

Style & Format Do's	Style & Format Don'ts
<p>Use strong action words. (e.g., "designed" not "worked on formulation of...")</p> <p>Make the resume attractive to the eye.</p> <p>Use a format similar to what your peers use.</p> <p>Have two others proofread and critique your resume for accuracy and impact.</p>	<p>Don't crowd the margins or use or use excessively small type.</p> <p>Don't overdo the use of bold or underlined type. Don't make your name enormous.</p>

Types of Resumes:

Although resumes can be designed in several ways, five styles are most common:

- The **CHRONOLOGICAL** resume lists your positions in reverse order, latest first. It highlights accomplishments within each position. The advantage of the chronological resume is that it presents your background in a clear-cut, straightforward manner that enables the reader to quickly review your experience. This is the favorite resume of recruiters and hiring managers. The drawback is that any employment gaps or lack of experience will be immediately evident.
- The **FUNCTIONAL** resume allows you to focus on your accomplishments in the area in which you seek a job, and to play down any gaps in your employment history. Thus, you can draw attention away from work areas you do not wish to highlight, as well as the sequence in which you progressed. This type of resume is particularly useful when changing fields. The drawback is that it might frustrate a busy recruiter who wants things laid out simply.
- The **COMBINATION** resume is a hybrid of both the functional and chronological resumes. It is especially useful for individuals who have a very long work history because it highlights aspects that are most relevant to the desired position, as well as summarizing the career history.
- The **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY** is for high level people who want to be able to give networking contacts a fact sheet without seeming to be applying for a job. It usually focuses on how to contact the person, their education, career summary, and perhaps a list of current projects or recent companies.
- The **LETTER RESUME** can be handy to use when sending your resume to a blind newspaper ad where you want to limit the details that might exclude you from consideration. It is in a story format, with descriptions of important responsibilities and projects, but few details.

In Appendix 6a is an example of both a chronological and functional resume with the same content so that you can compare them.

We generally recommend the chronological resume unless:

- Your employment history is erratic or extremely long.
- The career change you seek requires a departure from past history or experience.
- You are attempting to return to a previous occupation.
- You have an unusual combination of functional areas and/or skills and want to emphasize this breadth rather than the linear progression of your career.



Summary and Objective Statements

Since resumes are usually seen by busy people who review them in substantial numbers, your chance to get your key message across quickly and successfully is at the very beginning of your resume or cover letter.

Your resume needs to list your skills in such an easy to read format that in five seconds a recruiter can figure out what you do. The first thing most resume readers want to know is, "What skills does this person have that I need?" One way to respond to this question is to start your resume with a summary or an objective. However, writing an objective presents the challenge of how to appear focused enough without being too narrow, yet not being so broadly positioned as to appear that you don't know what you want.



Both errors can damage your candidacy at the start. Because of this difficulty, we suggest that you put a summary statement at the top of your resume, then include a personalized objective statement in your cover letter. This allows you to customize your statement in the cover letter in response to the particular position available.

Another question the resume reader may ask is, "what type of candidate is this?" You can anticipate this question by providing a descriptive summary of yourself: This usually contains years of experience, type of environment, areas

of specialty, and brief descriptions of your most desired talents. It presents the broad picture of where you've been in a couple of sentences that either invite the reader to continue, or register a mismatch with the job or environment. Some resume readers won't bother reading a resume without a summary, because summaries save them time and speeds their judgment process.

Some candidates have multiple career objectives, all of which would be perfectly acceptable and would meet their personal needs. This often occurs when you are investigating several related career directions simultaneously. In these days of resume scanning systems, you cannot have a company physically track two resumes because their scanning software only allows one entry for each combination of name, address, etc.

So what do you do if you want Cisco Systems to consider you for both technical writer and marketing communications and technical trainer? You use one resume that identifies your core competencies, and list the particular job requisition numbers in the cover letter (which is also scanned in.) This also avoids the potential errors which can occur when using more than one resume in your in person marketing efforts.

