



## Building a Resume

### What is a Resume?

Put succinctly a resume is a brief summary of what you have done to date in your education, employment (paid and volunteer services), and relevant aspects of your personal and social life. The resume is a relatively brief document, usually about three pages, and allows the prospective employer to see at a glance the most important elements of your background. The reader will only take 15-20 seconds to scan your document and therefore first impressions are vital for them to consider reviewing it more critically.

Resumes need to be relevant to the skills and abilities required for the job and therefore you may need to tailor the basic format each time to specifically target what the employer is interested in.

### Preparation

A well constructed resume can be a powerful tool in securing you an interview. Careful planning and preparation will ensure you include only the relevant information and alleviate the document of matter which is of no relevance to the position. You will need to brainstorm all areas of your life to identify the knowledge, skills and abilities that you have gained. To assist you with this information consider the following resources:

- ❖ educational transcripts
- ❖ job descriptions of past jobs, paid and volunteer
- ❖ copies of performance reviews, references
- ❖ certificates or records of seminars/conferences attended
- ❖ letters of appreciation from customers, clients and colleagues
- ❖ The Facts section of myfuture ([www.myfuture.edu.au](http://www.myfuture.edu.au)) has lists of occupations and industries that you can refer to when describing your skill sets and knowledge areas.

### Getting Started

The first consideration is selecting the format/layout that you are going to use. There is no hard and fast rule regarding layout and this may change depending on the requirements of the position you are applying for eg: if education is the most critical aspect of the position then this needs to be covered in the first section of your resume. As undergraduate students, generally your education will be presented first but as you gain experience with employment a summary of your employment, tasks and achievements on the first page is more likely to engage the reader. The following styles are the most common:

*Reverse Chronological:* this is considered the most common and widely accepted style with education and employment listed in reverse order, starting with the most recent.

*Functional:* this format focuses on your skills, competencies and attributes more so than your previous employment and positions held.

Examples are available from the Student Support Officer.

## Resume Headings

**Personal Details:** The first page of your resume should incorporate your name and contact details. Include only phone numbers where you can be contacted easily and if supplying an email address ensure it is a professional sounding and you check for replies regularly. You are not obliged to include age or marital status but as graduates birth date will indicate the reasons for your lack of experience. Any other information which can discriminate against you, such as health, weight, gender or citizenship, should not be included. Personal information can be centred at the top of the resume.

**Career Objective:** This is a targeted statement about the type of position you are seeking, your career path and the skills and attributes you have relevant to that outcome. It provides the prospective employer useful information about you and demonstrates that you are focused. This is an optional heading but if used it must be specific and not written as though it could apply to anyone.

*Example – An opportunity to work in a customer service role where I can use my demonstrated capacities in written and verbal communication, conflict management and negotiation skills and my ability to develop relationships with key stakeholders.*

**Summary of Experience:** This is a condensed description of your skills, abilities and attributes which gives the employer an overview of your experience and to highlight your strengths. The summary should only be a paragraph in length.

*Example – Qualifications in education and training and 10 years experience in teaching sport and physical education have developed skills in group facilitation, program development, problem solving, negotiation and time and people management. In my role as Department Head, I have managed budgets and liaised with a range of stakeholders to develop appropriate programs, experience readily applicable to the development and running of tour groups.*

**Education:** In this section you should include all current and completed qualifications. This will include university qualifications, high school certificate or completed year level and any other training courses you have undertaken. There is no need to list every training experience you may have attended, try to keep them relevant and those which you anticipate the employer is interested in. Use reverse chronological order to list your education and refrain from using abbreviations, as the prospective employer may not be familiar with that training course. You may also highlight subjects which may be particularly relevant for the position for which you are applying and attach your academic transcript to you application. If you have achieved outstanding grades in your studies (High Distinctions and Distinctions) you can include this information eg: Distinction average.

**Employment History:** Outline your employment history, part time and full time, in reverse chronological order including any work experience and voluntary work. Include in this section:

- ❖ Job title, employer and dates – what you did, who you worked for and when;
- ❖ Brief description of the employer – this is particularly relevant where the employer is an overseas organisation or an unknown company;
- ❖ Responsibilities – list those tasks that you were accountable for;
- ❖ Achievements – highlight those initiatives that you implemented outside of your normal duties. It can include suggestions you put forward, developing new business, special commendations, increasing business profit, exceeding monthly targets etc.

## Example

March 2003 -  
December 2004

**Personnel Officer**  
**Blues Chip Computers, Malvern**  
**Industry Based Learning (IBL)**  
Nature of Organisation - A chain of 59 computer outlets specialising in business needs

**Responsibilities**

- Designed selection criteria for new staff
- Interviewed new staff as a part of the selection panel
- Trained new staff

**Achievements**

- Initiated and maintained an internal magazine entitled "Chips and Sauce." The magazine was available both on-line and in hard copy.

