
Tip Sheet - Resumes

Anyone can have a great looking resume!

By following these tips, you are well on your way to having a professional and effective resume. Remember there are many resources available to help you with creating this important document.

- **Attend the Resume Workshop:** Learn best practice in resume writing, get your questions answered, and begin your resume worksheet in a small group setting.
- **Use a Resume Writing Program:** We have three options in our Career Resource Centers. WinWay Resume, JobLink and Microsoft word all offer resume templates and different design and content options.
- **Work with a Career Development Facilitator:** Receive one on one support from one of our experienced staff. We are happy to help with your resume.
- **Be Prepared - Gathering Your Information:** Complete the resume worksheet before you get started. It is important to look at your background and experience to gather all the necessary information before writing your resume.

Overall Presentation

- **Use an eye pleasing font** (Times New Roman is the most popular and best received by employers)
- **Text size is important** – 12 pt. size is standard for general content. Headers/titles can be larger.
- **1 to 2 pages is standard length.** 1 for less than 10 years' experience, 2 for a seasoned professional.
- **Look at the big picture** - Information should be balanced on the page to be visually pleasing.
- **Utilize bullets, lines, indents, bold and italics** in a thoughtful way and in moderation to highlight key areas of information and separate content. Format throughout should be consistent.
- **Check for errors** - correct any spelling errors, text out of alignment, grammatical issues or other mistakes.
- **Have someone else review your resume** – Fresh eyes often see mistakes or can offer new ideas.
- **Use high quality resume paper** – It looks great – and is available **free** to those printing resumes at a Vermont Department of Labor Career Resource Center.

Contact Information

- **Highlight your name** – It makes it more memorable. 18 to 22 pt. font size is standard.
- **Think about your address** –If you are concerned about your address, consider a Post Office Box.
- **Share a reliable phone number.** The answering machine or voicemail should have a message which makes a good impression and does not cause any misunderstandings or confusion.
- **Utilize an appropriate email address.** Your email should look professional and not highlight personal habits or interests that cause a business concern.

Content

- **Highlight your accomplishments** – and lead those statements with action verbs.
- **Organize your content** - list your most recent experience and education first
- **Tailor your resume** to the job in which you are applying. Changing a few important details can make your resume point to a specific position and increase your chances for an interview.
- **Include relevant information** - Re-think jobs you have had that lasted under 6 months
- **Use Industry Language** – It is the language related to the job/industry/field you are applying for – using industry language shows you are up to speed on their type of work.
- **Certifications and Licenses** – put these on only if they are current and you have proof of them
- **Highlight your volunteer work** – it is a great way to get experience and show skills, especially when you are new to the job market.
- **Always appeal to the employer** – never refer to the personal advantages you would gain from the job. This is a common mistake in objective or goal statements.
- **Lead with the most important information** – for example – list your job title or the business first. Dates are important, but they are not the focus.

Important “Do Not’s”

- **Do not** use abbreviations
- **Do not** use “I” to refer to yourself. Instead, lead your statements with action verbs.
- **Do not** include personal information (age, height, weight or family status)
- **Do not** mention salary expectations or wage history
- **Do not** include a photograph of yourself unless you are applying to a European company, or a position such as modeling or acting where photographs are essential.
- **Do not** include references on your resume – these should be provided on a separate sheet of paper



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Resume Writing Resources

Action Verbs & Skill Statements

Action Verbs

Action Verbs are a key element in highlighting your accomplishments in your resume. These action verbs can help you begin your statements in an exciting and descriptive way.

Adapt/Modify/Adjust	Expedite/Accelerate/Advance	Organize/Assemble/Arrange
Advise/Counsel	Facilitate/Assist	Persuade/Convince
Analyze/Investigate/Research	Forecast/Predict	Plan/Schedule/Program
Appraise/Assess/Evaluate	Identify/Recognize	Present/Speak/Provide
Arbitrate/Mediate/Audit	Implement/Initiate/Instigate	Produce/Form/Synthesize
Brief/Inform	Influence/Persuade	Program
Budget	Inspect/Examine	Promote/Endorse
Classify/Categorize	Integrate/Incorporate	Recommend/Propose
Collaborate	Investigate	Recruit/Enlist/Employ
Consult	Lead	Redesign/Reorganize/Restore
Create/Invent/Design	Listen	Sell
Decide	Manage/Direct	Solve/Troubleshoot
Draft/Outline	Market	Summarize/Recap
Economize	Motivate/Encourage/Inspire	Supervise/Lead/Monitor
Edit/Revise	Multi-task	Teach/Train/instruct/Coach
Envision/Conceive	Negotiate/Bargain	Write/Publish
Estimate/Project	Operate	

Using Action Verbs in Skill Statements

Highlight your most marketable skills and the ones you want to use in your next job. Make sure your skills statements are descriptive and paint a picture of the great work you did. Skill statements in your resume will help you sell your greatest assets to prospective employers. Identifying skills that you used in the past and you want to use again are key in creating a great resume.

