

From the Editors of
California Job Journal

Writing Your Best Resume

*Your Complete Guide for Writing
a Resume That Gets You Noticed:*

Overcoming Writing Obstacles

The Best Resume Style for You

Resume Samples & Worksheets

Effective Cover Letters

Much More...

This guide was created to provide you with a better understanding of a resume's purpose in the job-search process and the knowledge to create a document that establishes a positive first impression in the mind of prospective employers.

Using This Guide

We recommend using Adobe Acrobat Reader to view this guide, which will allow you to access hyperlinks embedded in the text. Simply click on any [blue word](#) to connect (via the Internet) to expanded information in another section of the guide or a related website.

This guide is 'printer friendly.' You may print out any pages on letter size (8½ x 11) paper.

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What Is a Resume?

A Resume Is:

- Your introduction to a prospective employer.
- The first impression many recruiters will have of you.
- The key to maximizing your employment opportunities.
- An influential factor in negotiating your starting wage.
- A significant document in the advancement of your career.

Your resume is your personal emissary. It should provide a positive first impression and an honest summary of your skills and attributes. It should always be typed or computer printed and meticulously prepared with no spelling or grammatical errors. It must convince the reader that you are reliable, responsible, and ready to successfully handle the responsibilities of the job.

Your resume has only one purpose — to entice the screener to take you to the next level — a job interview. Therefore, every step of the resume process should be taken with this goal in mind. Earning you a job is not your resumes purpose; nobody has ever been hired based on a resume alone.

Your resume should state your employment goal and briefly review your relevant work experience, skills, training, and education. Honors, interests, and talents associated with previous jobs should be listed, as well as other quali-

cations that directly relate to the position you are seeking.

Your resume can serve you in a variety of ways, but it is primarily used in making the following types of contacts with prospective employers:

- In response to a job opening that has been advertised or brought to your attention.
- When contacting an organization to inquire about employment opportunities.
- As a follow-up to a formal interview or conversation with a person who may be able to hire you or recommend you to others.
- As an attachment to a standard job application.

When mailing a resume to a prospective employer, it should be accompanied by a cover letter that explains your interest in being employed by that organization in a specific job.

A resume should be a “living” document. While most people seeking new employment say they are concerned with long-range career goals, they often act as if they are only “job” seekers. They dust off an old version of their resume, add details of their last job and submit it to prospective employers. When they get a job, the resume is returned to a file until the next time.

Your resume should be reviewed periodically to determine if the informa-

Your resume has only one purpose — to entice the screener to take you to the next level — a job interview.

Your resume is your personal emissary. It should accurately and honestly present you in the most positive manner.

Don't use a resume to describe what you didn't like about your previous jobs.

tion it contains responds to current market demands, accurately reflects your best qualities (with recent achievements kept in context with your overall qualities), and generates a positive impression that will lead to interviews.

In considering what an effective resume is, it may be helpful to first review what a resume is not.

A Resume Is Not:

- A detailed biography of your life. There is no requirement that you list every job held, dates, and locations. In fact, if you have been employed in many jobs, a detailed listing is sometimes a disadvantage since it may not be relevant to the job you are seeking. Also, a resume does not require a complete listing of every class you took, every association or club you belong to, and details of your family life.
- A substitute for a job application. The purpose of a job application is to

solicit some basic information which aids the personnel department in screening and placing employees. It is also used to secure information needed for legal and record-keeping purposes. Unfortunately, many job applicants write resumes as if they are filling in the blocks and spaces of a job application.

- A confession of the reasons you left other employers. Don't use it to describe what you didn't like about your previous jobs, and never mention what you don't know or can't do.
- A substitute for other aspects of the job-seeking process: letters, phone calls, and informational or selection interviews. Resumes are most effective when tailored and used as one element in a job-search strategy. Job hunting includes person-to-person communication as well as written correspondence. Don't expect a resume to do it all for you.

Common Resume Pitfalls

It is important to remember that a resume by itself cannot get you the job. It can only stimulate interest in you and pave the way to a successful interview. You might say that a resume is your "key." It can open the door of opportunity for you . . . but then you're on your own.

But a resume can *prevent* you from getting a job by creating a poor or misleading impression. Many job applicants with years of experience and excellent qualifications have had their resumes ignored for such reasons as:

Jobs do not always go to the most qualified candidates. They often go to the best job hunters.

The Perfect Resume?

Unfortunately for aspiring resume writers, there isn't complete agreement on the best way to write a resume, even among resume-writing experts. What might be considered a perfect resume by some professionals could just as easily receive criticism from others who may be trained to write them differently or who may have a different perspective. Still, there are some basic principles and codes to writing a resume which are widely accepted. As long as you follow those basic guidelines, you can stop worrying about pleasing everyone and focus on creating a resume that is perfect for you.

- Too much repetitive information.
- Boring, uninteresting description of background and experience.
- Sloppy or unattractive presentation.

Jobs do not always go to the most qualified candidates. They often go to the best job hunters. These are the people who have learned to present themselves effectively, both in person and in print.

Companies are often faced with an enormous challenge in the screening and selection of candidates. It's not

uncommon for a reputable firm to receive thousands of resumes for a single job opening. Even with computerized scanning capabilities, such a volume can make a huge time impact on the company's staff members charged with administering the recruiting process.

An employer usually cannot spend more than a few minutes reviewing each resume. Therefore, first impressions count! Only the most interesting, organized, concise, and attractive resumes are likely to move a candidate to the next level.

Resume Stumbling Blocks

Do you know anyone who loves to write resumes? Probably not; it's not an easy or pleasant task. There are a number of stumbling blocks which prevent people from writing effective resumes and keep them from enjoying the process.

Let's take a look at some of the most common obstacles and learn how you can overcome them.

Lack Of Confidence

Who doesn't want to be more confident? Most of us feel confident in some areas of our lives, but lack self-assurance in others. When it comes to resume writing, two major problems of confidence emerge:

1. Lack of confidence in your ability to write, especially a resume.

Throughout our formal schooling years, we became accustomed to having our writing checked and criticized. We often approach resume writing anticipating the inevitable red checks and grades. Increasingly, it appears that few people feel confident writing anything, let alone a resume. Even letter-writing skills have been lost to the telephone and the informal style of e-mail correspondence.

It is difficult to succeed at something if you lack confidence in your abilities. If you believe you can't write a resume, ask yourself if you can learn new skills. People are not born resume writers. They learn how to do

it, much as they learn other skills they have acquired in life.

2. Feeling that you're not good enough for the job you are seeking.

People spend an inordinate amount of time worrying about perceived competition. True, somewhere out there is a person who is probably more qualified than you for a specific job. But keep in mind that each of us has a unique blend of skills, experience, talents, perspectives, and interests which make us highly qualified for certain jobs. It is difficult to judge who is the best person for any particular job, or the most qualified in a specific situation.

Employers may be looking for someone who demonstrates "potential" rather than extensive experience. Then there's that indefinable "chemistry" between an employer and an applicant. It can mean the difference between being hired and being an also-ran.

Little Practice

When were you trained in writing a resume? How many *really good* resumes have you seen? Even if you have attended a resume-writing workshop, the information may have been limited to a particular audience or may now be outdated.

You may have more practice than you realize. When you write a letter to your favorite aunt or email a friend about

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Creating and maintaining a resume should be an ongoing activity, not a reaction to your ever-changing employment goals.

what you’ve been up to lately, you are in a sense practicing writing a resume. After all, both types of communication are about you and your experiences.

Hasty Preparation

Trying to write a resume at the eleventh hour is all too common. In most instances it is due to procrastination, stemming perhaps from apprehension over some of the stumbling blocks reviewed in this section.

It could be that you just read or heard about a job opening, and the deadline is tomorrow. So, you sit down at your computer, burning the midnight oil, trying to compose an interesting profile of yourself. And after knocking yourself out, you may still be unsatisfied with this hastily prepared resume. Does this sound familiar?

Creating and maintaining a resume should be an ongoing activity, not a reaction to your ever-changing employment goals. Work on your resume in preparation to beginning a job search — or better yet, at a time when you’re happily employed. Don’t put off updating your resume until the last minute, or you’ll be fretting about it the night before an important deadline.

Lack of Focus

Since resume writing is not perceived as an enjoyable task, people will often try to produce one version they can use for every possible situation. They hope it will require only occasional updating.

Unfortunately, these resumes are

usually the ones that end up in employers’ wastebaskets. Writing an all-purpose resume is like writing an all-purpose thank-you note. Would you thank your Aunt Sue for a birthday gift with the same message you sent to your cousin Frank for his invitation to dinner?

Resumes, like any message, have a distinct purpose. Your success as both a job seeker and resume writer depends on how effectively you tailor your message to each situation. If the job is worth going after, pursue it with a resume that has been carefully produced with that goal in mind.

Narrow View of Skills and Abilities

People tend to have a limited view of their skills and usually describe themselves only in terms of the jobs they have held. The concept of “transferable skills” is extremely important to the processes of career development and resume writing. This idea has been promoted by such career planning experts as Richard Bolles, author of *What Color Is Your Parachute?* and is also covered in the companion to this book, *Getting Your Next Job* (available at JobJournal.com). By evaluating your transferable skills, you broaden your perspective regarding the types of jobs you are qualified to do and the different industries you could work in.

Throughout our lives, we develop and polish our skills by applying them to new situations and environments, by solving increasingly complex problems, and by

If a job is worth going after, do it with a resume that has been carefully produced with that goal in mind.

learning new ways to use those skills. Let's explore an example:

At ten years of age, Randy set up a lemonade stand on his front lawn. When he was thirteen, he went door-to-door offering magazine subscriptions. In high school, he took a job behind the counter at a men's clothing store. At nineteen, he worked as an independent distributor for a vacuum cleaner company. After college, he began selling life insurance.

In this example, the functional skill is selling. "Functional" means a combination of related skills which together produce a specific result — in this case, selling or sales. There is a tendency to assume that we don't learn marketable employment skills until we are recognized as adults seeking permanent, full-time employment. As this example illustrates, Randy developed his sales skills throughout his life, *transferring* them from one situation to another.

The point is that if you have been successful in your application of skills in one setting, you can successfully apply them to another setting. This helps explain why people, more and more, are changing careers several times in their lives.

It also explains how stay-at-home mothers can make successful transitions to careers outside of the home, or how people from a variety of backgrounds make significant contributions in volunteer work by applying their skills to those activities.

Recent high school and college graduates can become successful in new jobs, too, by transferring skills developed in many involvements such as part-time employment, sports, volunteer work, and school activities.

You are the best judge of your skills. Therefore, *you* must be responsible for conducting a comprehensive inventory of your life experiences in order to identify all the marketable skills you have developed.

Lack of Feedback

If you sent a resume to a prospective employer and were invited to interview for the job, you have some idea of how your resume was received. However, if you received a rejection letter, or if you received no response at all, you probably don't really know why. It could have been because:

- The job was already filled by the time your resume was received.
- You lacked the skills and experience desired or there were others more qualified than you.
- Your resume was considered a poor presentation and was immediately rejected.
- You failed to include a cover letter with your resume.
- Other factors beyond your control influenced the employer.

Writing a resume can be a lonely experience. Very few of us actually show

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Share your resume with someone who can give you either a professional opinion or a candid impression.

our resumes to others to solicit their constructive criticism. Even if we do, they may have little knowledge of resume writing. Often we prepare a resume in private because we don't want our co-workers, friends, or even family to know we are looking for a new job.

However, feedback at this point is critical to the success of your resume. Therefore, you should share your resume with someone who can give you either a professional opinion or a candid impression. Others might detect serious errors you may have overlooked.

The only thing worse than negative feedback is no feedback. But in either case, you should make every effort to analyze your resume, evaluate the possible circumstances that may have contributed to the rejection, and decide how you can improve your resume or change your approach in applying for future job openings. Put yourself to the test. Do not allow lack of feedback to become one of your dominant stumbling blocks.

Underestimating the Challenge

We all would like the resume-writing process and job-hunting experience to be easier than they are. The same could be said for earning a college degree, purchasing your first house, or raising

children. None of these projects is "easy," but most people would agree that the effort is more than worthwhile.

Although creating one is not easy, a good resume is essential to a successful job search and, ultimately, career success.

Not Including a Cover Letter

Once you do have an effective resume in hand, don't send it off alone. Be sure to include a proper cover letter. The cover letter is one of the most ignored elements of a successful job-hunting strategy but essential to making a positive impression on a prospective employer. A good cover letter introduces you to a recruiter, persuades him to consider you as a viable candidate, and compels him to read your resume. It serves as an example of your communication skills, resourcefulness, and professionalism. More than anything, taking the time to compose a thoughtful cover letter shows that you have a true interest in the job!

Cover letters are so important, in fact, that many employers will not review your resume at all if it is not accompanied by one. For more information on how to write them effectively, see the chapter titled "The Cover Letter" at the end of this guide.

Taking the time to compose a thoughtful cover letter shows that you have a true interest in the job!

The Screening Process

Understand the general process an employer uses in screening job applicants and selecting a person for the job.

Before you prepare a resume and submit it to a prospective employer, there is a great deal of research that you must do to be successful in your job quest. Start by understanding the general process an employer uses in screening job applicants and selecting a person for the job.

