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HOW TO WRITE A RÉSUMÉ

The following information was provided by and with the permission of NORCO College of the Riverside Community College District.

A résumé is one of the most important tools to assist you in getting an interview for a job. It brings together your education, work experience, interests, and skills into one comprehensive but brief outline for the employer to read. A résumé should be a good reflection of who you are, since it is the first impression a potential employer has of you, so take your time when preparing your résumé.

Writing a résumé can be a confusing and long process, but with the right guidelines you can create a résumé that does what it is made to do: catch an employer's eye. It is important to think of your résumé as your own

personal sales pitch. Ask yourself, "Why should he/she hire me?" When you write your résumé keep in mind all of your experiences, education, and qualifications. Here are a few guidelines we hope will assist you in that process:

BASIC ELEMENTS OF A RÉSUMÉ

Choose the headings that best reflect your experience. Your headings do not have to come directly from this list, as it is not comprehensive.

- Heading
- Objective (optional)
- Education
- Experience
- Honors and Awards
- Skills/Highlights
- References (on a separate page)

HEADING

This section of a résumé is one of the most important. It should include your name, address, email address and phone number. Make sure to let your name **STAND OUT** by using bold and enlarging the font size of your name. Use a professional email address (i.e. do not use crzychick@aol.com, starwarsfan@hotmail.com, etc.)

OBJECTIVE

The objective is a one-sentence declaration of the type of job that you are seeking. It appears beneath the heading and is as specific as possible, noting the company you are applying to, the job title you are seeking and skills you would like to use in that job. This should only be included if you can be specific about the position you are seeking. Otherwise, omit it.

EDUCATION

This section of a résumé lists all the colleges you have graduated from, along with their addresses and any degrees you have earned with the date you attained them. If you are in the process of attaining a degree, list the expected date that you will receive it. Do not list your high school unless it is of importance to the employer that you are applying to (i.e. applying to be a teacher at the same high school you graduated from).

EXPERIENCE

An experience section on a résumé can refer to paid or unpaid jobs and should include your job title, the name of your employer, city and state, followed by dates of employment. Next, summarize your contribution to the position, achievements, and/or responsibility assumed. Give numbers when applicable. Make sure to use action verbs to begin your statements (see the action verb list in this booklet). Use a present verb tense only when describing a current position. This should not be a job description, but instead should illustrate your accomplishments and results.

HONORS & AWARDS

This is an optional section of your résumé and should include scholarships and other related honors. These can be school or non-school related. Make sure to include the date you received the honor or award. For clarification it may be necessary to give short descriptions of the nature or purpose of some of the organizations, awards, honor societies or service organizations. Only include scholarships that are based on merit, not financial need.

SKILLS/HIGHLIGHTS

In this section you should inform the reader of any unique, relevant or necessary skills that you have but are not reflected in the other sections of your résumé. For example: foreign languages (conversational, fluent, and bilingual), computer applications, certifications, etc.

REFERENCES

This section should be on a separate sheet of paper that matches the font/format of your résumé and cover letter. The heading on this page should also match your résumé. You should always secure the permission of anyone you choose to use as a reference before giving his/her name.

Good references might include professors, advisors or employers. Never use relatives for references. Give a copy of your résumé to these references so they can speak highly of you when your potential employers speak with them. Employers might ask your references questions such as: "How reliable was this individual?" "what was it like to work with this individual?", and "What kind of contributions did this individual make in his/her job?" Be sure to list your references in order of how well they know your qualifications and include their name, title, company, city, state, zip, phone, and email address if appropriate.

TYPES OF RÉSUMÉS

CHRONOLOGICAL RÉSUMÉ

The chronological résumé lists your work experience from the most recent backwards. This is the simplest of résumés, and it is a useful format if used properly. This résumé format is preferred by most employers and works best when you've had a long, steady work history and promotions that you want to showcase.

FUNCTIONAL RÉSUMÉ

The functional résumé is arranged around your skills and abilities. For example, if you are strong in communication skills, under that major heading you would list variety of supportive experiences from different jobs, school or volunteer situations. This format is sometimes used by those with little or no work experience, or those who are career changers.

COMBINATION RÉSUMÉ

The combination résumé combines elements of chronological and functional résumé to improve the clarity or presentation of a résumé. For example, if you have a good work history that supports your current job objective, you could start with a skills section that supports the skills needed in the job you want, then include a shorter work experience.

RÉSUMÉ LANGUAGE, FORMATTING, AND TIPS

Résumé language is distinct in that it utilizes action verbs and is very direct. Remember, you are trying to communicate all your best selling attributes in a small space. Use powerful words to try and accurately reflect the assets that you would bring to a job. When formatting, remember there is no one absolute format. Create a format that best represent you. A few formatting rules apply:

- Margins can be as small as .5 inches
- Font can be 10pt if necessary
- You should always include a cover letter with your résumé
- Do not use the word "I"
- Use few abbreviations
- Do use capitalization to highlight job titles
- Do use bullet points to emphasize job descriptions
- Always use action verbs in job description