Examples:

Simple Statement	Unloaded several trucks every day.
Action Verb Skill Statement	Unloaded 12 trucks and approximately 12,000 pounds of glass daily; consistently achieved 100% customer satisfaction ratings.
Simple Statement	Answered customer calls successfully.
Action Verb Skill Statement	Answered over 100 customer calls per day and achieved 24-hour problem-resolution rate of 98%.
Simple Statement	Tracked expenses and saved money.
Action Verb Skill Statement	Created an Excel spreadsheet to track expenses that saved 20%, or over \$2,000, per year for 3 years.

Resume Writing Resources

Resume Worksheet

Gathering Your Information

It is important to look at your background and experience to gather all the necessary information before writing your resume. By listing your experience, education, skills, abilities, etc., you can then select those items that are relevant to specific employers, and build your resume.

This worksheet is designed to help you gather the raw materials to include in your basic resume.

Contact Information: *Clear, well presented contact information sets the stage for a good looking resume. Including a phone number, address and appropriate looking email address creates a great first impression.*

Name	
Address	
Phone Number	
Alternate or Cell	
Email Address	

Skills Acquired through non-employment activities *(Home, Hobbies, etc.)*

Responsibilities <i>Example: Washing dishes at home</i>	
Hard Skills <i>Example: Auto Repair</i>	
Soft Skills <i>Example: Customer Service</i>	

Highlighting your Qualifications *(Quantify and Qualify your summary of skills to create an effective summary for the beginning of your resume. It may be helpful to complete the employment section first to gather information for this section.)*

Quantify your Experience	
List your Best Assets	
Highlight your Accomplishments	

Resume Writing Resources

Education: *Begin with your most recent education and work back. Listing details and significant coursework can help target your resume towards a specific job.*

Course of Study/Degree/Major	
School Name/Type	
City, State	
Year of Graduation	
Significant Coursework/GPA/Awards	

Course of Study/Degree/Major	
School Name/Type	
City, State	
Year of Graduation	
Significant Coursework/GPA/Awards	

Other Information: *Associations/Professional Affiliations/Publications/Experiences/Certifications, etc.*

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Resume Writing Resources

Experience/Work History: *List all paid jobs, volunteer work, internships or freelance jobs. Begin with your most recent employment and work back. Generally, it is good to go back 10 years in your work history.*

Position	
Organization	
Town, State	
Dates	
Duties/Skills/ Accomplishments:	
Position	
Organization	
Town, State	
Dates	
Duties/Skills/ Accomplishments:	
Position	
Organization	
Town, State	
Dates	
Duties/Skills/ Accomplishments:	
Position	
Organization	
Town, State	
Dates	
Duties/Skills/ Accomplishments:	

Resume Writing Resources

Resume Mistakes to Avoid

By AJE Recruiting Specialist
America's Job Exchange

The resume is one of the very first things a potential employer will use to decide on the best candidates for an available job. Many employers will only give a resume a 20 to 30 second glance before deciding to keep it or toss it out. You need to make sure those few seconds count. While [creating a resume](#) that employers will notice is crucial, you must also keep in mind a few resume mistakes that could get your resume thrown into the "no" pile. Keep these common mistakes in mind as you prepare a [new resume](#) or update your existing one.