Resume Review Process

Skilled personnel and human resources managers use a six-step review process:

Step One:

Identify Job Requirements

The exact job requirements are determined by either the department manager or a human resource professional. Anticipate this step by listing the job requirements the employer advertised plus others you feel may apply. Then highlight your skills and experience in your resume to match these requirements.

Step Two:

Determine Skill Requirements

The employer considers what skills and attributes a candidate would need to achieve excellent job performance in two areas:

- “Can do” criteria that relate to functional skills.
- “Will do” criteria associated with intangible characteristics, like overall attitude.

For example, if the Management Information Systems Department of a

lending institution is seeking a programmer/analyst, “can do” criteria might include:

- *Two years of data processing experience, systems design, and programming expertise.*
- *Knowledge of networking as well as online and batch systems.*
- *Familiarity with specified operating systems and programming languages.*
- *College degree in computer science or related field.*
- *Knowledge of accounting, insurance, or an industry related to financial services.*

A list of “will do” items could include:

- *Ability to work effectively under pressure.*
- *Problem-solving skills.*
- *A team player.*
- *Detail oriented.*
- *Innovative.*

The resume-sorting process starts with separating those that have a “stated job objective” (or some clear indication of career direction) from the others. Job seekers who can define the type of job they want in a dozen words or less are invariably career-oriented. These individuals have weighed their options and determined exactly what type of employment they are seeking.

For example, a well-stated job objective might be:

Job seekers who can define the job they want in a dozen words or less are invariably career-oriented.

A resume may be selected based on the quality of the applicant's experience.

- A managerial position in training.
- An entry-level position in public relations.

Far less effective are generalized and verbose statements, such as:

- A position where I can use my skills and experience to make a significant contribution to a growth-oriented firm.
- A position in a well-established company that provides an opportunity to work in a fast-paced entrepreneurial environment.

Step Three: Evaluate “Can/Will Do” Criteria

The employer then identifies the “can do” criteria of each candidate. For example, there may be a requirement of “five to seven years of product management experience,” but an applicant only lists four years of experience. Although this may disqualify some candidates, a resume may be selected based on the quality of the applicant’s experience or the excellent reputation of his or her current employer.

Next, the “will do” criteria is assessed. This is a more subtle process because it requires an intuitive impression that is based on what is not, rather than what is, listed in a resume. For example, if a job applicant states that he or she recruited, hired, and trained a sales force for a new company, this experience could indicate to an employer that the candidate is persuasive, has interpersonal skills, and can be innovative.

Step Four: Study Experience

The employer reviews work experience and looks for consistent career

advancement. In most cases, talented and successful people are career-minded and attempt to move up the career ladder. Resume readers will look for a change in title or an increase in responsibility. However, time spent in a certain position isn’t always considered to be a positive sign unless it is reinforced by listed accomplishments.

One of the most important criteria in evaluating a resume is the length of time a candidate stayed with each employer. Continuity of employment is equally important. Gaps in the chronology of experience may send up red flags in reviews. A resume that lists jobs with five employers in five years (outside of temporary work, contracting positions, or in some cases high-tech jobs) may indicate to potential employers that the applicant is a job-hopper with a poor performance record or a lack of interpersonal skills. If the firm is seeking a long-term employee, this alone could eliminate a resume from consideration. If your employment background creates this impression, create a **functional resume** to emphasize other, more positive attributes. You may also consider providing some explanation in your cover letter.

Step Five: Examine Accomplishments

Resumes of the job finalists are reviewed to examine the personal accomplishments and identifiable skills of each candidate. Resumes tend to indicate what an applicant was responsible for, but not how well these responsibilities were carried out. Actual accomplish-

Resume readers will look for a change in title or an increase in responsibility.

Employers want to hire people who set their goals high and then work hard to achieve them.

ments, details of successes, and improvements in operations, expenses, or revenues are important to highlight in a resume. These facts create strong, positive impressions in the mind of the reviewer. Employers want to hire people who set their goals high and then work hard to achieve them.

Statements that fit this criteria might include:

- *“Introduced a new procedure that saved the clerical staff 100 hours per month.”*
- *“Consolidated the sales force and concentrated on high end of market to increase revenues by 20 percent.”*
- *“Consolidated routes and reduced the delivery staff, accounting for a monthly savings of \$12,000.”*
- *“Devised and introduced new procedures which reduced overhead by 18 percent and increased sales revenues by 12 percent.”*

Step Six: Review Appearance

The resume screener will also evaluate

the look of each resume. To screeners, your resume’s appearance is almost as important as its content. It is a reflection of a candidate’s neatness, attention to detail, and ability to present credentials in the most effective manner — particularly if accuracy, writing skills, or attention to detail are important elements of the job.

The advent of inexpensive personal computers, word processing programs, and letter-quality printers has made creating professional-looking resumes at home quite commonplace. But with their capabilities comes the temptation to exploit it. Resist the urge to use unusual fonts; instead select no more than two simple, clean typefaces. Make sure you output the final version on a quality printer. Laser printers produce beautiful clarity; some inexpensive ink jet printers may not be capable of producing an image of suitable quality. For more information on creating a professional looking resume, see the chapter titled, [“Appearance and Format.”](#)

Steps to Resume Writing

A great resume doesn't just happen. An attractive, effective resume is the result of preparation and organization . . . and several drafts. These are the basic steps.

1. Compile a list of your experience, work history, and other related activities or accomplishments.
2. Establish one or more objectives for your job search. Remember to accompany each different objective with the appropriate supportive information.
3. Select the resume format you will use. (See “Types of Resumes” for help in deciding whether functional or chronological is best for you.)
4. Select section titles and, if applicable, functional skills headings for your resume.

5. Write descriptive statements for each experience that you consider applicable to your job objective. If you are writing a chronological resume, you should try two or three different ways to describe each job you have held, with each emphasizing different responsibilities. If it's a functional resume, identify two to four major skill areas to highlight. For each skill area, write several descriptive sentences. (The [sample resumes](#) at the end of this book show several different styles of writing that are appropriate.)

6. Put together a rough draft selecting the best statements. Include relevant supplementary sections and additional information (such as awards, military service, or community involvement). Type your rough draft to determine how much space is needed and preview how your resume will look and read.

7. Edit, rewrite, and reorganize your first draft, following the guidelines presented in the next few chapters.

8. When you are ready for final preparation of your resume, review the “Appearance and Format.” chapter.

You'll find these eight resume-writing steps described in further detail on the following pages.

A great resume is the result of preparation, organization . . . and several drafts.

A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words

It is a principle taught by writing coaches: A writer who wants to portray a heroic character should strive to show her committing an act of bravery, rather than simply telling the reader she is brave. The writer, in effect, demonstrates the hero's strength of character and leaves it to the reader to reach their own conclusion.

Applying the same principle — show not tell — just might help you win your next job. The truth is, you are already applying the principle in crafting your resume. Instead of saying you are a great employee, for example, you list accomplishments which show your skills — and let the reader (the hiring company) come to their own conclusions.

Excerpted from “Show ‘em How Far You’ll Go” by Rich Heintz. To view entire article, visit JobJournal.com

Types of Resumes

Chronological resumes are easy to organize and lend themselves to quicker updating.

There are two basic ways to organize a resume: chronological and functional.

Chronological Resumes

This is the traditional approach, using a reverse chronological listing of employment and educational experiences. The most recent job experience is listed first, followed by the previous job, etc. Within each job listing is a synopsis of responsibilities.

Advantages

1. Directly relates your work and educational history, while outlining the order of your career progression.
2. Highlights an impressive and interesting promotion or job history .
3. Can emphasize significant or impressive positions and/or organizations.
4. Most employers are accustomed to reading this type of resume and are comfortable evaluating qualifications presented in this format.
5. Easy to organize and lends itself to quicker updating.

Disadvantages

1. Can be difficult to highlight your skills, abilities, accomplishments, or potential if you are interested in changing your career direction.
2. Information can appear boring or repetitive, especially if you have held several positions with similar duties.

3. Focuses on the past — what you have already done. If you are seeking a position with greater responsibility or in a new field, this resume form may not effectively demonstrate your potential or abilities to support this change.

4. May limit how you describe your capabilities. If you are inexperienced, changing careers, a student, or reentering the job market after a period of unemployment,

5. In a workplace of changing values and more critical demands, employers place increasing emphasis on “What can you do for us?” that is, “What skills or accomplishments do you have to offer?” and “Can you change, learn new work methods, and adapt to a computer-driven environment?” Depending on how sophisticated your experience is, it may be difficult to fully answer these questions in a chronological format.

Functional Resumes

The functional format presents your experience under skill headings, allowing you to group your accomplishments — and relevance to your objective — rather than by chronology. In the pure sense of this format, work history (job titles, company names and dates of employment) are not included. However, it is strongly recommended that this information be listed concisely in a section

Information can appear boring or repetitive, especially if you have held several positions which are very similar.

separate from achievements.

Advantages

1. Emphasizes skills and abilities which are desired by the prospective employer.
2. Demonstrates “transferability” of skills the applicant has acquired in another field or through unpaid activities such as volunteer work. It is most effective for those who are changing careers, reentering the work force, or beginning their careers.
3. Shifts the focus away from an inconsistent or lackluster employment record.
4. Provides the opportunity to design a resume that is more individualized, personalized, interesting, and attractive — one that is more likely to stand out from hundreds of other resumes.
5. Ideal for people who have done very similar tasks for a number of different employers. The format prevents repetitive information.

Disadvantages

1. Some employers are suspicious of functional resumes and will want a more detailed work history. Employers in conservative industries such as law and finance are particularly averse to the functional format.

2. Because there are so many creative options in organizing and writing this type of resume, it may be difficult to format.
3. Since this format deemphasizes chronological progression, a track record of increased responsibilities or career advancement is not showcased.
4. Can create confusion as to what accomplishments were made for particular jobs. This problem can be addressed by indicating the job or employer within the description, i.e. “*Trained twelve Home Depot cashiers.*”

Combination of Styles

Resumes do not have to be purely chronological or functional. It is common to begin with one format and incorporate elements of the other for added effectiveness. This can be done, for example, by highlighting skills and accomplishments within the body of each job description rather than merely listing all the responsibilities associated with each job.

Those choosing the functional approach could include a brief chronological summary of employment either after the objective or at the end of the resume. This highly recommended addition answers employers’ basic questions about specific employment history.

Resumes do not have to be pure forms of either resume type. It’s possible to incorporate functional elements in a chronological format.

Functional resumes are ideal for people who have done very similar tasks for a number of different employers.

Common Resume Components

The purpose of including an objective is to clarify your job goal and focus the reader's attention

A resume contains several components that present relevant and interesting information. Not every effective resume uses the same format or section titles, so select your section titles based on their appropriateness to the resume format and the information presented. Turn to *Resume Samples* for examples. What follows is a review of the most common components used in resumes.

Identification

At the top of the page, either centered or at the left margin, type your name, mailing address, telephone numbers and e-mail address where you can be reached. If your employer is aware of your job search, and you are comfortable being contacted at work, include this telephone number. When your resume has more than one page, type your name at the top of each page.

Objective

A stated objective is highly recommended by career and job placement specialists. It should follow your personal identification information. The purpose of an objective is to clarify your job goal and focus the reader's attention on the importance and relevance of the information which follows.

There are several different titles you may use for this section:

- *Objective*
- *Employment Objective*
- *Career Goal*
- *Professional Objective*
- *Job Objective*
- *Position Desired*

Many job seekers want to keep their options open, and they hope the employer will figure out the job for which they are best qualified. Such candidates tend to compose nondescript "objective" statements like, "*Career-growth position where skills and education can be utilized.*" Or, they may leave the objective out altogether and give no indication of what kind of job they are seeking. But it is not realistic to expect that employers have the time or inclination to determine what position is right for you. Remember — you want to present yourself as someone who is ready to *do* work, not create it.

It is possible to state a broad objective that would lend itself to a variety of positions. For example, "*Administrative position to utilize writing skills*" could be used to pursue many different kinds of jobs, from grant-writing or executive assistant opportunities to paralegal positions. While it's not always necessary to specify your precise job objective in the resume, you should clarify in your cover letter the position you're seeking with each employer you approach.

If you have several objectives that are unrelated, prepare a separate resume for each. While it's easy to draw a relationship between writing and administrative tasks in the example above, it would not make sense to list clearly separate objectives such as retail sales and clinical nursing in the same resume. Information in the body of the resume may need to be reorganized to specifically support each objective.

It is possible to state a broad objective that would lend itself to a variety of positions.

Defining your objective provides the foundation for the rest of the resume, helping you to prioritize what information should be included.

An alternative to the objective statement is to create a brief career profile, an introductory paragraph, indicating what you do and noting key qualifications or areas of expertise. Here’s an example:

Over 25 years strategic management experience in commercial banking, manufacturing, retail and wholesale. Additional 11 years economic development experience with government agencies. Accomplished in new business development and expansion, job creation, and workforce retention. Recognized for exceptional skills in mediation and conflict resolution.

Or, you could give yourself a professional title, such as “John Doe, Building Contractor,” in your resume heading. The idea is to clearly define the type of position you are seeking. Defining your objective also provides the foundation for the rest of the resume, helping you to prioritize what information should be included.