Objective statements taken from cover letters:

- A traffic management position in the advertising business.
- A director of employment in a medium-sized company.
- A project manager in a manufacturing organization.
- A sales position in an international environment.

Compare the very succinct objective statements above with these corresponding summary statements:

- Organized, detail-oriented traffic manager with more than ten years of experience in New York based advertising agencies. Solid accomplishments in organizing work flow and scheduling staffing. Able to work under pressure. Good communication and people skills.
- An energetic, highly motivated recruiter with a fifteen year record of advancement from receptionist to manager of recruiting for non exempt and hourly staff. Skilled in interviewing, selection and training of staff, and in writing creative, productive, "help-wanted" advertisements.
- Results-oriented project manager with more than twelve years experience in the manufacturing environment. Major strengths are in the areas of Quality Control, Shop Operations, and Warehousing Supervision.
- Ten years experience in sales and marketing, including overseas and



military accounts. Proven success in major sales increases, productive business relationships, new product introductions, marketing manufacturing, sales promotions, and broker relations.

The objective and summary statements are the result of your personal assessment: of thinking through what you have to offer to the employment market, and what you think that market will be interested in.

Handling Special Content Issues

When dealing with such issues as an incomplete educational background, unusual military service, or other challenges that are particular to your background, it is important to consider your audience in order to position yourself in the most effective way.



- ☒ **NO COLLEGE DEGREE:** If you have no college degree, but make a point of saying that you attended college, you will need to be prepared to respond to questions about that in the interview. If you fall into the "Just have one or two classes left to graduate" scenario, we strongly recommend quickly signing up for those classes at a private college or junior college and getting them finished. You will feel a lot better and companies will feel better if they know you are in the process of remedying this.
- ☒ **MILITARY SERVICE:** Unless you have recent, relevant military experience that directly relates to

whatever job you are positioning yourself for, leave it off the resume but include it in the employment application. If you left the military within the last ten years and managed people or held large responsibilities, it may enhance your image. If so, include it, but describe it in a way that fits in with the corporate world.

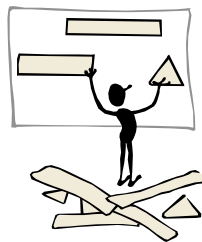
☒ **ADDING SPECIAL INFORMATION:** As you reflect on the challenges that have brought you to this point in your career, be sure to include experiences that could distinguish you from your competition and help your reader to remember you in a particularly positive way (e.g., self supporting through school.)

Your resume should be:

- Neat and clean, allowing plenty of space on the page.
- Easy to read. The size of the font should be comfortable to the eye, and the amount of information that is bold or underlined should enhance readability, not overwhelm the reader.
- Flawless – no spelling errors or typos.
- Between one and two pages in length.
- Printed on at least 25% bond paper using a word processor or an outside printer.
- On the same quality and color of paper as your cover letter.

Format Considerations

The first thing that resume readers usually notice is the overall appearance of the document. If it's sloppy, overly crowded, or full of errors, there's a good chance they won't read it because it represents you in a negative way. Naturally, you want the



appearance of your resume to invite further reading.

What Resume Scanners Look For

Resume scanners in some companies process up to 1,400 resumes per week. Once the resume is in the system,

recruiters and hiring managers will only find it if they do a key word search and your resume is pulled up. When they see it on the screen, they will give it a quick scan to see if it meets their needs. Recruiting is very costly these days, so there is not

much time for individual attention to your resume.

Cover Letters (or Please Do Not Kiss the Blarney Stone)

In **Appendix 6b** we provide examples of some nice, short cover letters guaranteed to not make anyone cringe. Just include the following:

1. You are looking for a job
2. What you do
3. Why you are interested in their company.

These cover letters when modified will work for all sorts of situations, including contacting executive recruiters. Hint:

your 30 second commercial which became the basis of your summary statement fits nicely into a cover letter.