

## Guidelines to Help You Prepare a Resume

**A resume is a one or two page summary of your qualifications, which should include your education, skills, accomplishments and experience. A resume is a self-marketing tool, designed with the goal of obtaining a job interview.**

*The resume is often the first impression an employer will have about you so make it a good impression!*

### Resume Formats

There are a number of resume formats. The two most common formats are the chronological and the functional combination. Each format is suited for certain employment histories and/or employment goals. Ideally, the format you choose should emphasize your strengths and uniqueness that best present your qualifications for a specific job. Regardless of the format you choose, all resumes should be targeted for a specific position whenever possible.

### What is the Best Format or Style?

It depends; choose the format that works for you and the job you are interested in pursuing. You may have several versions of your resume to be used for different positions.

#### Chronological

This format is considered the traditional format and is preferred by many employers. It lists your background in a reverse chronological sequence, starting with the most recent experience. You may arrange your headings in various ways, depending upon which aspects of your background you wish to emphasize. If your job titles relate to your current job objective, start each position description with job titles. If not, begin with the name of the organization. Follow job title and organizational information with the organization's city and state. Whatever you choose, be consistent in listing your experience. Use the first and last month and year to describe dates of employment. For example: Coordinator, Student Employment office, Santa Rosa Junior College, Santa Rosa, CA – September 2002 – January 2006. Job duties and accomplishments are described under each employer with emphasis on those requiring the highest degree of skill and judgment.

Chronological format effective if:

- Work, volunteer and academic experience relate directly to the type of job for which you are applying
- You can demonstrate accomplishments related to work you have done
- Employment history shows continuous upward progression with no significant gaps
- Job titles or places of employment are impressive

## **Functional Combination**

This format highlights your most important skills or functions. Headings are built around these areas. Job titles, employers and dates of employment are listed in a brief section at the bottom of the page. This format allows you to highlight skills, knowledge and abilities relevant to the position regardless of where and when you obtained them. Choose two to four headings to summarize each area of functional skill or expertise. Develop the functional skill headings based on the skills you want to market to employers and/or that are most related to your targeted objective. Describe your skills in short phrases and place under the appropriate functional skill categories. Place the most important skill or accomplishment first.

Effective if:

- Work experience is not directly related to your career goals
- Making a career change
- Learning new skills in school and want to highlight those skills
- A recent graduate with little or no professional experience in the field
- There are large gaps in your work history
- You have accomplishments related to school or volunteer work
- You have had different positions with the same type of job duties

## **Basic Elements of a Resume**

### **Heading/Contact Information**

Identifying information should always appear at the top of the resume. Be sure this information is clear, stands out, and is easy to read. Include a phone number where you can be reached easily with a message that is appropriate for an employer. The heading should include:

- Name and address (street address, city, state and zip code)
- Telephone with area code
- E-mail address and web site (if applicable)

### **Objective - You may also use “Position Desired”**

The objective is placed at the top of the resume below your name and address. Using an objective is optional, but is recommended to give your resume focus. If you do not use an objective, be sure to include one in your cover letter.

- Decide on a specific job title for your objective.
- Restrict your objective to one or two concise, easy-to-read sentences.
- Avoid being too general.
- Avoid phrases that sound self-serving such as “ability to enhance potential and utilize experience.”
- Focus on what you have to offer rather than on what the job can offer you.
- Avoid using long run-on sentences with too many adjectives.

## **Education**

The education section can be placed either below the objective (for recent graduates) or at the end of the resume. Generally, this section goes first as long as you are in school, and from one to three years after you graduate, depending on such factors as whether your education was relevant to your career field and how impressive your work experience has been. Do not list every college you attended. Only list those where you have achieved a degree or certificate. Listing your high school education is not necessary and not recommended if you have completed any college coursework. Recent seminars, workshops and classes to upgrade your skills are relevant and should be included in the education section.