Qualifications Summary

Once you’ve indicated what your job goal is, quickly tell the potential employer why you are qualified to fulfill that goal. A powerful strategy to accomplish this is to create a “Qualifications Summary” or “Key Skills” section. In it, highlight your most important skills and qualifications to pique the reader’s interest in you, enticing them to read the rest of the resume. Remember, a the typical screener spends as little as a minute with a resume, so it is essential that you give them the highlights right

away.

What goes into your qualifications summary must support the objective you’ve stated and be directly relevant to the position you’re applying for. The body of your resume will elaborate on listed skills you’ve acquired and the context of specific accomplishments. The qualifications summary is simply an overview of what you are offering a prospective employer.

There are a number of ways to create such a summary. A resume writer and career consultant, for instance, might write a few statements about himself, such as:

- *Over 10 years experience in resume writing.*
- *Accomplished in interviewing and one-on-one client counseling.*
- *Skilled in use of desktop publishing systems.*

Or, he could list specific skills in keyword fashion:

- *Communications*
- *Counseling*
- *Workshops & Seminars*
- *Writing & Editing*
- *Case Documentation*
- *Public Speaking*
- *Desktop Publishing*
- *Client Referrals*
- *Customer Service*

Experience

This section is the heart of your resume and can be organized using either the chronological or the functional format.

What goes into your qualifications summary must support the objective you’ve stated.

Functional resumes should include a work history summary indicating where you worked and when.

Chronological Format

In writing a chronological resume, describe your paid employment experience by using a category heading such as:

- *Experience*
- *Employment*
- *Work History*

As noted, a chronological resume organizes information with the most recent experience first, followed by the position prior to that, etc. Listing includes the job title, name of the employer and dates of employment. Below each heading are responsibilities from that job.

Functional Format

When writing a functional resume, there are many possible category titles including:

- *Skills & Experience*
- *Qualifying Skills & Abilities*
- *Related Experience*
- *Areas of Expertise*

Functional resumes arrange experience in skills or function categories rather than reverse chronological format. Start with the functional skills area or experience which is most important and relevant to your job objective. Functional categories might be headed with terms such as:

- *Sales & Marketing*
- *Office Administration*
- *Customer Service*
- *Communications*
- *Staffing & Supervision*
- *Financial Management*

It is often helpful to list those skill areas within the objective itself, in the order you will explore them in the resume. For example, an objective could be: “*Administrative position to utilize office management, communications, and customer services skills*” Then, “*Office Management,*” “*Communications,*” and “*Customer Service*” can serve as functional skills headings, with appropriate experience and accomplishments noted under each.

Functional resumes should include a work history summary indicating where you worked and when. You might title such a section:

- *Work History*
- *Employment History*
- *Employment Summary*

Each listing includes the job title, name of the employer and dates of employment.

How Much Detail?

How much experience should you include and how many jobs or functional skills should you list? Most resumes should not exceed two pages in length. After the second page, a resume ceases to be a summary and tends to lose the reader’s interest. Most experts support the guideline of one page per 7-10 years of experience. However, there are excellent two-page resumes written by people with less than five years of full-time employment, as well as outstanding one-page resumes for people with over 15 years of experience. To fit information on two pages or less, you can only describe two to five major jobs or functional skill areas. You must be selective in choosing what to include, and then be concise in your descriptions.

Education

This section can also be titled “*Training*” or “*Education and Training*.” Although frequently listed near the top of a resume, it should not appear first unless it is the most important and relevant information to support your employment objective. Recent graduates from college or a special-training program — or those who receive higher degrees or special certificates relating to their career objective — tend to benefit most from listing education first. Leading with the Education section can be particularly useful for job candidates with an appropriate degree but little experience that’s related to their job goal.

If you have a degree in a field that is unrelated to your current career objective, it should be listed near the end of your resume, if at all. Another option is to deemphasize the degree subject by first listing the school attended.

When presenting educational information, use the reverse chronological format by documenting your most recent educational experience first.

You don’t need to list specific courses you completed or your grade point average. But if you feel this type of information or some specifics about your relevant academic achievements will make you appear more qualified for your objective (as might be the case if you had little related work experience) — include it.

It may also be helpful to briefly describe relevant highlights of additional educational experiences such as seminars, workshops, internships, certifica-

tion programs, and other continuing education activities you may have completed. Remember, prioritize course work, degrees, or certificates that are most relevant to your objective.

Other Components

The following categories form a “menu” from which you can select components to help describe yourself. Some of these may overlap with information under “*Experience*” and a few can be combined to create a broader category.

Military Service

If you served in the military, you should list this experience as it demonstrates characteristics desired by all employers: self-discipline, team work, leadership, and more. You can include it in a chronological resume in the appropriate time frame or in a functional resume either as one of your experiences or as a separate skills category. Make your experience in the service more impressive by describing your military skills, knowledge, honors, and accomplishments. But avoid the use of military jargon; use words that will convey the value of your experience to any reader.

Honors / Awards / Achievements

People tend to narrowly define the concept of achievement to only the most formal or widely recognized accomplishments. You should include work-related awards and achievements (such as “Employee of the Year” awards) under the appropriate positions in your Experience section. For additional accomplish-

List military experience as it demonstrates characteristics desired by all employers: self discipline, team work, leadership, and more.

Recent graduates tend to benefit most from listing education first.

Recognition from your peers and community helps demonstrate your success and potential to a prospective employer.

ments, an “Achievements” or “Recognitions” heading may be appropriate. For example, “Organized first successful community crime-watch program in my neighborhood. Police credit the program with a 30% reduction in burglaries in the first six months of operation.”

Perhaps you were named “Outstanding Volunteer” for your efforts in a volunteer/charity or church organization. Don’t be overly humble about these kinds of recognition from your peers and community. They help demonstrate your success and potential to a prospective employer.

Professional Associations

If your memberships to professional groups or societies provide support to your objective, include them. Do not create a category to mention only one membership; include it under a different heading, such as “Interests or Professional Development.”

Interests / Hobbies

Only include this section if your hobbies and interests are in some way relevant to the position you are seeking. In certain cases your personal activities might make you a more attractive candidate to employers. For example, if you apply for a position in an organization that produces goods and services for athletes, mention that you coach kids in your local soccer league.

Special or Technical Skills

This section might be useful for chronological resumes in which you want to list interesting or important skills and

abilities which were not mentioned in the experience section. It could include areas such as interests or bilingual skills. If you list a second language that you believe the employer will value, indicate whether you read, write, or speak the language. Even if your bilingual skills are rusty, chances are you can easily refresh them if necessary.

Research / Publications / Presentations

These three categories could be covered in a functional resume under such skills areas as “Research and Writing,” “Communications,” or “Public Speaking.” If they are not already covered under experience or if you wish to highlight them further, you can create a special section.

The goal here is not to list every research project, every article published, or every speech you ever gave. Instead, you should provide interesting and representative examples of this kind of work. If you consider these significant and want to highlight them without a listing, you might develop a statement such as, “Extensive experience writing for publications in the areas of corporate finance and tax preparation.” Such a statement could be included in your Qualifications Summary, or it might be included under another heading, such as “Achievements or Special Skills.”

Optional Information

Your resume should focus on communicating the skills and professional expertise that qualify you to work in your

Only include hobbies and interests if they are in some way relevant to the position you are seeking.

desired occupation. Personal information — even hobbies and interests — are optional. In fact, some personal information (such as age and ethnicity) should *not* be included in the resume.

Personal Data

This section use to be a standard component of resumes. It was most often located at the top of the first page with one’s name and address. Usually identified was age, height, weight, gender, marital status, number of children, condition of health, and citizenship status.

Do you really want to be judged by someone who reads “Age: 25” and thinks “too young” or reads “Age: 47” and thinks “too old?” Or maybe the reviewer sees “Height: 5 feet, 9 inches” and thinks “too short for this management job,” or reads “190 lbs” and decides “too heavy for the front office.” While such judgments are obviously unfair and discriminatory, there’s no point in allowing your employability to be sabotaged by narrow-minded resume screeners.

Because such statements can invite bias reactions, they may be inappropriate to include on a resume. Save physical and personal data for the job application, employment benefits form, or other forms that may require that information.

While it is not advisable to include personal information because it can lead to a multitude of subjective impressions on the employer’s part, some people still feel personal information adds depth of character to their resumes which they would not otherwise have the opportu-

nity to create until the interview. Such details can also help an interviewer create a relaxing, conversational opener to defuse the tension of that first meeting. Ultimately, it’s your choice. If you choose to include personal information, present it in a manner that creates a positive impression — and is somehow relevant to your job objective.

For example, you could note, “*I have traveled through many parts of the United States with my spouse (name) and two children, camping, hiking, and skiing. I have enjoyed learning and teaching survival skills with my family and friends, and find that the teamwork value of this experience has been beneficial to my management career.*”

While this type of statement is riskier than listing only relevant work experience, in some cases the approach can actually make you appear more interesting, appealing, and valuable to an employer, helping you to control the initial impression you make.

Relocation

Your resume should indicate only that you are “*willing to relocate,*” and only if this is a factor in the job you are seeking. Further details about the terms of relocation should be handled in your cover letter and subsequent interactions with company representatives. If a prospective job is in a distant city and the company does not indicate it will reimburse for moving expenses, you may want to address this in your cover letter. You can indicate your willingness to negotiate the cost of moving for the job, or even the option of relocating at your

If you choose to include personal information, present it in a manner that creates a positive impression — and is somehow relevant to your job objective.

Some personal information (such as age and ethnicity) should *not* be included in the resume.

Prepare a list of references that you can send to employers upon request, and always bring this list with you to interviews.

own expense if you're concerned the company might screen you out of the recruitment process based on this factor alone. (The final negotiation regarding relocation should take place in the interview, once the position has been offered to you.)

References

References are usually mentioned last, if at all. You need not actually list your references on your resume. Rather, you should state, "References will be provided upon request." Choose individuals with whom you've worked or had professional relationships, if possible.

If you are a recent college graduate,

you may be able to keep reference letters on file with the school's career placement office. If you do, state "References are available upon request from: (name of the placement center, name of college, address, and telephone number)."

Otherwise, prepare a list of references that you can send to employers upon request, and always bring this list with you to interviews. Be sure to verify with your references that you've listed them, and tell them employers might be calling to ask about you and your work style. An alternative to mentioning references on your resume is to make note of it in your cover letter.

Writing Style

Resume writing styles differ from what are considered normal writing styles. In a resume you can do a number of things which are not “correct” in a letter, report, or other form of prose writing.

A review of the resume samples in this guide (see page 46) will assist you in recognizing the differences between resumes and other types of documents.

Guidelines for Perfecting Your Prose

1. A useful writing and organizing principle for resumes is to list the most important, relevant, and interesting information first, positioned near the top of the page or easily visible from the left margin. The reason for this is simple: Most people

reading a resume are rapidly scanning or skimming it. When skimming, the eye focuses quickly on what is presented first. Chronological resumes begin with the most recent experience because it is usually the most relevant and important to the candidate’s objective.

2. Keep sentences and paragraphs short but descriptive.
3. The pronoun “I” is not used in resume writing except, on occasion, in the “objective” or “career profile” sections. Sentences usually begin with verbs, adverbs, or adjectives which immediately describe skills, responsibilities, and accomplishments.

Emphasize achievements and examples of how you applied your skills and abilities.

A Little Book that Helps You Whittle with Words

by Rich Heintz

To me, E.B. White was the co-author of the biggest little book on the English language, *The Elements of Style*. To this day, I recommend the pocketbook to all who want to write better.

Elements is a model of brevity, and by example sets the standard for any aspiring writer. In essence, the authors are saying “See, good writing is easy.” In no more than a few hours, the book will provide you with more insight about writing than you can remember learning in high school or college.

Is better writing worth the effort? Cer-

tainly to someone like myself who deals with words everyday. But what about to the jobseeker or the employee? It can be, especially if you realize that clear writing reflects (and requires) clear thinking.

Sloppy writing, on the other hand, can indicate a shoddy attitude toward your job.

How else can you improve your writing? Below are a few pointers I have developed over the years.

◆ **The key to all good writing is rewriting.** Write the first draft without fear, knowing that you can make any neces-

sary changes on the next go round.

◆ **Use your own words.** Don’t puff up your writing with pompous language. Also avoid jargon. Good writing is creative, complete and concise – several steps above email and below the sentence structure of the tax code.

◆ **Know your audience.** My primary audience is comprised of jobseekers. Who are you writing to? A perspective boss? Your current boss? The board of directors? By imagining your audience as you write, your work will improve. What do they need to know? What will

continued on next page

4. State accomplishments with action verbs to generate interest and help develop an image of what you can do. Examples: developed, organized, administered, supervised, contributed, accomplished. See the next chapter for more examples.
5. Do not simply string together a list of job duties to explain what you did in previous positions. Listing responsibilities alone will not effectively describe what you actually accomplished.
6. Avoid repetition, such as duplicate duties descriptions for similar jobs.
7. Content should emphasize results produced, specific problems overcome, achievements, and examples of how you applied your skills and abilities.
8. Be careful with the use of jargon (language unique to your work or industry) which is not easily understood by those outside your field. This is especially important if you are seeking a new career or type of employment, such as changing from government to business, or from a military career to the field of education.