1. **You do not specify a connection to employer need.** For every job you apply for, make sure your resume is adjusted to the specific requirements of the position. This means not sending out a blanket document to 60 job openings, but tweaking your objective and relevant job responsibilities to highlight your qualifications to match each job description.
2. **Lack of focus and direction.** Steer clear of generic objective statements, like, "to obtain a position that utilizes my skills and experience." If you choose to include an objective, tailor it specifically to the job you are applying for so employers understand exactly what your career goals are. If you are unsure of what to say in an objective statement, it's okay to leave it off.
3. **Padding and embellishments.** In other words, lies. While it's obviously important to make yourself shine in your resume, any untruths will be discovered and could lead to serious consequences down the line.
4. **Listing your job duties as a generic laundry list,** such as "meeting with clients" or "training new employees." Add substance and meaning to your job duties, demonstrating your measurable accomplishments and how they can transfer to your next job. As you reflect on your work history, ask yourself how often you did a particular task and determine its impact. Did you do something no one else in your company did? Do these responsibilities match the needs of the job you are applying for? Help your future employer by enabling him or her to quickly match your achievements with what they need.
5. **Sticking important skills at the bottom.** Avoid the cookie-cutter template of education/experience/skills. Specific skills, especially computer-related ones, should go near the top so the employer sees them first.
6. **Formatting and other visual, surface errors.** Mistakes like this are completely unacceptable. If you are not sure about spelling or punctuation, enlist the help of someone who can proofread your resume and look for other problems. Do this several times until you are certain your resume is 100% error-free.
7. **Listing your references at the bottom of the resume.** While it's essential to have an updated list of references, do not include these when you send your resume. If an employer is interested in you, you will be asked to provide your references, at which point you can provide this information.
8. **Not using a format that is compatible** when opened as an email attachment. Make sure that your document can be opened and viewed by all of the major word processing applications and will look exactly how you want it to look. This is a critical piece of the application process. If you are uncertain as to how to send your resume electronically, ask the hiring contact exactly how to save and send the document.
9. **Your resume contains complete sentences** instead of bulleted statements using action verbs. As a rule of thumb, resumes should not be in narrative form unless specifically requested by an employer or job listing. Save the anecdotes for your cover letter and your interview.
10. **Leaving important information out.** While it might seem logical to leave out short-term jobs, summer work, or volunteer experience unrelated to the position you are seeking, the soft, transferable skills you've gained from these experiences (e.g., work ethic, time management) can be as important to employers as job-related skills.

Things Employers Want to See on Your Resume

By AJE Recruiting Specialist
America's Job Exchange

While [job search strategies](#) may have shifted with the advent of social networks and more recruiting taking place online, one constant remains – you need a solid resume, say our career experts. Whether you present this in standard written form or via your profile page on networking sites such as LinkedIn, your resume is the first impression an employer has of you as a viable candidate.

Here are some factors you should consider if you are in the process of creating or updating your resume.

Make sure your [resume fits the job](#). If you are submitting your resume for several job openings, the temptation may be to submit the same resume to each one. This is wrong, and can lead to wasted time and energy. Hiring managers seek unique skill-sets for every job opening they post and will focus on these requirements specifically. If your resume does not highlight the skills that are included in the job posting, it will be set aside.

The best rule of thumb is to mirror the keywords that are being used within the job description itself. While you do not want to add keywords for the mere sake of doing so, including content that is directly in line with what the hiring manager is looking for will help.

[Showcase your strengths](#). Resumes are advertisements; now is the time to brag. Undoubtedly the most successful and effective way to communicate your strengths to a potential employer is through your accomplishments. Highlight your career successes and make these a featured element of your resume and cover letter.

Managers seek employees who are results-oriented. The best way to showcase this attribute – prior to the opportunity of discussing these with a potential employer face-to-face – is to highlight results achieved prominently on your resume.

Make your [resume engaging](#). Employers seek employees who are successful. Showcase the path of your career. Highlight awards and accomplishments. Outline any organizations, groups or other affiliations that are in direct line with the job you seek. Your resume should clearly define your career roadmap, telling the story of how you as an employee will perform, and why you should be hired.

Add all appropriate details. There are certain [elements that should be included in every resume](#) and you need to make sure you do so. Always provide the right contact information, objectives, and work history. Add social networking addresses and links to other online directories that highlight your career. And all of the information should be displayed professionally, with no typos.

Resume Writing Resources

Resume Writing Tips for Older Workers

By Recruiting Specialist

For older workers about to write a resume, similar to the [job search](#) process, there are some challenges you face. The way you write your resume and position your skills will determine how you stand out from other job candidates. Here are some tips you can follow as you begin to develop your resume.

Don't focus on your years of experience. The general rule of thumb for anyone 50 or older is to develop a resume that highlights your skills instead of the number of years you spent accomplishing them. You may want to consider developing a functional resume. This type of resume highlights your work experience and skills instead of a chronological listing of your work history.

List the most recent 10-15 years of work experience only. We recommend that you list no more than the last 10 to 15 years of work experience. This will enable you to highlight your most recent work accomplishments and the benefits you can bring to a prospective employer, with less focus on years in the work force.

Be sure to include your most recent and current skill set. This should include everything from specific computer knowledge to any continuing education courses or seminars you have participated in. Remember, hiring employers are looking for candidates who are up to date on the latest technology and industry specific trends that impact day to day work flow.

Highlight your email or social media. Employers expect to contact you via email so be sure to include. If you do not have an email address, we recommend you create one. Any number of Internet service providers offer free email. Fax numbers are outdated - never include. Also, if you have links to social media sites, such as a LinkedIn profile, add them. This shows that you are current.