### **Include:**

- Names of institutions attended and the cities and states where schools are located
- Education in reverse chronological order with degrees or licenses first followed by certificates and advanced training
- Degrees awarded; and major
- Date the degree was awarded and/or is to be awarded if you are working on an uncompleted degree
- Include your GPA if it is 3.5 or above
- Include course titles if they are outside your major and relevant to the job
- Significant honors and awards can be included as a sub-category of your Education section

## **Qualifications Summary**

Keep it brief...no more than four to six lines. The purpose of the “summary” is to highlight your most important qualities, achievements and abilities related to the job. This is often the part of the resume that gets the employer’s attention. If you lack experience, then highlight ability. Include the following:

- Number of years of related experience
- Special education, training, or certification in the field not listed elsewhere
- Key accomplishment(s) if not listed elsewhere
- Employment-related honors and awards
- Specific skills related to the field or job such as computer skills, knowledge of specific software and/or other technical skills
- Personal skills, such as “collaborative team player” or “ability to work independently”
- Foreign language skills- include languages in which you have more than just some basic ability and indicate your level of ability (“basic conversational ability,” “proficiency,” “near—fluency,” “fluency”) or the number of years of college-level study

## **Experience**

Experience is highlighted using one of the formats discussed.

- Do not limit your experience to paid employment; include relevant extracurricular volunteer and intern positions.
- Quantify your accomplishments and responsibilities whenever possible.
- Include job duties and skills that relate to the position you are seeking.

## **Key Words and Key Word Phrases**

Keywords are used to screen resumes and are the basis of how resumes are electronically scanned. Keywords are the “words” associated with a specific industry, profession, or job function. In addition to industry Key Words, there are some general, “professional” Key Words. Key Words are usually nouns, noun phrases, abbreviations, or acronyms.

Today, due to competition for jobs the use of “Key Words” to identify your qualifications, capabilities, and skills is necessary to get an employer’s attention.

Examples of Key Words are “Office Management,” “Team Building & Team Leadership,” “Client Advocacy,” “Merchandising,” “Oral & Written Communication skills,” “PC & Internet Technology.”

## **Tips**

If you are applying for a specific job always TARGET your resume. Know your audience and what they are looking for. Read the job announcement carefully and identify what the employer is looking for in both the required and preferred section of the job announcement. Analyze what skills are needed for this job. Identify how you can demonstrate that you have those skills. Study the organization’s literature or web site and see if you can identify what qualities they value in their employees. Usually a resume should only go back about ten years of your working life. It is important to convey confidence but avoid overdoing it where the resume sounds artificial or scripted.

## **Length**

Be concise. One page is preferred by most employers. Although no definite rule exists about a resume having to be only one page, common practice has been to limit a resume to one page when possible and definitely no more than two pages. Avoid crowding too much information on one page. Use two pages if you need more space to highlight your experience and qualifications and to demonstrate your ability to do the job. If you have the experience and need the space then two pages is acceptable.

## **Paper**

Print your resume on good quality paper in neutral tones such as buff, white, off-white, light tan, or light gray. If you use quality-watermarked paper, be sure the right side of the paper is used. Hold the paper up to the light; you can see a watermark and read it if the right side of the paper is facing you. Never use paper with a background (pictures, marble shades, etc.).

## **Type, Size and Style**

Use a serif font such as Times, New Century Schoolbook or Garamond for greater readability. The font size should be between 10 and 12 points. You can make headings slightly larger for emphasis. If you choose Times or Garamond, then use 12-point because these fonts are smaller. Be careful about mixing typefaces.

## **Appearance**

The appearance of your resume is important. Be sure the resume is inviting and easy to read; don’t provide too much information. Incorporate enough white space between sections to facilitate skimming. Center text and use adequate margins. Use bold face headings, bullet points and phrases rather than complete sentences to highlight information. Complete sentences aren’t necessary in a resume.

## **Electronic Resumes**

To send your resume through e-mail, the resume must be a plain text document (commonly ASCII). Do not assume that you can attach a word-processed version to an e-mail message as many employers will not open attachments and unless you are using a PDF format the attachment may not work.

For information about how to send your resume via e-mail, visit the Career Center for additional handouts and books on this topic. Also check out these web sites for additional information on resume writing and job search:

<http://www.eresumes.com>

[www.monster.com](http://www.monster.com)

## Resume Do's and Don'ts

### Do

- Use good quality (at least 20 lb. bond) paper
- Use a readable font and print on a laser printer
- Be specific in your objective, if you use one
- Emphasize results produced, significant achievements, recognition from others
- Quantify when possible and use specific examples
- Include your grade point average if 3.5 or above
- Focus on your accomplishments, not just job duties
- Proofread to ensure your resume contains absolutely no errors (no typographical errors; no spelling errors; no grammar, syntax, or punctuation errors; no factual errors)
- Target your resume to your goal
- Get feedback from several people
- Begin phrases with action verbs such as “developed” and “initiated”
- Use phrases rather than full sentences when phrases are possible
- Vary words—don't repeat a verb or adjective twice in the same block
- Use Key Words
- Keep you resume to one page if you have limited work experience
- Use bullets, **bold**, *italics* and underlining unless your resume is going to be scanned
- Write out numbers one-nine, but use numerals for all numbers above ten
- Focus on transferable skills, especially if you are transitioning from one career to another