Your most important and relevant information should appear first.

A Little Book *from previous page*

interest them? What will not?

◆ **Search for the dramatic.** In my business, news is drama. What dramatic things have happened in your career? Search out the unusual and use it in your cover letters. If you are working on a research report for work, organize your writing around the most interesting findings. Let content shape style.

◆ **If you have time, set your writing aside for several days.** You will be surprised what time will tell you. Good writing rings true; weak word-ing wilts.

◆ **Put your subconscious to work.** Sometimes by switching from project to project, I find my subconscious

comes up with a better phrase or approach. I have come to look at the skill as my own personal writing assistant.

◆ **Read what you write.** Sounds pretty basic. Yet consider these errors the Job Journal has received from real applicants. Would you hire the person who wrote "I am very interesting in this position." Or this masochistic soul who wrote "Objective: Seeking an entry-level position with a stale company." How about this possessed individual "Administrative professional with years of experience in a stock broker." Then there is this master of language who wrote: "I have a BA in English. This will avail it's self in the writing of the advertisements. I can writing using phrases and abbreviations as well.

Clearly these writers' thoughts were lost in translation. So were their opportunities.

◆ **Ask a friend to read your work.** Even if you proofread your own writing, you may be missing something. Ask someone whose language skills you respect to give your writing the once over.

◆ **Develop a thick skin.** You have to learn to accept criticism without taking it personally. In any writer's career, red ink flows. The more you embrace the help, the more you will learn.

◆ **Read.** By exposing yourself to the written word, you subconsciously develop an ear for the language.

Excerpted from "The Last Word on Good Writing" by Rich Heintz. To view entire article, visit JobJournal.com

9. Avoid the use of abbreviations unless you use them after spelling out the full word or identification earlier in the text. Examples: company initials, government and military agencies or section initials, educational institution initials, abbreviated or contracted words.
10. Lead each job listing with your position title, followed by the name of the employer and the employment dates. You may choose to boldface the position title, but don't give as much emphasis to the employer or date information, as this is not as important. It is not necessary to include employers' addresses and phone numbers; you can supply this information later if requested.
11. Do not indicate conflicts in previous employment or reasons for leaving jobs. This information is best presented in a face-to-face interview.
12. Avoid listing activities that may be considered frivolous or controversial, and do not mention associations that may lead to unfair bias against you.
13. You may use personal touches and even mild humor in your resume as long as it doesn't overshadow your accomplishments, and the tone does not alienate the reader.
14. Strike a balance between being too modest and exaggerating your abilities or accomplishments. (Most people tend to be overly modest about themselves.)

Resume Vocabulary

Use descriptive words that help the reader quickly understand what you are capable of doing.

An interesting and attention-getting resume employs descriptive words to help the reader quickly understand what you are capable of doing. Finding the right word is not always easy. Be sure to consult a dictionary, thesaurus and any reference books appropriate to your field. They are essential to help you choose proper spelling, grammatical accuracy, and alternative words.

Transferable Skills

The following lists of words and phrases describe skills and abilities which are generally transferable to other jobs and careers. Use them to assemble a descriptive visual image of your strengths and capabilities. The title of each word group serves as a term which summarizes the specific skills that are listed. Some of these lists, such as “Leadership” and “Administrative/Management,” are interrelated.

Human Relations

developing rapport	mediation	conflict resolution	negotiation
problem-solving	customer service	delegating	interviewing

Leadership

motivating others	inspiring trust	initiating	directing
heading meetings	decision-making	recruiting	team-building

Administrative/Management

implementing	delegating	briefing	supervising
coordinating	establishing	negotiating	arbitrating

Influencing/Selling

persuading	marketing	demonstrating	fundraising
representing	promoting	communicating	negotiating

Teaching/Education

assessing	lecturing	facilitating	advising
instructing	presenting	communicating	tutoring

Problem-Solving

identifying	strategizing
planning	analyzing
evaluating	organizing
developing	solving

Think about what you can contribute to a company — what you have that will make the employer want you over other candidates. Always emphasize accomplishments that are relevant to the job for which you are applying.

Creative Design

designing	conceptualizing	drafting	illustrating
inventing	imagining	innovating	drawing

Organization

record keeping	coordinating	organizing	scheduling
integrating	arranging	matching	indexing

Research/Analysis

synthesizing	investigating	analyzing	testing
researching	experimenting	information processing	

Communications

listening	writing	telephoning	reading
articulating	editing	publicizing	generating

Performing

showmanship	public speaking	producing	athletic ability
musical talent	directing	creative talent	demonstrating

Financial

financial planning	budgeting	accounting	forecasting
financial reports	annual reports	trending	bookkeeping

Verbs such as “increased,” “improved,” and “saved” speak very well of you, no matter what field you’re in.

By using “active verbs,” you can create and maintain the reader’s interest.

Active Verbs

By selecting “active verbs” to describe your involvements and accomplishments, you can create and maintain the reader’s interest. Find the title words that relate to your job experience and then check the list that follows for action verbs you can use.

Bookkeeping — Accounting — Financial Management

analyzed	calculated	estimated	reconciled
appraised	compiled	examined	reviewed
budgeted	computed	managed	tabulated

Influence — Persuasion

advised	defined	influenced	persuaded
arbitrated	described	interpreted	promoted
communicated	documented	listened	reconciled
confirmed	explained	motivated	reviewed
coordinated	guided	organized	summarized

<p>Look under headings you don't think would apply to you. Words like "measured" and "created" could apply to many fields.</p>	<i>Developing — Planning — Organizing — Executing — Supervising</i>			
	achieved	directed	instructed	presented
	arranged	documented	judged	recommended
	communicated	evaluated	maintained	scheduled
	contracted	expedited	negotiated	supervised
	defined	formulated	organized	trained
	developed	interviewed	programmed	utilized
	<i>Detail — Follow-through</i>			
	applied	delivered	filed	purchased
	checked	developed	implemented	recorded
compiled	executed	organized	tabulated	
confirmed	expedited	proofread	typed	
<i>Leadership</i>				
conducted	developed	instructed	negotiated	
created	expedited	judged	planned	
defined	formulated	lectured	spoke	
delegated	initiated	managed	supervised	
described	inspired	motivated	visualized	
<i>Artistic</i>				
authored	decorated	illustrated	presented	
arranged	designed	measured	purchased	
assembled	developed	modeled	restored	
built	drafted	observed	sketched	
composed	examined	organized	stenciled	
created	fashioned	photographed	wrote	
<i>Performing</i>				
composed	dramatized	orchestrated	recorded	
conducted	lectured	performed	recited	
demonstrated	modeled	presented	showed	
<i>Travel — Outdoor — Athletic</i>				
boated	flew	mountaineered	skied	
camped	guided	navigated	swam	
climbed	hiked	officiated	traveled	
cultivated	landscaped	ran	walked	

Take advantage of the Thesaurus in Microsoft Word. Select a word, right click (PC), then select "Synonyms" from the menu.

Machine — Manual

accounted	developed	massaged	serviced
blasted	drove	measured	sewed
built	filed	moved	sorted
carried	ground	operated	tabulated
cooked	knitted	parked	transcribed
cut	labeled	pressed	unloaded
delivered	lifted	repaired	washed
designed	loaded	served	weaved

Double-check your resume for spelling and grammatical errors. Then check it again!

Language — Reading — Writing — Speaking — Communications

communicated	described	illustrated	published
composed	documented	interpreted	spoke
created	edited	lectured	summarized
defined	examined	presented	translated
demonstrated	explained	proofread	wrote

Observation — Learning

appraised	detected	estimated	observed
assessed	defined	interpreted	perceived
analyzed	described	judged	read
comprehended	discovered	listened	screened

Instruction— Interpretation — Guidance — Education

advised	delivered	facilitated	organized
aided	demonstrated	guided	persuaded
clarified	designed	influenced	planned
composed	dispersed	instructed	researched
consulted	explained	lectured	trained
counseled	expressed	listened	taught

Serving — Helping — Human Relations

adjusted	communicated	evaluated	provided
advised	conveyed	guided	referred
assessed	counseled	helped	researched
assisted	directed	nursed	served
attended	encouraged	planned	understood

Intuition — Innovation

adapted	developed	interpreted	recognized
applied	formulated	invented	remembered
conceived	imagined	memorized	sensed
demonstrated	improved	perceived	visualized

Research — Investigation — Analysis — Evaluation

anticipated	examined	organized	reviewed
critiqued	grouped	perceived	solved
defined	interviewed	recognized	structured
determined	inspected	researched	surveyed

Powerful Phrases

Here are some phrases that may assist you in identifying and expressing significant accomplishments and achievements:

Boosted sales	Improved morale	Reduced capital investment
Reduced costs	Improved training	Improved quality
Increased earnings	Designed equipment	Increased return on investment
Managed operations	Increased productivity	Conceived new products
Raised efficiencies	Streamlined processes	Developed new procedures
Saved time	Reduced overtime	Improved corporate image

Appearance and Format

Whatever special treatments you use, be consistent in their application throughout the resume.

The immediate visual impact of your resume is extremely important. The adage “You never get a second chance to make a first impression” definitely applies to resume writing and formatting. “Format” refers to the actual look of a resume. An easy-to-read typeface, bullets preceding key phrases, section headings in boldface or italics, secondary phrases indented, extra space between sections — these are all components of a well formatted resume.

You may format your resume on a personal computer, or you may have it professionally formatted and printed by a professional resume service or printer. Today’s sophisticated word-processing and desktop publishing programs offer a wide range of type faces and sizes as well as extra features such as bold or italic print to highlight key skills, achievements, and other important information. If you’re confident in your abilities to format your own resume but don’t have the proper software at home, consider renting time on a PC through a local copy shop, school computer lab, or library.

General Guidelines

Here are some guidelines and suggestions to help you create a professional looking resume that’s sure to make a strong impression.

1. The size and style of type should be easy to read and businesslike. Choose standard fonts such as Arial,

Helvetica, Optima, or Times Roman. Avoid the use of script or other fancy styles of type, which can appear unprofessional and distracting to the reader.

2. Use a good quality “business” paper in 8 ½ x 11 standard business-letter size. Colored paper helps a resume stand out from the predominantly white paper usually found on an employer’s desk. When using colored paper, choose a shade that is soft and appropriately businesslike. Popular choices include ivory, tan, gray, light

Typewriting Your Resume

With personal computers now in over 75% of U.S. households, resumes created on typewriters are becoming quite rare. In fact, anyone who would use a computer on the job is expected to submit a resume created on a PC and printed on a high-quality printer. What should you do if you don’t own a computer? PC’s are readily available at most colleges and can be rented by the hour at many copy centers, such as Kinkos. Or a friend or family member might either let you use their equipment or even create your resume for you.

For jobs that don’t require computer literacy, a typewritten resume is perfectly acceptable. However, those with smudges from clogged typewriter keys, globs of correction fluid or hand-written corrections will never win points with employers. So if you choose to type your resume, create a master on using a high-quality typewriter and bright white paper. Take the time necessary to produce as clean and error-free version as possible. Then use a high-quality copy machine to create duplicates to send out.

blue, or pale yellow. Don't skip on quality by using standard copy bond, and avoid using coated stocks or dark colored papers. Any paper or business supply retailer can help you select the right paper for your needs.

3. Highlight your section headings and other important information by using different fonts or graphic treatments, such as bullets. Experiment with formatting ideas such as capitalizing or underlining section headings, job titles, etc. You may draw attention to titles using bold and/or italic type. Section titles may be centered or left justified along the margin. Whatever special treatments you use, be consistent in their application throughout the resume.
4. Be sure there is enough white space so that the resume is easy to read. If it looks too dense or cluttered, consider whether some details could be stated more concisely or deleted altogether. Never sacrifice content for the sake of a one-page resume, however. Many professionals do need two pages to adequately reflect their job qualifications and relevant credentials.
5. If your resume is two or more pages, use separate sheets. Never print on both sides of one piece of paper.
6. If you work in the creative arts, consider varying the design and format of your resume. If you feel comfortable, you may want to take some liberties with the style of type, color of ink, and paper thickness and

color. However, this should be done with taste and professionalism. For information on portfolio resumes or multimedia presentations, turn to "Alternative Presentations."

7. If there is need for a lengthy, detailed list of information, such as publications, research conducted, educational programs taught, or equipment handled, you may want to produce a separate appendix or supplemental sheet which can be sent either with your resume or upon request by the employer. References should also be prepared on a separate sheet, to be brought to an interview and/or supplied to the company upon request.

Never sacrifice content for the sake of a one-page resume.

Experiment with formatting ideas such as capitalizing or underlining section headings, job titles, etc.

Scannable And Electronic Resumes

Ironically, while technology has brought new and unique capabilities to resume formatting, it is also responsible for electronic and scannable resumes, which require minimal formatting to be received clearly. In an effort to screen volumes of applicants and establish in-house files of potential future candidates, human resources departments are turning to their computers. Today, many companies use modern techniques such as resume scanning (where the paper document is scanned, or "read" by a computer and converted to a text file) and e-mail (where the resume file itself can be sent from one computer to another via digital transmission).