Downplay your years of experience. In some instances, depending on the job you are applying to, you may need to downplay your experience level. Employers pay for experience and in some cases too much experience may position you out of a job because you may appear (based on your resume) as being too expensive, even if this is not the case.

Include your education and dates. Even though you have eliminated other dates, here is where you need to be transparent. Hiring managers expect to see education outlined and the dates.

Include your hobbies. Employers are always looking to hire candidates that not only match the experience to the job, but add to a dynamic workplace. Including this information, such as if you like to run, ski or travel, positions you as an active, vibrant person - younger than your years.

Tailor your resume for each position. Just like you have to prepare for each individual interview, do the same with your resume. Tailor it to each position you are applying to.

Check your grammar. As with your entire job search, remaining professional is imperative. Always check for grammatical errors before you submit to hiring managers. Rely on family and friends to proofread and edit.

Tip Sheet –References

Positive work references will make the difference in finding the job you want!

By following these tips, you are well on your way to having professional references.

Remember there are many resources available to help you with creating this important document.

Work with a Career Development Facilitator: Receive one on one support from one of our experienced staff. We are happy to help with planning, organizing and presenting your references.

Selecting References

- Always get permission first.
- Ask potential references if there is anything about you they would not be able to speak positively about.
- Think carefully about who you choose in order to avoid the possibility of a negative reference.
- Keep in touch with your references – and not just when you need them!
- To create your reference list, write down all the people you know who can vouch for your abilities. You won't use all of these people for any one job – instead tailor your references to each job you apply for.
- List at least one former boss – preferably more. Most employers are mainly interested in what your supervisor has to say.
- Out of courtesy, be sure to let your references know that they may be getting a call.
- Select references who can speak to your skills, knowledge and accomplishments.
- Avoid references who are too personal – employers want to know primarily about your work skills.

Overall Presentation

- List your references on a separate sheet of paper – not as part of your resume.
- Do not hand out your list of references unless asked. Most prospective employers will not call your references unless they are really serious about hiring you.
- **Use an eye pleasing font** (Times New Roman is the most popular and best received by employers)
- **Text size is important** – 12 pt. size is standard for general content. Headers/titles can be larger.
- **1 page is standard length.** A list of quality references should be no longer than 1 page.
- **Look at the big picture -**
Information should be balanced on the page to be visually pleasing.
- **Check for errors** - correct any spelling errors, text out of alignment, grammatical issues or other mistakes.



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Resume Writing Resources

Tip Sheet - Cover Letters

Everyone should have a Cover Letter that meets the Employer's expectations!

By following these tips, you are well on your way to having a professional and effective Cover Letter.

- **Attend the Resume & Cover Letter Workshop:** Learn to write an effective Cover Letter to compliment your Resume, and introduces you to that potential employer.
- **Work with a Career Development Facilitator:** We will provide you with individualized assistance in developing a Cover Letter, which most effectively reflects your skills, and supports your desire bottom line.

Overall Presentation

- **Use an eye pleasing font** - (Times New Roman is the most popular and best received by employers)
- **Text size is important** - 12 pt. size is standard for general content. Headers/titles can be larger.
- **Look at the big picture** - Information should be balanced on the page to be visually pleasing.
- **Formatting** - Should be consistent throughout, both the Cover Letter and Resume.
- **Check for errors** - Correct spelling, page alignment and grammatical errors.
- **Review the Cover Letter** - Does it effectively convey your skills and experiences to the employer.
- **Quality counts** - Using quality paper stock it tells the employer that you have chosen to go the extra mile.

Contact Information

- **Correct-** Be sure that yours' and the Employer's contact information is correct.
- **Business Contact-** If you know the person's name, address the letter to them, otherwise Dear Sir, or Ms. or To Whom it May Concern: will also work.
- **Voice Mail** -The voicemail be appropriate and leaves a good impression on the potential employer.
- **E-mail address.** Should also be professional and leave the employer with a good impression

Content

- **New Formatting:** All information should be aligned on the left hand side on page, no need to indent paragraphs.
- **1st Paragraph** - Identify what documents are being submitted, what position, you are applying for and where you found the job listing.
- **2nd Paragraph** - Identify your skills and compare them to those the skills required by the employer.
- **3rd Paragraph.** Tie the letter all together in this paragraph and make a final sale's pitch to the employer that you are the right person for this job.
- **Use Industry Language** - Use similar language as used in the job advertisement and language pertinent to the industry, when describing your skills.(Paragraph #2)



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