### Don'ts

- Include the word “Resume” at the top of the resume
- Include the date of resume preparation
- Include your gender, age, race, marital status, religion or other personal information
- Include hobbies, interests, and professional associations (unless relevant)
- Include reasons for leaving other jobs
- Include negative information
- Include long, wordy paragraphs
- Use the first person and possessive pronouns such as I, me, my, myself
- Include name of supervisor
- Include a grade point average under 3.5
- Include an introduction
- Include artwork/borders
- Use abbreviations except for states and career buzzwords
- Use unrelated industry jargon
- Lie or misrepresent or exaggerate facts or your skills
- Include references (these should be submitted on a separate sheet and only upon request by the employer)
- Reference religious or political affiliations (unless job-related)
- Include salary information
- Include full address and zip codes of former employers
- Mention controversial activities or associations
- Start phrases in the experience section with “My responsibilities (or duties) included”

## Chronological Resume – Garamond Font

### Joe Smith

1111 Street Road, Santa Rosa, CA 95401

(123) 456-7890

joesmith@email.com

---

**OBJECTIVE: Reservation Desk Associate at Marriott**

### QUALIFICATIONS

- Over three years of customer service experience
  - Excellent organization, communication and multi-tasking skills
  - Work extremely well in team-based environments, while requiring very little supervision
  - Computer proficient in Windows XP/2000, Microsoft Office Suite (Word, Excel and PowerPoint) and the Internet
- 

### EDUCATION

Santa Rosa Junior College, Santa Rosa, CA

2004 – May 2006

Hospitality Career Certificate in Business Administration

---

### EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

#### Customer Service/Sales

Royal Cinemas, Santa Rosa, CA

June 2004 – June 2006

- Managed ticket box sales with no supervision, including computer data entry, cash management, ticket restock and customer services
- Worked concession stand and provided assistance in food and beverage service, inventory management, various machine operations, register and cash intake, and stand maintenance

#### Sales Representative

The Clothing Shop, Santa Rosa, CA

September 2002 – May 2004

- Managed sales, customer services, inventory and store closing operations
- Assisted customers in clothing selections and returns
- Created and set up floor displays and seasonal promotions

#### Sales Representative

J&K's Ice Cream/Vicky's Sports Shop, Petaluma, CA

May 2002 – August 2002

- Managed sales, customer services and business operations for busy ice cream and sports kiosks owned and operated by the same individuals
  - Oversaw cash intake, daily accounting, and inventory management
  - Assisted customers by providing prompt, courteous and accurate delivery of orders
  - Opened and closed kiosks with no supervision, and cleaned and maintained premises
- 

### COMMUNITY SERVICE

#### Volunteer

Reins of Hope, Petaluma, CA

Summers 2000-2004

- Provided voluntary support services in the care and grooming of horses, maintenance of equipment, and hands-on guidance to disabled individuals utilizing program's services
- Communicated with riders and caregivers in issues regarding general facility operations, safety procedures, and rider care. Trained various individuals in horse care and safe riding procedures

**Chronological Resume – Times New Roman Font**

**Jane Smith**

333 Francisco Way  
Rohnert Park, CA 94928  
(987) 654-3210  
[jane@email.com](mailto:jane@email.com)

---

**OBJECTIVE: Administrative Assistant II**

**QUALIFICATIONS**

- PC proficiency (Word, Excel) in the preparation and formatting of spreadsheets, reports, databases and correspondence
- Two years office experience
- Attention to detail and accuracy
- Excellent written/verbal communication
- Ability to work independently, prioritize urgent issues, and cooperate as a team member

**EXPERIENCE**

**6/05 – present** Santa Rosa Junior College, Santa Rosa, CA  
Advanced Office Assistant, Career Center

- Handle incoming phone calls, relay messages to staff and schedule appointments
- Manage projects, prioritize tasks, order graphics, maintain files, and answer student inquiries