Scannable and electronic resumes are prepared differently from traditional

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resumes presented in paper directly to employers. If you know your resume will be scanned, or if you want to prepare a resume that can be sent as an independent computer file (either to e-mail recruiters or to submit to resume banks on the Internet), the following guidelines are crucial.

First, understand how the receiving or scanning computer will “see” your resume. Using OCR (optical character recognition) software, a scanner will “read” it line by line, from left to right, with no regard for indented margins, tabs or columns, bullets, or font treatments such as italics and bold type. It will “scroll” the document from top to bottom, so the one- or two-page resume dilemma will become irrelevant. Some scanners limit the number of characters it will read horizontally, and there may be a limit on the amount of information a scanning file will hold for each document.

The ideal way to prepare your resume to be scanned is to find out from the company you’re applying to what scanning parameters their equipment requires. Most larger companies — especially high-tech firms — have brochures with guidelines for best scanning results. If you’re unsure, here are some general guidelines:

- If you’re using a personal computer, make a file copy of your resume under a second file name so that you will not overwrite your beautifully formatted resume.
- Then, proceed to take out all format-

ting. Delete margins and indents so that all your text is left justified. Take out bullets and other graphics, along with columns or tabs.

- If you have skills or other key qualifications/information tabbed horizontally in groupings or tables, list them vertically, one on each line.
- Eliminate bold, italics, and underline treatments, so all the text is plain and clear. It’s okay to leave capitalizations, as long as the letters are not touching each other.
- Use one line each for your name, address, and phone number. Be sure to choose a simple font such as Arial, Helvetica, or Optima which have no serifs (the “caps” and “feet” of letters like those used in this text). Do not include any graphics, such as shaded borders, drawn images or lines.

Now, the resume won’t be as pretty and it may not appear to highlight job titles or special skills as your formatted version does, but there are other ways to impress a scanner. The *content* of the resume is what captures the scanner’s attention. After all the text goes into its database, the software will sift through it looking for key terms and phrases which indicate your qualifications for a given job. If you’ve taken care to use appropriate industry terms and identify specific skills required for the job, the scanner will probably flag your resume as one that should be considered and reviewed more carefully. One way to do this is to review

The *content*
of the resume
is what
captures the
scanner’s
attention.

If you aren't sure how a prospective employer wants resumes, and you want to cover all your options, send both versions.

the recruitment ad or job announcement before preparing your scannable resume.

Another way is to talk to someone knowledgeable about the job you're pursuing to find out what skills, credentials and terminology are important.

Finally, print your scannable resume on quality, plain white paper using a high-resolution printer. Do not print scannable resumes on colored paper, even if it is a pale shade.

If you're preparing an electronic resume, keep it in a simple text-only file which can be posted at career-search websites or sent as an attachment to e-mail correspondence. The same guidelines for creating scannable resumes also apply to electronic resumes.

No matter how much you use your scannable or electronic resume, don't

underestimate the power of the fully formatted resume. Just as computers have not resulted in a "paperless society," electronic resume databases do not eliminate the usefulness of a professional-looking resume on quality *paper*. The visual design, the way it feels in one's hand, the color and texture of the paper — these things are absent with the electronic version.

Therefore, it's recommended that job seekers always try to get the real thing in front of a hiring manager, even if the same information is already in the company's resume database.

If you aren't sure how a prospective employer wants resumes, and you want to cover all your options, you can send both versions.

The Problem Resume

This chapter is principally devoted to uncommon “problems” that are not applicable to most resumes. If you are comfortable with the way your current resume sells your skills, you may not need to review this section. However, if you feel you may have a problem with your work history or if you know you need to overcome experience or education deficiencies, health-related problems, termination, or even the possibility of gender discrimination, this chapter will be of interest to you.

Most job hunters have a work profile that supports their job search and enables them to be competitive with other applicants. But some job seekers find themselves with a less-than-desirable education background or work history. These people have “resume problems” which make it difficult for them to create a resume that appeals to employers.

Knowing how to address these problems is critical to being selected for a new job. Failure to identify and appropriately deal with problems in a resume significantly decreases your chance of receiving the crucial first interview. To help you compose a successful resume, this section addresses the most common resume dilemmas. Employment experts indicate that approximately 80 percent of all problem resumes involve these eight areas:

Age — Applicant is thought to be too old for the position.

Job Hopper — Applicant has worked too many different jobs in a short period of time.

Employment Gap — Applicant has experienced a lengthy period of unemployment or underemployment (work in lesser positions).

Disability — Applicant has a physical or mental handicap which may be considered to impede performance.

Gender — Although sexism in employment has been minimized through equal opportunity laws, some employers still feel certain jobs require a male or female.

Education Deficiency — Applicant lacks a college degree or the educational requirements necessary to support the stated employment objective.

Experience Deficiency — Applicant has insufficient experience or does not have the specific experience required for the position.

Changing Career Fields — Applicant lacks the experience required for the job in a new career field.

Ultimately, however, the controlling factor regarding any potential problem is the principle of supply and demand. If your type of experience or skill is rare and of high value, employers are more

Knowing how to address these problems is critical to being selected for a new job.

Some job seekers find themselves with a less-than-desirable education background or work history.

As the baby boomers continue to age, there is likely to be less age discrimination in coming years due to a shrinking labor pool.

willing to overlook potential problem areas in the evaluation process. Conversely, if the industry in which you are seeking employment has a glut of potential workers (entertainment, for example), problem areas may be extremely difficult to overcome.

If one of these problem areas applies to you, use the following information and suggestions to develop an effective resume that deemphasizes your potential obstacle.

Age

Is age still an obstacle to employment? The answer is influenced by two major factors: demographics and civil rights legislation.

You are probably aware of the changing age profile of this country, often described as “the graying of America.” Older persons are becoming a larger percentage of the population, with younger people dropping in percentage. One fortunate effect is that as the baby boomers continue to age, there is likely to be less age discrimination in coming years due to a shrinking labor pool and the median age of the nation’s work force. These changes will become evident in the workplace as people take a more positive attitude toward older workers.

The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 makes it illegal for employers to discriminate on the basis of age when making employment decisions. Although this law has minimized the use of age in employee selection, there is still some covert discrimination. When two

candidates present comparable or equal qualifications, many employers hire the younger worker. Since this is an illegal action, the hiring manager may scrutinize

Are You “Too Old”?

For many hiring managers and specialists, the age question now only relates to the level of the job being considered. For example, an individual who is 40 to 50 years of age may not be considered too old for a position as vice president or department manager. It usually takes 20 to 25 years of experience to develop the qualifications for a position at this level. In contrast, a 25- to 30-year-old person may be acceptable over a 45-year-old for an engineering or sales position that only requires a few years of experience. Most firms would question why a 45-year-old with 25 years of experience would be interested in a position which requires minimum qualifications, unless the candidate has made a transition to a new career.

Traditionally, the following guidelines would indicate progressive levels in a “career ladder” path within a particular industry.

- Age 25-30** Junior-level staff positions
- Age 30-35** Senior-level staff positions
- Age 35-40** First-level managerial positions
- Age 40-45** Mid-level managerial positions
- Age 45-50** Vice president-level positions
- Age 50+** Executive-level positions

But with a rapidly changing work culture — and especially the flattening of organizational hierarchies reducing traditionally intricate levels of middle management — the future career path might include many more professional positions at all levels. For this reason, it may be more useful to consider a position to be appropriate if it promises a challenging growth opportunity commensurate with your skills.

the experience and qualifications of the older applicant in an attempt to cite the absence of a job-related qualification. Therefore, an impressive resume can certainly help diminish the age issue in the eyes of open-minded employers.

Of course, having special skills in a high-demand market effectively neutralizes age discrimination. In addition, smaller firms or those with less comprehensive benefit packages typically exhibit a more flexible attitude toward age.

There is nothing wrong with withholding your age from your resume, as long as you don't lie. To do this, omit hints to your age such as graduation dates from high school, college, or other educational institutions, as well as long-past dates associated with professional publications in which you had material published.

Don't list every job you've held since the beginning of your career. Just list your most recent positions and employers, going back about 10 years. Only list sufficient experience to establish that you are skilled and have the experience to handle the position for which you are applying. A basic rule to remember is: Since it is not necessary to list *all* past employment experience, omit work history that doesn't strengthen your candidacy for a job.

However, an employment application is different. Usually a chronological listing of your last six to ten employers is requested. If you are given a choice, try to avoid completing a formal application until after you have been interviewed, at least on the telephone.

Do not feel guilty about disguising your age! It is illegal for employers to discriminate on the basis of your date of birth. If your resume is screened by an age-discriminating department manager, you may never get the chance to interview with the unbiased department vice president.

Job Hopper

Have you held too many jobs in a short period of time? There are plenty of good reasons for job changes, but employers tend to frown on an unstable work history — which in today's economy is not always defined so much by numerous jobs, but by the lack of any long-term commitment to any one employer.

Stability may be defined differently from one field to another. During the dot.com boom of the late 1990's, frequent job changes were not only commonplace among those with technical skills, they were expected. Jobhopping is also common in the sales field as well, and looked at positively if it resulted in increased productivity.

Unless high turnover or contract work is common to an applicant's industry, a candidate can leave a negative impression by chronologically listing numerous jobs held in a short period of time on his resume. This job seeker is usually labeled "unstable." It is assumed that his job hopping behavior will continue and that it is not in the best interest of an employer to hire him.

Remember, a business must bear a substantial cost to recruit, hire, and train an employee and, additionally, may risk

There are plenty of good reasons for job changes, but employers tend to frown on an unstable work history.

There is nothing wrong with withholding your age from your resume, as long as you don't lie.

Use the functional resume format to lessen the impact of past job turnover.

legal troubles should termination become necessary. Therefore, a hiring manager is responsible for controlling recruitment expenses by only considering those candidates who have a reasonable probability of staying with the company for the expected period of time. If you feel you may be classified as a job hopper, there are some steps you can take to improve the appeal of your resume.

In the event your resume looks “unstable,” with gaps of more than one year between employment, use the functional resume format to lessen the impact of past job turnover. The initial presentation of major experience and accomplishments may offset the chronological listing of dates in your employ-

ment history section. Focusing on major accomplishments and substantial contributions to previous employers will create a positive image and help to deemphasize an inconsistent employment history.

Employment Gap

A long period of unemployment or underemployment can cast a shadow on your resume. Underemployment (working a job far below your skill level or working sporadic part-time jobs) and unemployment indicate to an employer that you have had difficulty finding work in the past.

It is natural for employers to question why a person with excellent credentials has experienced a significant gap in

Answering “Why Did You Leave?”

Generally, providing reasons on your resume for leaving past employers is not recommended. Even if the reasons tend to be things that were beyond your control, it’s best to refrain from discussing them until you are interviewed. If you are specifically asked for this information beforehand, such as on an application form, here are some circumstances that may offset the negative impression of job changes:

Major Shift in Company — Company was sold, new management brought in, operation restructured, or offices moved.

Reorganization — Department or posi-

tion eliminated, company dropped a product or line of business, or a change in marketing philosophy resulted in job consolidation.

Early Retirement — Accepted an offer to retire.

Budget Reduction — Eliminated your job, deemphasized the need for your skills.

Although health reasons or lack of advancement opportunity may be viable causes for job separation, use these reasons with caution. Some employers will see such statements as a disguise for discontent with a previous boss or company.

Unacceptable reasons for leaving past employers include absenteeism, chronic lateness, poor performance, dishonesty, incompatibility with the job or company policy, or personality conflict with a boss.

Be prepared for a thorough employment check by your prospective employer. This has become standard procedure due to the high cost of recruitment and employment. Therefore, you can readily understand why it may be important for an employer to discover the reason you left a company, especially if the circumstances could be interpreted as unacceptable.

employment. They will likely assume that something is wrong. Here again, you could be identified as a “risk” by potential employers.

Are there ways to overcome this problem? Yes. Simply do not point out employment gaps in your resume work history. If you were unemployed from December 16, 2001 to August 1, 2002, indicate on your resume :

WORK EXPERIENCE

2002 to present: Product Manager,
Delta Corporation

1998 to 2001: Information Specialist
Gamma Corporation

~~No law requires resumes to include all~~

periods of employment or unemployment. Remember, the resume is only intended to be a brief overview of experience and credentials.

If you decide not to include information that indicates periods of unemployment or underemployment on your resume, be prepared to offer an explanation during an interview. If the employer uncovers your employment gap in a thorough investigation of your references and past employers, your candidacy could be jeopardized.

Disability

While the marketplace has matured in recent years and provided more opportunity for workers with physical disabilities, it is still an issue that must be considered. Some conditions are physical impairments that interfere with the performance of life functions (sight, hearing, walking, use of arms or hands, etc.). Others may stem from a disease or medical disorder (e.g., heart disease, cancer, AIDS, MS) or they may be caused by a temporary disabling condition such as allergies, asthma, or migraine headaches.

Federal law prohibits employers from discriminating against candidates on the basis of physical handicaps, where “reasonable accommodation” would enable such candidates to satisfactorily perform the job. Further, the law requires that reasonable accommodation be provided to enable disabled individuals to perform their jobs. Special desks, chairs, ramps, and modified rest room facilities must be available for use.