**Skills and Attributes:** This section enables you to highlight any skills that are relevant to the particular position that you are applying for and to list any computer or language skills.

**Memberships/Extracurricular Activities:** As a new graduate with limited employment experience this section will enable you to state skills that you have developed through sporting and community activities. You will be able to demonstrate skills such as teamwork, leadership qualities and organisational abilities. If you have several different areas to cover it is suggested that you use sub headings such as representative positions, memberships, personal achievements, interests.

**Referees:** A prospective employer may choose to contact a referee to enquire about your work ethic, your ability to work in a team, and to gain a clearer understanding about you and your skills. You can elect to use referees from work experience, especially where this relates to the position you have applied for, voluntary positions, paid employment, academic staff (although they can only support your abilities as a student) and personal/character references. Ensure you notify the referee and have permission to use them in your application. You will need to include their name, organisation and position held and contact number.

## General Tips

- ❖ Create a header and footer with your name in case the pages of your document become loose;
- ❖ Use a consistent font which is easy to read (Times New Roman or Arial), and refrain from trying to make your resume look "fancy" with borders etc.;
- ❖ When you format the document check for consistency, indents are all the same, bolding and capitals are regular;
- ❖ Check for spelling and grammatical errors. Have someone else revise your document;
- ❖ The resume should have more white space than actual print, you are not writing an essay! Use bullet points for the most part except where you have included an objective or career overview where a narrative style is used;
- ❖ Use clear and concise wording with lots of action words (see list attached) to start the bullet point instead of pronouns (I, we).
- ❖ Be honest in your resume, exaggerating without evidence will not stand up to scrutiny; and
- ❖ Always print your resume single sided and on good quality white paper.

<b>Action Words</b>		
<p><b>A</b></p> <p>Achieved, acquired, acted, activated, adapted, addressed, administered, agitated, analysed, anticipated, assembled, assisted, audited.</p>	<p><b>B</b></p> <p>Boosted, briefed, budgeted, built.</p>	<p><b>C</b></p> <p>Calculated, centralised, changed, collaborated, composed, condensed, conducted, constructed, constructed, contracted, converted, coordinated, created.</p>
<p><b>D</b></p> <p>Demonstrated, designed, developed, devised, discovered, doubled, drafted.</p>	<p><b>E</b></p> <p>Edited, eliminated, enforced, established, evaluated, expanded, explained.</p>	<p><b>F</b></p> <p>Facilitated, finalised, fixed, focused, followed up, forecasted, formed, founded.</p>
<p><b>G</b></p> <p>Gained, gathered, generated, graduated, guided.</p>	<p><b>H</b></p> <p>Handled, headed, helped, hired.</p>	<p><b>I</b></p> <p>Identified, illustrated, implemented, improved, improvised, increased, influenced, informed, initiated, innovated, installed, instigated, instructed, insured, integrated, interacted, interpreted, interviewed, introduced, investigated, issued.</p>
<p><b>J</b></p> <p>Joined, judged, justified.</p>	<p><b>L</b></p> <p>Launched, lectured, led, liaised, lobbied, located, logged.</p>	<p><b>M</b></p> <p>Maintained, managed, manufactured, marketed, mastered, maximised, measured, mediated, minimised, mobilised, modernised, monitored, motivated.</p>
<p><b>N</b></p> <p>Navigated, negotiated, nominated, notified.</p>	<p><b>O</b></p> <p>Observed, obtained, opened, operated, optimised, orchestrated, ordered, organised, originated, overhauled, oversaw.</p>	<p><b>P</b></p> <p>Perceived, perfected, performed, persuaded, piloted, pinpointed, pioneered, planned, predicted, prepared, prescribed, presented, prevented, produced, prioritised, procured, produced, programmed, proposed, protected, promoted, proved, provided, publicised, published, purchased.</p>
<p><b>Q</b></p> <p>Qualified, questioned.</p>	<p><b>R</b></p> <p>Raised, ran, reached, realised, recognised, recommended, reconciled, recruited, rectified, reduced, refined, regulated, remodelled, reorganised, repaired, replaced, reported, represented, researched, reshaped, resolved, responded, restored, revamped, reviewed, revitalised, revived.</p>	<p><b>S</b></p> <p>Saved, scheduled, searched, secured, selected, separated, serviced, setup, simplified, sold, solved, sorted, surveyed, staffed, specialised, spoke, standardised, supervised, supplied, surpassed.</p>

<b>T</b> Tabulated, targeted, taught, terminated, tested, totalled, tracked, traded, trained, transcribed, tutored.	<b>U</b> Uncovered, undertook, unified, updated, upgraded, utilised.	<b>V, W</b> Validated, verified, vitalised, volunteered, welcomed, won, worked.
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