**6/04 – 6/05** Fastek Technical Services, Petaluma, CA  
Office Administrative Support

- Front desk reception - took messages and greeted customers
- Coordinated staff meetings, conference calls and managed calendar
- Prepared reports using MS Word and Excel
- Assisted with faxing and filing
- Sorted, prioritized and replied to correspondence received
- Organized reference materials

**9/03 – 6/04** Countrywide Home Loans, Cotati, CA  
Junior Secretary

- Provided administrative support to assistant manager and Director of Loan Services
- Provided telephone and walk-in customer service
- Typed and sent letters to clients
- Processed reports

**EDUCATION**

**2004 to Present** Santa Rosa Junior College, Santa Rosa, CA  
Certificates in Administrative Support I & II

## Functional Resume – Garamond Font

Jesse Chen  
123 Street Road  
San Rafael, CA 94900

(123) 456-7890 (H)  
(987) 654-3210 (Cell)  
[jchen@email.com](mailto:jchen@email.com)

---

### **JOB OBJECTIVE: Human Resource Assistant**

#### **QUALIFICATIONS SUMMARY:**

- Over two years office experience
- Current knowledge of human resources practices and guidelines
- Ability to multi-task and work as a team member

#### **ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

- Organized training program for supervisors to provide excellent customer service
- Created database to track employees' compensation and complaints

#### **HUMAN RESOURCE SKILLS:**

- Reconcile and process monthly premium invoices
- Verify employee eligibility for benefits and answer benefits questions
- Communicate employee status changes to insurance carriers
- Monitor and coordinate processing of forms such as job announcements and Personnel Action Forms

#### **COMPUTER SKILLS:**

- MAC and PC proficient
- Microsoft Office (Word and Excel)
- MS Outlook and Internet

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE SKILLS:**

- Perform detailed tasks with accuracy
- Communicate and write effectively
- Distribute materials, file, fax, copy, order supplies, prepare and ship materials
- Schedule meetings, compose correspondence, and plan events

### **WORK HISTORY**

- 2004-2005 JJ Enterprises, San Rafael, CA  
**Human Resources/Clerical Assistant**
- 2003-2004 New York Camera, San Rafael, CA  
**Assistant Manager**

### **EDUCATION**

- 2004 Completed 10 units of the Human Resource Administration Certificate  
Santa Rosa Junior College, Santa Rosa, CA

## Action Verbs

Proclaim the genius in you!

accelerated	coordinated	formulated	monitored	renewed
accomplished	corresponded	founded	motivated	reorganized
acquainted	counseled	functioned	navigated	reported
acted as	created	gained	negotiated	represented
activated	committed	gathered	obtained	researched
adapted	commended	generated	operated	restored
adjusted	decided	governed	ordered	revamped
administered	defined	guided	organized	reviewed
advised	delegated	handled	originated	revised
affected	delivered	hired	participated	scheduled
analyzed	demonstrated	identified	performed	screened
approached	designed	illustrated	persuaded	selected
approved	detailed	implemented	pinpointed	served
arbitrated	detected	improved	planned	set up
arranged	determined	increased	possessed	simplified
assembled	developed	indexed	prepared	skilled
assessed	devised	influenced	prescribed	sold
assigned	diagnosed	informed	presented	solved
assisted	directed	initiated	presided	staffed
audited	discovered	innovated	problem-solved	standardized
authored	dispensed	inspected	processed	stimulated
budgeted	displayed	installed	produced	structured
built	distributed	instituted	programmed	strengthened
calculated	drafted	instructed	promoted	studied
catalogued	edited	integrated	proposed	summarized
chaired	educated	interacted	protected	supervised
charted	effected	interested	provided	supplied
clarified	eliminated	interpreted	publicized	surveyed
collaborated	employed	interviewed	published	synthesized
collected	engaged	introduced	purchased	systemized
communicated	enlarged	invented	realized	taught
completed	equipped	investigated	received	team-built
compounded	established	involved	recognized	tested
conceptualized	evaluated	launched	recommended	trained
conciliated	examined	lectured	recorded	transcribed
conducted	executed	led	recruited	transmitted
conferred	exercised	logged	rectified	translated
conserved	exhibited	managed	re-designed	utilized
consolidated	expanded	marketed	reduced	versed
constructed	expedited	mediated	referred	wrote
consulted	experienced	merchandised	related	
controlled	facilitated	moderated	reinforced	
cooperated	familiarized	modified	rendered	

# Functional Template

**Before you start:** Review job description for the desired position or a similar position. On a separate sheet, list 4-6 skills required for the job. Design your resume to highlight those skills.