A long period of unemployment or underemployment can cast a shadow on your resume.

The Consulting Conundrum

While more and more businesses are completing work through outsourcing, contracting, and temporary assignments, the frequency of acceptable job changes varies by industry. What is common in one field may be unusual in another. Certain professionals may be involved with consulting firms that hire and retain a full-time work force based on a contract, for instance. When a major project is completed, many of those professionals are released. Similarly, someone working for a temporary agency may have many “jobs” or assignments at various firms that contract with the agency. On your resume, list notable contract or temporary assignments under the name of the employing agency or contracting firm, with the dates employed by that firm. While the projects you completed and the companies you worked with may be notable, the agency or firm that brought you on to do the work is technically the employer. Generally, an experienced employment specialist or human resources professional is aware that frequent turnovers may be normal in cases like these.

If you choose to advise an employer of your disability prior to interviewing, do so in your cover letter.

But the pressing question is whether a person should list a disability in his resume. Generally speaking, no. If it is to be mentioned it should be handled in the cover letter. Ultimately, this is really an individual issue. If you are the type of person who is comfortable with your disability and not embarrassed when someone reacts awkwardly when they first meet you, then don't mention your disability prior to the interview.

On the other hand, some people feel it is a courtesy — and reassuring — to inform an interviewer of a disability in advance, especially in cases of dramatic physical appearance where there is concern that the employer might assume a candidate is incapable of fulfilling the duties required of the job. If you feel compelled to advise the employer in advance, do so in your cover letter. Provide an accurate account of your limitations, but also include details on how you have performed successfully in previous jobs.

No matter how you address this problem, make sure you don't overdo it. Stress your worth and capability as a prospective employee and discuss why your condition will not prohibit you from meeting all job responsibilities and expectations.

Gender

Many jobs that were once identified as either "male" or "female" positions are now being handled by both sexes. When intelligence or experience is required, discrimination tends to be minimized. When bodily strength is called for, a

problem persists, since some employers still consider physical work to be "men's work."

In any event, if you have the qualifications and experience in today's more profit-sensitive climate, smart employers will not discriminate. Laws prohibit it and it's simply bad business. Employers still want to hire the best person for the job.

If you feel a specific job may be considered with some gender bias, dispel preconceived notions in your resume with an array of accomplishments, skills, and experience that can't be overlooked by a prospective employer. For example, if travel is necessary, mention that you are available and capable of handling this requirement. Or, if tools are required, note that you have your own.

When you are seeking a job in an industry dominated by the opposite sex, establish that you are aware of this circumstance but don't feel it is a problem. If you have had a successful experience working in a similar environment, point this out. In most instances, gender is only a problem if you allow it to be.

Education Deficiency

Many people feel that a college degree is critical to success in today's business world, and without one they will forever be overlooked when applying for jobs. The truth is, a college degree may be quite important at the beginning of your career, but becomes less so as you gain real-world skills and experience. By the time you reach your thirties, most recruiters are far more interested in what you've done for previous employers than

In most instances, gender is only a problem if you allow it to be.

whether or not your name is on a piece of parchment. This issue may be more in your head than the minds of hiring managers.

Still, some employers feel job candidates should have the appropriate credentials (associate's, bachelor's, or advanced degree) they consider "necessary" to handle certain positions in their companies. This is a reality you will have to address if you expect to receive an invitation to interview for a job.

If a B.A. in journalism is required and you do not have one, this could represent a major stumbling block. But if you have a B.A. in communications, the situation may not be so bad, since these degrees are closely related. Or you may have a degree that is not as closely related, such as a B.S. in anthropology. Since an employer is more interested in whether you can fulfill the requirements of the position, you can point to your experience and accomplishments to demonstrate that you are capable of handling the job responsibilities. This is particularly true when you have acquired skills that are in high demand. On the other hand, if your field has many candidates with comparable skills seeking the same positions, proper educational credentials will play a more important role in the resume review process.

The key to overcoming an educational deficiency is to stress your experience and accomplishments at the beginning of your resume and list your educational credentials toward the middle or end. This can be done whether you use the chronological or functional resume

format.

If you do not have the degree indicated but can offer a related degree, emphasize course work which complements the requirements of the job you are seeking. Your challenge is to convince an employer that your degree has equipped you with an education comparable to the credentials traditionally identified with the job.

If you lack a degree altogether, you may not want to emphasize or include education on your resume at all. Your career may have started from an entry-level position, and because of your intelligence and commitment you were able to advance to a high level in your career field. By drawing attention to the fact that you did not receive the traditional degree expected of job candidates in your field, you may be disregarded as a candidate before you have had an opportunity to convince an employer of your value.

Again, you should refrain from "telling the whole truth" until you have a chance to impress a prospective employer during an interview with your experience and accomplishments. By carefully constructing your resume, you will create an opportunity to detail your credentials in an interview rather than be rejected in the resume-screening process.

Experience Deficiency

Employers tend to be more flexible regarding the actual years of experience required than they are with educational requirements.

Sometimes, workers with knowledge

A well-constructed resume can ensure you get the opportunity to detail your credentials in an interview, rather than be rejected in the resume-screening process.

Emphasize course work which complements the requirements of the job you are seeking.

There are some strategies you can employ to improve your chances for an interview.

and training can overcome a lack of experience with motivation and desire. A drive to succeed may lead them to out-produce experienced counterparts. Unfortunately, it is difficult to convince a manager that a person with a drive to succeed but not the required experience can perform the job better than more seasoned candidates. So, if there are sufficient applicants who meet the experience requirement, candidates without comparable backgrounds are not likely to be considered.

Lack of experience is a difficult problem to overcome, but there are some strategies you can employ to improve your chances for an interview. Consider using the functional resume with some modifications:

- In lieu of a career profile summary at the beginning of the resume, use an objective statement that clearly defines your job goal. There is no point focusing attention on the fact that your career does not illustrate the desired experience.
- Instead of “Major Accomplishments,” use a heading such as “Key Qualifications” or “Skills and Abilities” to highlight applicable experience, course work, or personal attributes that help qualify you for the position.

Since you do not have enough directly related experience, consider other qualifications a prospective employer may be looking for in a candidate for the job you are seeking. Even people with little work experience have skills valu-

Withholding Information

Should you withhold “problem” information altogether from a prospective employer? *Definitely not.* While you do not need to include all details of your work history and education on a resume, there is a time and place to provide additional information. Include it on applications and, when appropriate, volunteer details during interviews. By introducing less-than-favorable details in person, you can neutralize any negative implications as you provide a more complete explanation. Since you can expect employers to thoroughly check your employment history and references, it is in your best interest to volunteer and qualify what might be considered negative information.

able to most employers. Honesty, integrity, a strong work ethic, and good judgement are just a few examples. Always keep in mind that your primary objective is to overcome an experience deficiency by redirecting the employer’s attention to qualities that are essential to successfully performing in the position.

Changing Careers

A change in career fields presents much of the same issues as does an experience deficiency. While you may have a great deal of experience in your old field, the greater the difference between that one and your new field, the more inexperienced you will appear to a prospective employer. Take the same actions you would take if you had an experience deficiency, and be sure to promote transferable skills.

Be aware that some employers might

Even people with little work experience have skills valuable to most employers.

be suspicious of your motives in making a career change — even in a time when multiple career transitions are more common. So, be prepared to provide a logical explanation.

Reasons for your decision should be presented in your cover letter, especially if your resume is in a chronological format which does not appear to indicate a natural transition to the field. Avoid

stating the negative reasons that may have influenced your decision to make a career change. Instead, concentrate on one or two major reasons why you feel your transitional skills and enthusiasm for the new field will help you benefit the company and its bottom line.

Resume Samples/Templates

On the following pages are typical resumes in need of repair. An ORIGINAL version of each resume is displayed on odd-numbered pages. On the following even-numbered pages are REVISED versions that contains many of the resume-writing techniques

presented in this guide.

Remember — these are not intended to be examples of “the ideal resume.” There is no such thing. Use them as a guide to assist you in preparing a resume that is informative, persuasive, and professional.

Resume Samples

Chronological Style Emphasizing Expertise	page 48
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Chronological Style Emphasizing Experience	page 52
Chronological Style Highlighting Qualifications	page 54
Functional Style Emphasizing Transferable Skills	page 56
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Resume Worksheets

Chronological Resume Style	page 59
Functional Resume Style	page 60

ORIGINAL

Bob Smith
101 Elm Street
Sacramento, California 95999
Office: (916) 555-2222
Home: (916) 555-6666
E-mail: lbigstud@hotmail.com

Birth Date: 6/23/75
Height: 5'11"
Weight: 180 lbs.
Health: Excellent
Marital Status: Single

EDUCATION:

B.A., English, University of California, Davis, 1997.

John Hoover H.S., Vacaville, California, graduated 1993.

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY:

Amazing Gadgets, Roseville, California, 2001 to present. As Account Supervisor, I was responsible for all aspects of sales management for one product line, including planning and coordination of sales campaign; preparation of new products' sales presentations; supervision of reps; and other projects as assigned.

Wonder Foods, Sacramento, California, 1997 to 2001. As Account Representative, I was responsible for the sales and marketing of company products in a six-state region.

Big Al's Saloon, 1995 to 1997. Bartender.

ABC Computer Warehouse, 1993 to 1995. Salesman.

Dion's Video Emporium, 1991 to 1993. Counter Attendant.

HOBBIES: Football, basketball, tennis, sailing, writing, travel, and volunteer work.

BOB SMITH

101 Elm Street
 Sacramento, California 95999
 (916) 555-6666
 bsmith@hotmail.com

REVISED
 RESUME TYPE:
Chronological
 EMPHASIS:
Expertise
 PAGE 48

OBJECTIVE: Management position in sales/marketing division of a major retail or wholesale products business.

- EXPERTISE IN:**
- Sales
 - Marketing
 - Customer Relations
 - Product Line Development
 - Merchandising
 - Advertising
 - Maintaining Key Accounts
 - Complaint Investigation
 - Supervision

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

2001-present *Amazing Gadgets, Roseville, California.*
 A leading wholesale manufacturer of automotive parts, with annual sales of \$200 million.
 As Account Supervisor, responsibilities include:

- Coordinate sales and advertising of all product lines in major account representing 25 percent of the total market volume.
- Plan and execute sales campaigns.
- Prepare detailed presentations of new products.
- Direct and supervise 10 sales and marketing representatives.

Achievements:

- Entered marketing area with a budget deficit of 14 percent; increased sales and profits 20 percent above budget.
- Achieved 40 percent distribution on new product line.

1997-2001 *Wonder Foods, Sacramento, California.*
 A Fortune 1000 company which produces cereal food-products.
 As Account Representative, responsibilities included:

- Sales and marketing of company products in over 200 stores and five food-product wholesale distributors in a six-state region.
- Development of a major marketing survey which resulted in the use of new sales strategies and a 40 percent increase in sales during a two-year period.

Achievements:

- Created an excellent relationship with all clients and added 30 new accounts.
- Generated an overall sales increase of 57 percent within assigned sales territory.

EDUCATION: Bachelor of Arts in English, University of California, Davis, 1997.
 Attended many courses and seminars on sales, marketing, management, and planning.

INTERESTS: Travel, writing, tennis, sailing, team sports, community volunteer work with adolescents.

References will be provided upon request.

ORIGINAL

Susan Jones
101 Main Street
Oakland, California 94888
Home: (510) 555-0000
Mobile: (510) 555-5555

Height: 5'6"
Weight: 120 lbs.
Age: 27 years old
Single

EDUCATION

B.S.A., Humanities, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 1998.

Plains H.S., Sidney, Nebraska, Graduated 1994.

JOB HISTORY

2000-present TREND Department Store, Career Wardrobe Division, Oakland.
Position: Buyer. Duties include management of purchasing, supervision of salespeople, marketing research, visiting markets, meeting with manufacturers' representatives, verification and authorization of all invoices, reduction of inventories, etc.

1998-2000 Fashion Boutiques Unlimited, Lincoln, Nebraska.
Position: Assistant Buyer. Duties included: purchase of women's sportswear, record-keeping, meeting with marketing representatives, customer survey, etc.

1996-1998 Fashion Boutiques Unlimited, Lincoln, Nebraska.
Position: Salesclerk. Duties included: Sales, inventory, restocking. Worked 30 hours/week to earn tuition expenses.

1995-1996 The Ice Cream Palace, Lincoln, Nebraska. Counter Clerk.

1994-1995 Admissions Department, University of Nebraska-Lincoln,
Office Receptionist.

1992-1994 Held various jobs as baby-sitter, waitress, and salesclerk.

HOBBIES

Dance
Painting and Textile Art
High School Cheerleading
Costume Design and Sewing

REVISED
 RESUME TYPE:
Chronological
 EMPHASIS:
Skills
 PAGE 50

SUSAN JONES

**101 Main Street
 Oakland, California 94888**

**Home: (510) 555-0000
 Mobile: (510) 555-5555**

OBJECTIVE: Buyer position in women’s apparel for established retail organization.

EXPERIENCE:

Buyer, Career Wardrobe Division, TREND Department Stores, 2000 to present

Responsibilities and accomplishments:

- Manage all purchasing activities within Career Wardrobe Division. Supervise staff of 15.
- Conduct field research studies of customer preferences. Chart major changes in consumer purchases. Create innovative merchandising programs.
- Directed purchase of apparel firm with over 500 merchandise lines from 15 different countries. Increased annual sales by 130 percent.

Assistant Buyer, Fashion Boutiques Unlimited, 1998-2000

Responsibilities and accomplishments:

- Purchased all lines of women’s sportswear.
- Helped increase sales of sportswear by 50 percent.
- Acquired knowledge and skills in all areas of buying.
- Designed and implemented Fashion Boutique’s first customer survey for sportswear preference.

Sales, Fashion Boutiques Unlimited, 1996-1998

Responsibilities and accomplishments:

- Assisted in customer relations, sales, in-store promotions, and inventory.
- Contributed to growth of overall store sales.
- Named “Outstanding Salesperson” in 1997 and 1998.
- Contributed to development of first store competition to boost sales.

ADDITIONAL SKILLS:

Designing displays . . . writing promotional pieces for introduction of new wardrobe lines . . . applying computer programs to fashion trend analysis . . . painting . . . fluent in French and Spanish.

EDUCATION:

- Bachelor of Arts, Humanities, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 1998.
- Earned all tuition expenses through sales work and artwork.
- Additional training in marketing, sales, management, and retail purchasing.

INTERESTS: Travel, textile art, painting, dance, costume design for community theatre.

References will be provided upon request.

ORIGINAL

John Doe
101 Main Street, Sacramento, California 95999
Phone: (916) 555-1111 Cel: (916) 555-1234 E-mail: Jdoe@Hotnet.com

JOB DESIRED: Electrical Engineer

EMPLOYMENT

HISTORY: Medical Services, Inc.
1992 - present
Senior design engineer. Duties included the design of several major electrical components for clients in health care and aerospace. Supervised four designers in the development of many different products. Coordinated research and development of quality control systems.

Davidson Engineering Company
1987 - 1992
Design engineer. Duties included designing electrical components for satellite communications systems. Worked as part of a research/design team.

Kessler Engineering Company
1986 - 1987
Associate design engineer. Duties included helping to design and test several components used in telecommunications project.

EDUCATION: B.S.E.E. Michigan State University, Lansing, Michigan. 1986.
Fillmore H.S., Detroit, Michigan. Graduated 1982.
Additional engineering coursework

ADDITIONAL WORK

EXPERIENCE: Held various odd jobs in college and high school to earn college tuition expenses.

AWARDS: Phi Beta Kappa
Tau Beta Pi
Summa Cum Laude graduate
National award for senior thesis
National Merit Scholarship finalist
Outstanding Young High School Senior
President of High School Senior Class

HEIGHT: 5'10"

WEIGHT: 170 lbs.

MARITAL STATUS: Married, wife Ann.

HEALTH: Excellent

REVISED
RESUME TYPE:
Chronological
EMPHASIS:
Experience
PAGE 52

JOHN DOE

101 Main Street, Sacramento, California 95999

Telephone: (916) 555-1111 • Mobile: (916) 555-1234 • E-mail: jdoe@hotmail.com

OBJECTIVE: Design/research position in the biomedical or aerospace industries where related experience could be applied to advanced research engineering projects on health in space flight and telecommunications.

EXPERIENCE/ACHIEVEMENTS:

Medical Services, Inc., Senior Design Engineer, 1992-present

- Designed three major new electrical components which are now being utilized by several companies in both the health care and aerospace industries. These products generated over \$100 million in sales within the first two years.
- Supervised four designers in the development of seven major products.
- Coordinated research on the long-term effectiveness of several company products. Results included the development of quality control systems.

Davidson Engineering Company, Design Engineer, 1987-1992

- Designed a major new component for use in satellite communication systems. Will be utilized in Davidson's next satellite launch, scheduled for next year.

Kessler Engineering Company, Associate Design Engineer, 1986-1987

- Contributed to the design and testing of several components utilized in a major telecommunications project, which resulted in 120 percent revenue growth for company in one year.

EDUCATION: Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering
Michigan State University, Lansing, Michigan, 1986.

Additional coursework in advanced engineering design and other related areas at Detroit School of Engineering and Aerospace.

HONORS/AWARDS:

Phi Beta Kappa (National Honorary), Tau Beta Pi (Engineering Honorary), Summa Cum Laude graduate. National Award for senior thesis project presented at the 1986 national conference of the Society of Electrical Engineers.

INTERESTS: Photography, flying, backpacking, designing electrical systems for community theatre productions, and building a house with my wife, Ann.

References will be provided upon request.

EMELDA LOPEZ
1234 El Camino Real #6
Menlo Park, CA 94025
(650) 321-2345

WORK EXPERIENCE:

1993 - 2003 Wesgo Inc., Belmont, CA

Manufacturing Operator I, Manufacturing Operator II

- * Striping ceramic parts, OD's and ID's with brush and wheel.
- * Read blueprints and micrometer. Open screen, pattern screen, blacklight inspector.
- * Checking ceramic parts under microscope.
- * Striping process, training of manufacturing assistants.

- * Promoted from blacklight inspector.

- * Cleanroom procedures.

EDUCATION:

1 1/2 years high school and GED.
Also CPR and First Aid

INTERESTS:

Fitness, tennis and volleyball.

References available upon request.

EMELDA LOPEZ

1234 El Camino Real #6
Menlo Park, CA 94025
(650) 321-2345

REVISED
RESUME TYPE:
Chronological
EMPHASIS:
Qualifications
PAGE 54

OBJECTIVE:

Position as manufacturing operator or inspector.

KEY QUALIFICATIONS:

- Over **10 years experience** in manufacturing operations and assembly.
- Knowledgeable of **clean-room environment and protocol**.
- Experienced **training others** in manufacturing process.
- Able to read **blueprints and schematics**.
- **Bilingual**: proficient English, fluent Spanish.
- **Computer literate**: data entry.
- Certified in **CPR and First Aid**.
- Responsible, honest, friendly.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Wesgo Inc., Belmont, CA

Manufacturer of ceramic parts for high-tech products, worldwide clientele and distribution.

Manufacturing Operator II (1998-2003)

Promoted and assigned to striping room, working on unit orders of 100 or more. Interpreted blueprints with product specifications and band-size requirements for individual clients. Used brush and wheel to paint ODs, and used vacuum with syringe to paint IDs. Examined parts and band sizes, and used micrometer to check paint thickness before and after firing. Used pin gauges to verify depth of ceramic pieces.

- Trained three manufacturing assistants in striping process.

Manufacturing Operator I (1993-1998)

Quickly promoted from position as blacklight inspector to work in screening room. Painted faces of ceramic parts with metal material after firing, and dried parts in oven. Skilled in both pattern screen and open screen metalizing techniques. Checked parts for grains, lint, pinholes, paint overlap and other defects. Eliminated defective parts and forwarded quality parts to plating department.

- Followed appropriate clean-room procedures and protocol.

Blacklight Inspector (1992-1993)

Began work with company as a blacklight inspector, examining ceramic parts under microscope for chips, cracks, excess material or other defects.

- Promoted within the year to Manufacturing Operator position.

EDUCATION:

High School GED
Continuing Education: CPR & First Aid

INTERESTS:

Fitness, tennis and volleyball.

References available upon request.

ORIGINAL

JANE ANN SMITH
101 Main Street
San Francisco, California 94999
(415) 555-3333
jasmith@freemail.net

HEIGHT: 5' 3"
WEIGHT: 100 lbs.
Marital Status: Divorced
Children: 2
Age: 27

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY:

1987-1991: Secretary to Vice-President, Sales Division, Simpson Office Products.
Duties: typing, filing, dictation, reception activities, appointments, and other duties as assigned.

1991-1995: Secretary, Patients Accounts Department, West Coast Medical Center.
Duties: typing, word processing, filing, dictation, office records, reception activities, orientation of other office staff, other duties as assigned.

1995-present: Administrative Assistant, Department of Surgery, West Coast Medical Center.
Duties: word processing, maintenance of computerized files, typing, supervising other secretaries, office record-keeping, staff orientation, other duties as assigned.

EDUCATION:

Sinclair H.S., Visalia, California. Graduated in 1986.

Visalia Business Institute. June 1992.

Continuing Education:

"Telephone Communications"
"Assertiveness Training"
"Stress Workshop"
"Time Management"
"Communications Skills"

References will be provided upon request.

JANE ANN SMITH

101 Main Street • San Francisco, California 94999 • Home: (415) 555-3333 • jasmith@free

REVISED
RESUME TYPE:
Functional
EMPHASIS:
Transferable
Skills
PAGE 56

OBJECTIVE

Office Manager position in a client-oriented organization, where skills in administration, organization, communications, and office automation can be applied to improve productivity.

QUALIFYING SKILLS

Administrative/Supervisory: As administrative assistant in a health care facility, responsibilities included:

- Supervision of three full-time and four part-time administrative staffers.
- Maintenance of all department records, payroll, information systems, inventories, and files.
- Coordination of major office projects as delegated by manager.

Organizational: As secretary in various companies, have successfully managed office systems, including:

- Implementation of word processing systems, assisting office staff with rapid learning and adjustment of old procedures to new systems.
- Organizing new office systems, developing procedures, and designing new systems.
- Worked with office automation analysts, providing them with significant recommendations for improved implementation of office systems, including the selection and design of software.

Communications: In both professional office environments and various volunteer activities, have assisted people in resolving complaints, conflicts, and other problems.

- In a sales organization, improved office staff response to complaints from the sales staff, resulting in more efficient and effective communications.
- Developed job aids and an office training program to help new or temporary staff gain a rapid understanding of office procedures.
- As director of volunteers for a local charity organization, helped develop successful campaigns to recruit new volunteers and raise funds for community projects.

Office Automation: Familiar with several word processing and computer systems, including Microsoft Word, WordPerfect, and WordStar in Windows PC operating environment.

EDUCATION

Visalia Business Institute, June 1992: Received Outstanding Achievement Award for top student.

Graduate of Sinclair High School.

Continuing Professional Development: Attended workshops and seminars in areas covering the topics of time management, effective communication skills, word processing, and computer file systems.

SUMMARY OF EMPLOYMENT

Administrative Assistant, Department of Surgery, West Coast Medical Center, 2000-present.

Secretary, Patient Accounts Department, West Coast Medical Center, 1996-2000.

Secretary to Vice-President, Sales Division, Simpson Office Products, 1992-1996.

References will be provided upon request.

FLYNN RICHARDS
1234 Main Court
Carmichael, CA 95608
(916) 555-4444 home
555-9876 cel

OBJECTIVE: Maintenance/repair

SKILLS: Carpentry, repair, building, buying materials.

JOBS HELD:

Carpenter, Sacramento Housing Authority, 1997-present
Built and repaired housing, maintained facilities.
General Manager, Flynnco Company, 1996-1997
Operated all aspects of own company.
Manager, Saving Center, 1989-1996
Managed a store.
General Manager, Reeds Lumber, 1976-1989
Managed all operations of lumber store.

EDUCATION:

Two years in business studies, American River College, CA
US Air Force Carpentry Certificate.

AWARDS:

Achieved highest score in nation in Air Force.

REFERENCES:

AVAILABLE IF REQUESTED.

FLYNN RICHARDS
 1234 Main Court
 Carmichael, CA 95608
 (916) 555-4444 home; 555-9876 cellular

<p>REVISED RESUME TYPE: EMPHASIS: Expertise PAGE 58</p>

OBJECTIVE: Supervisory position to utilize proven expertise in housing maintenance and repair management.

QUALIFYING SKILLS:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Carpentry & Shop Management ■ Purchasing & Vendor Negotiation ■ Inventory Management ■ Quality Control | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Operations Management ■ Preventative Maintenance ■ Safety Standards ■ Training & Supervision |
|---|---|

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Housing Maintenance

- As Carpenter Specialist for the Sacramento Housing Authority, managed Maintenance Division’s central shop responsible for over 4,000 public housing units. Planned and coordinated facility maintenance and repair projects.
- Maintained high work quality standards while ensuring efficient, cost effective, and timely completion of jobs. Commended by city officials and individual tenants.
- Tested and introduced more effective tools and established new repair and maintenance procedures to expedite work flow and raise work quality standards.
- Kept clean, organized shop and enforced safety procedures to minimize injuries. Redesigned shop to maximize work space. Designed and installed cyclone system; also working on HEPA Filter system to control dust.
- Managed repair orders, reviewed bids, and negotiated with vendors for manufactured and custom materials. Developed extensive product and vendor expertise.

Operations Management

- Streamlined and oversaw inventory of \$250,000 in building materials for Sacramento Housing Authority. Controlled \$1.5 million inventory as lumber company GM.
- Standardized building materials and procedures in refurbishing housing units for faster, more cost-efficient repairs. Consulted with architects and contractors on preventative maintenance programs and maintenance feasibility of new structures.
- Managed retail operation with \$15 million in sales revenues.
- Handled purchasing and managed merchandising. Designed store layout and built product displays. Introduced new products and phased out unsuccessful products.
- Established independent manufacturing business designing and building custom industrial displays.