## YOUR NAME

Your address, City, State and Zip

(707) xxx-xxxx

E-mail

**OBJECTIVE:** A position as Customer Service Representative

**HIGHLIGHTS:** *\*including unpaid work      \*\*reflected in the details below*

- Number of years experience in work\* at all relevant to the objective above
- Credentials or education or training, relevant to this objective
- A key accomplishment\*\* that shows you're a "hot candidate" for this job
- A Strength\*\* or characteristic\*\* that's important to you and relevant to job
- Something else the employer should know...i.e. computer skills, foreign language

## RELEVANT EXPERIENCE:

**One Major Skill** (*that is directly relevant to the job objective stated above*)

- \* An accomplishment or job duty that illustrates this
- \* An accomplishment or job duty that illustrates this

**Another Major Skill** (*that is directly relevant to the job objective stated above*)

- \* An accomplishment or job duty that illustrates this
- \* An accomplishment or job duty that illustrates this

**Another Major Skill or Special Knowledge Area** (*that is directly relevant to the job objective*)

- \* An accomplishment or job duty that illustrates this
- \* A list of equipment or processes you're familiar with and that are needed in this area
- \* A list of courses or trainings you took that shows your expertise in this area

**EMPLOYMENT HISTORY:** (*most recent first, go back approximately 10 years*)

Year-year	Job Title	Company name and city/state
Year-year	Job Title	Company name and city/state
Year-year	Job Title	Company name and city/state

**EDUCATION:** (if you are a recent graduate with limited or no work experience related to your job objective, this section should go *before* "Relevant Experience.") Most recent first, list degrees, certificates or related seminars and the date you completed (year only). If graduation is in the near future, show expected completion date or indicate "in progress." List any academic honors or awards and GPA, if 3.5 GPA or higher.

University of So-and-So, Podunk City, AZ  
A.A., Basket Weaving, year you completed

**AFFILIATIONS/OTHER INFORMATION:** (if applicable – optional)

Include organizations to which you belong that are related to your job goal. Avoid references to religious or political organizations.

# Chronological Template

**Before you start:** Review job description for the desired position or a similar position. On a separate sheet, list 4-6 skills required for the job. Design your resume to highlight those skills.

## YOUR NAME

Your address, City, State and Zip

(707) xxx-xxxx

E-mail

**OBJECTIVE:** Certified Nurse Assistant Position

## HIGHLIGHTS:

- Number of years experience in work\* at all relevant to the objective above
  - Credentials or education or training, relevant to this objective
  - A key accomplishment\*\* that shows you're a "hot candidate" for this job
  - A strength\*\* or characteristic\*\* that's important to you and relevant to this job
  - Something else the employer should know...i.e. computer skills, foreign language
- \*including unpaid work      \*\*reflected in the details below*

**RELEVANT EXPERIENCE:** (most recent first, go back approximately 10 years)

Dates COMPANY NAME, City, State

*Job Title*

A 2-line overview of your essential role, including the kind of products or services you dealt with.

- \* An accomplishment or job duty illustrating a skill needed in the NEW job
- \* Another accomplishment or job duty illustrating a skill needed in the new job
- \* Another activity from this job, illustrating a skill needed in the new job

Dates COMPANY NAME, City, State

*Job Title*

A 2-line overview of your essential role in this company, including the kind of products or services you dealt with.

- \* List accomplishments or job duties and related information (same as above)

Dates COMPANY NAME, City, State

*Job Title*

- \* List accomplishments or job duties and related information (same as above).

**EDUCATION:** (if you are a recent graduate with a major related to your job objective but have limited or no work experience, this section should go *before* "Relevant Experience.") In reverse chronological order, list degrees, certificates or related seminars and the date you completed (year only). If graduation is in the near future, show expected completion date or indicate "in progress." List any academic honors or awards and GPA if 3.5 GPA or higher.

University of So-and-So, Podunk City, AZ

A.A., Basket Weaving - year you completed

**Affiliations/Other Information:** (if applicable - optional)

Include organizations to which you belong that are related to your job goal. Avoid references to religious or political affiliations.