Staff Supervision

- Provided on-the-job training to carpenters and maintenance personnel. Also experienced in training and supervising sales, clerical, and administrative staff.
- Experience supervising both union and nonunion workers.
- Supervised retail sales staff. Hired, trained and scheduled employees to reach revenue goals and make customers feel welcome.
- Conducted performance evaluations and made recommendations for promotions.

WORK SUMMARY:

Carpenter Specialist, Sacramento Housing Authority	1997- present
General Manager/Owner, Flynnco Company	1996 - 1997
Retail Manager, Saving Center	1989 - 1996
General Manager, Reeds Lumber	1976 - 1989

EDUCATION:

AA Business Administration with Data Processing, American River College, CA
Carpentry Certificate (US Air Force. Achieved highest score among all US bases.)

<p>TEMPLATE RESUME TYPE: Chronological PAGE 59</p>

Name
Street Address
City, State, and Zip Code
Home Telephone and (if available) Fax and/or Mobile Numbers
Email Address

OBJECTIVE: (What kind of position are you looking for, in what industry?) _____

QUALIFICATIONS: (What key skills or expertise qualify you for the job objective stated above?) _____

EXPERIENCE/ACHIEVEMENTS: (Recount your responsibilities and accomplishments for each position.)

A. Current or most recent employment

(Position Title) _____
(Company & Dates) _____
(Job Description) _____

B. Previous employer, prior to A

(Position Title) _____
(Company & Dates) _____
(Job Description) _____

C. Previous employer, prior to B

(Position Title) _____
(Company & Dates) _____
(Job Description) _____

EDUCATION: _____

MILITARY EXPERIENCE: (list experience/training most relevant to objective.) _____

HONORS/AWARDS: (if applicable) _____

INTERESTS: (optional) _____

TEMPLATE
RESUME TYPE:
Functional
PAGE 60

Name
Street Address
City, State, and Zip Code
Home Telephone and (if available) Fax and/or Mobile Numbers
Email Address

OBJECTIVE: (What kind of position are you looking for, in what industry?) _____

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS: (optional — Briefly describe how your career achievements are relevant to objective.)

QUALIFYING SKILLS & EXPERIENCE: (Create skills categories to suit your objective; list achievements for each.)
FUNCTIONAL SKILL (such as Administrative/Supervisory)

FUNCTIONAL SKILL (such as Organizational)

FUNCTIONAL SKILL (such as Communications)

EDUCATION: _____

EMPLOYMENT SUMMARY: (List position titles, company names, and dates.)

Alternative Presentations

If you are a creative professional who wants to make a unique impression, a specialized presentation may be appropriate for you.

Note: The following alternative forms of presentation are not appropriate in applying for most job openings. Use these techniques only if you are seeking a highly creative position in a competitive industry.

We live in an age of advanced technology that has introduced new forms of communication, enabling us to move beyond the “traditional” printed resume. How and when you deviate from the standard resume format depends on the type of company or industry you’re applying to; the perceived competition for a job; whether the position is a creative or structured job, in management or nonmanagement, senior or executive level; and any of a number of other variables.

If you are a creative professional who wants to attract attention and make a unique impression, then a specialized presentation may be appropriate for you. Whether you present a portfolio along with your resume or your resume itself is delivered via multimedia presentation, a cover letter should always accompany your application materials.

Different Formats

Let’s consider some of the methods available to augment your resume:

Audiotape/CD

If the job you are seeking requires speaking or a high level of oral communication, consider including a cassette tape

or compact disc to demonstrate your voice quality. The recording could also be used as a complete resume or a narration that supports your qualifications for the job.

What About an HTML Resume?

Many job seekers are creating “webbed” resumes in the hopes of being discovered or as a place to refer an employer who might want to see more than what is usually found in a resume. An HTML version of your resume works particularly well for persons in a visual arts field, but it could serve anyone, provided it is done right and for the right reasons.

- **Doing it right** means starting with a basic HTML version of your designed resume, not an overloaded page of Shockwave and Java effects, huge graphics, and audio files that takes more than 2 minutes to download over a 56K modem.
- **Doing it for the right reasons** means turning your resume into a portfolio, complete with links to former employers or projects already publicly available online. Be sure you are not violating any copyright or confidentiality clauses by putting information online without prior approval.

The biggest problem with HTML resumes is TMI – “too much information.” Many people make their resumes part of their personal web site, loading it where there is all kinds of information an employer does not need to know before you are hired. Allowing an employer to learn so much about you can lead to potential discrimination problems that you may never be aware of.

Excerpted from ‘Preparing Your Resume for the Internet and Posting it On Line’ by Margaret Dikel. To view entire article, visit rileyguide.com/eresume.html.

Videotape/DVD:

This technique may be a little more difficult to produce, but if you have a video camera, most employers have the equipment to play back your video resume. (You may consider producing a DVD if you have the resources. However, consider the likelihood of the intended recipient having a DVD player in house.) The innovativeness of a videotape can be very impressive and it definitely commands attention. But be careful with this method. A poorly produced tape could be more damaging than helpful. Therefore, you may want to contact a local video production company or your local public access television station to help you produce the tape. On-camera television personalities should only send professionally produced videotapes to a prospective employer.

CD-ROM

If the position you are seeking requires advanced computer competency, producing a PC-compatible CD may enable you to demonstrate your computer skills to an employer. Today it's possible to produce sophisticated portfolios and even multimedia presentations — including sound, graphics, and visual animation — on CDs. This presentation option is particularly powerful for professionals in website design, animation, and other forms of multimedia.

Photography

If photography is related to the job you are seeking, then a complete resume could be developed in the form of a photo

album. A brief resume and cover letter should accompany your work. Also, you may want to produce photographic slides which could be used at your interview (you provide the projector).

Guidelines to Consider

Carefully consider if a unique approach like this is appropriate to your job search. If so, one of these techniques might be just the thing to support your job candidacy and give you the edge that results in a job offer. Keep these guidelines in mind:

- Send only a small sample of your work. Remember the only purpose of a resume (and anything you accompany it with) is to generate an interview. You want show them just enough to whet their appetite and make them want to see more. And you want to save something to show them at the interview.

Another reason to limit your sample is the same reason you limit the length of your resume: Recruiters will only spend a few moments reviewing your qualifications, no matter what the format.

- Since there is a cost associated with each of these special packages, it may be better to reserve them for interviews. Also, you have no assurance they will be returned or even reviewed by the prospective employer. Finally, never hand over your original work; while it is standard practice to return portfolios to job candidates, employers are not obligated to do so and cannot be held responsible for your materials.

Never hand over your original work; employers are not obligated to return portfolios to job candidates.

Use these techniques only if you are seeking a highly creative position in a competitive industry.

The Cover Letter

It should be individually written for each position you pursue. A little research will help you find out who to send your letter to.

A cover letter should always accompany your resume. In some ways, it is similar to a resume because it helps introduce you to the employer and stimulates interest in you as a job candidate. However, a cover letter should not be a restatement of the information contained in your resume. Rather, it is a tool that can specifically link your qualifications to the needs of the employer. A good cover letter will create a more complete and positive image of you as a prospective employee.

Cover letters should be individually written and personally addressed to hiring managers for each position you pursue. Letters used for more than one employer are less effective and are easily recognized as form letters.

Six Cover Letter Guidelines

Here are some brief guidelines for writing cover letters:

1. Do not copy the information from your resume. You may, of course, make references to information in your resume or repeat one or two major highlights.
2. The letter should be a sincere expression of your interest in working for the employer.
3. There are usually three paragraphs in a good cover letter.

The first paragraph describes the job or type of position you are seek-

ing, why you are interested in that particular opportunity with the organization, and how you learned about the company and job opening. If you have opted not to state your job objective clearly in your resume, include it in this paragraph.

The second paragraph represents the main body of your letter. Its purpose is to relate your skills and experience to the needs and expectations of the employer. Although you should avoid repeating the information contained in your resume, you may want to identify experience and skills that specifically meet the employer's requirements. If you left out of your resume some specific details or unique experience that applies to the job you are seeking, you can include that information here.

The last paragraph is a request for an interview, additional information, or assistance from the person to whom you addressed your letter.

4. Cover letters should be:
 - Typed (not handwritten) on one side of quality business paper.
 - Dated.
 - Prepared individually for each prospective employer. Do not send form letters.
 - Addressed to the hiring manager by name, if possible. A little research will help you find out who to send your letter to. Then call the company to

A cover letter should not be a restatement of the information contained in your resume.

Like the resume, have at least one other person review and proofread your letter.

make sure you have the correct name, title, and spelling. Do not use generic or familiar greetings, such as “Dear Friend” or “Hello.” Likewise, do not assume you are on a first-name basis with the company representative.

- On the same style paper as your resume. Do not use personal stationery or business stationery from your present or past employers (and of course, never use postage from a company mailing machine).

5. Like the resume, have at least one other person review and proofread your letter for spelling, punctuation, and grammar.
6. If time is of the essence, you may fax or email your resume and cover letter. If you do, call to follow up and verify that they were received.

10 Tips For Better Cover Letters

Put on your marketing hat when you’re writing a cover letter and get off to a good start with a prospective employer by following these tips:

1. If a restructuring or layoff has prompted your job search, don’t begin by discussing your previous employer or the organizational changes leading to your unemployment. Avoid the negative and concentrate on the positive — mention what you can do for the new organization.
2. Remember the importance of communicating your value to the employer rather than your need for a job.

Emphasize what you can contribute and avoid self-focused phrases such as “I’m looking for an opportunity to grow and learn new skills . . .” or “I’m interested in making a career change.” It’s not up to a prospective employer to solve your professional problems or meet your needs for growth and development.

3. An employer is not “the enemy.” Try visualizing the individual who will receive the letter. This is especially helpful if you’ve been jaded by a lengthy or frustrating job search.
4. Be natural. Avoid stilted, formal language. If you’re struggling with words, adopt a conversational tone by imagining you’re talking with the reader. Taping your thoughts will help you record the important points and prioritize them. Transcribe your organized thoughts onto paper, edit carefully, and ask a trusted friend for a constructive critique. Sometimes it’s helpful to put the letter in an envelope, open it the next day, and read it from the recipient’s perspective.
5. Don’t waste words stating the obvious. There’s no need to announce that you’re “engaged in an active job search” or that you’ve “enclosed a resume describing your education and experience.” (What else would a resume describe?)
6. Avoid weak and unnecessary qualifiers such as “I feel,” “I think,” “I wish,” or “In my judgment.” They dilute the impact of your message.

Communicate your value to the employer, rather than your need for a job.

7. Use adjectives sparingly, particularly vague descriptive words (e.g., “I am uniquely qualified for the position”). Instead, cite an example of what you have accomplished and let the facts of your experience speak for themselves.
8. Don’t use the pronoun “I” to start every paragraph. Job search correspondence should focus on the organizational “you” — the employer — and how you as a prospective employee can meet the company’s business needs.
9. Use the cover letter to tailor your message by highlighting or elaborating on relevant points. Don’t simply recite the contents of your resume.
10. Keep your letter to one typed page using a business format. It should always be an original letter (no photocopies). Pay close attention to grammar, punctuation, spelling, and important details like names and titles.

10 Tips for Great Resumes

1. Identify your objective

Know what kind of position you are looking for and why you are qualified to do that sort of job. Your objective or job goal will guide how you write the rest of the resume, and what information you will include.

2. List your key qualifications

You must be able to cite appropriate skills, training and qualifications that will enable you to perform the type of job you want.

3. Determine the resume's content

Prioritize the information you'll include, focusing on experience and education that is related to your objective.

4. Choose a resume format

Whether you use chronological, functional, or some combination of the two, your decision should be based on strategy, not style.

5. Describe relevant experience

Use active verbs (not passive statements) in talking about job responsibilities and accomplishments. Include community and volunteer work if it supports your objective.

6. Be professional

Keep information focused on your related experience and professional qualifications, not just personal attributes or characteristics.

7. Make it readable

Use formatting techniques to highlight key points and draw attention to the most important information. Balance arrangement of text with white space so the resume is easy to read.

8. Start with a rough draft

Expect to edit your resume several times. Few can turn out a perfect resume on the first try.

9. Proofread it

After you've proofread the final draft of your resume, always have at least one other person proofread it too (even if you use the spell/grammar check feature on your computer). Be open to feedback and suggestions for improvement.

10. Include a cover letter

While you may use your resume by itself at networking events like job fairs, never send it alone in response to a job opportunity announcement or when following up with a professional contact.

California Job Journal has been helping job seekers find meaningful work since 1982. Our award-winning employment weekly, distributed free throughout Northern California, features a fresh array of hot job opportunities and insightful articles with every issue. As California's premier source of employment expertise, we provide a range of employment services, including job fairs, resume services, and graphic design.

Writing Your Best Resume is one of three helpful job-search guides researched and written by our knowledgeable staff; the others being *Getting Your Next Job* and *Acing Your Next Interview*. To purchase PDF versions of these companion guides, visit JobJournal.com. For further assistance with your job search, call our offices at 1-800-655-JOBS (8:30am - 5:30pm PST) or visit JobJournal.com.

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