11 SIGNS OF A GREAT RÉSUMÉ

1. **TARGETED:** Employers want to know exactly what you can do for them. Whenever possible, target each résumé to each job. Vague and general résumés that cover many possible job options will not get noticed. While you may qualify for several different positions, it is better to create a different résumé for each job and incorporate only the information pertinent to that job description. This will alleviate the tendency to crowd your résumé with too much non-related information.
2. **CONSISTENT:** This is important when sending a paper version of your résumé to employers. The look of your résumé should be eye catching, not distracting. Be consistent with spacing and margins, allow for lots of white space and borders, and emphasize your important points with font and text styles such as: italics, capitals, underlining, boldface, indentation, and bullets.
3. **WELL WRITTEN:** Descriptive action verbs-such as established, implemented, created, and streamlined- add power to your sentences. It is crucial to start each sentence with an action verb (refer to the list of cluster works.)
4. **CONCISE:** Employers scan résumés and decide in less than 30 seconds if they want to look more closely at what you offer. Edit with care and delete information that isn't relevant. If you are submitting a paper version, one-page résumés work best.
5. **SUMMARIZED QUALIFICATIONS:** This is one of the most important parts of your résumé. The "Job Objective" or "Summary of Qualifications" section powerfully illustrates your top selling points. This is an ideal way to get noticed-fast.
6. **SELF PROMOTING:** Make sure to show your accomplishments, skills, and abilities. Employers want to see proof that you can do the job. Be sure to demonstrate the result of your experience and how others benefited from these results. You can effectively achieve this by including evidence of your productivity by noting any cost or time savings, and mentioning innovations, changes, or actions that show you produced results.
7. **ACCURATE:** List your skills, qualifications, and experiences in as positive a manner as possible-but do not exaggerate or misstate the truth. Be sure your job responsibilities are adequately described by your job title, and indicate the true level of your abilities. Exaggerating your skills will not do you any good!
8. **ABBREVIATION FREE:** Avoid abbreviated words on your résumé. It looks sloppy and many abbreviations are not universally accepted.
9. **NO PERSONAL INFORMATION:** Including any personal data such as age or height, is seen as unprofessional. Employers must be careful not to violate any discrimination laws, and most organizations prefer that you don't include it.
10. **GRAMMATICALLY CORRECT:** Review your résumé and have someone else read your résumé as well. This is the single most important thing you can do once you have written your résumé. Mistakes of any kind are extremely annoying to employers and also the fastest way to get your résumé into the rejection pile. Spelling mistakes and typos suggest the poor quality of work they can expect from you.
11. **GOOD PAPER:** If you are submitting a paper version of your résumé, use a computer and print it with a laser printer to give it a sharp, professional look. Conservative white, light tan, or light gray are generally acceptable colors. Dark or creative colors are acceptable only for artistic résumés (i.e. graphic design areas). Also, never send out a résumé that is obviously a copy.

TOP TEN PITFALLS IN RÉSUMÉ WRITING

1. **TOO LONG:** most new graduated should restrict résumés to one page.

2. **TYPOGRAPHICAL, GRAMMATICAL OR SPELLING ERRORS:** These errors suggest carelessness. Have at least two others proofread your résumé before submitting. Do not rely on spell or grammar checkers on your computer alone.
3. **HARD TO READ:** A poorly typed or copied résumé looks unprofessional. Use a plain font (Times Roman, Helvetica, etc.), and a point size no smaller than a 10 (11 in the body of your résumé). Asterisks, bullets, underlining, bold and italics should only be used to make the document easier to read.
4. **TOO VERBOSE:** Using too many words to say too little. Do not use complete sentences or paragraphs. Say as much as possible with few words as possible (this is where the action words come in handy!). Be careful in your use of jargon and avoid slang.
5. **TOO SPARSE:** Give more than the bare essentials, especially when describing related work experience, skills, accomplishments, activities and club memberships that will give employers desired information.
6. **IRRELEVANT INFORMATION:** Customize each résumé to each position you see (when possible). Of course, include all education and work experience, but emphasize only relevant experience, skills and accomplishments. Do not include: marital status, age, sex, children, height, church memberships, etc.
7. **OBVIOUSLY GENERIC:** Too many résumés scream “I need a job-any job!” The employer needs to feel that you are interested in that position with that company.
8. **TOO SNAZZY:** Of course, use good quality paper, but avoid colored or pre decorated paper. Become familiar with converting your résumé from word to pdf files, as companies are requesting résumés via email.
9. **BORING:** Make your résumé as dynamic as possible. Begin every statement with an action verb. Use active verbs, describing what you accomplished on the job. Don’t write what someone else told you to do; write what you did. Take advantage of your rich vocabulary and avoid repeating words, especially the first word in a section.
10. **TOO MODEST:** The résumé showcases your qualifications in competition with the other applications. Put your best foot forward without misrepresentation, falsification or arrogance.

ONE MORE THING

Your résumé should never travel alone! When providing your information to a potential employer, you should be providing them with: Cover Letter, Résumé and Reference Sheet. (In that order, paper clipped together)

Matthew Taylor

2912 Hawthorne Place Corona, Ca (965) 564-8975
matthewtaylor@yahoo.com

EDUCATION

Norco College-Riverside Community College District **Norco, Ca**
Major Preparation

Riverside Community College **Riverside, Ca**
Associates of Arts: Social & Behavioral Sciences 2007

Norco High School **Norco, Ca**
High School Diploma 2005

EXPERIENCE

CVS Pharmacy **Corona, Ca**
Store Manager January 2009 - Present

- Train and manage up to 20 probationary employees and achieved significant improvements in their productivity
- Train employees for cashier duties which include: cash, check and credit card transactions
- Supervise 50 employees, scheduled work hours, resolved conflicts, and determined salaries
- Provide customer service on a daily basis
- File, answer phones, and provide various office duties as needed
- Structure and implement professional growth and awareness workshops to employees

Edna's Cafe **Riverside, Ca**
Cashier October 2004 - October 2008

- Informed customers of daily specials.
- Explained how various menu items were prepared, describing ingredients and cooking methods
- Stocked service areas with supplies such as coffee, food, tableware, and linens
- Performed food preparation duties such as preparing salads, appetizers, and cold dishes, portioning desserts, and brewing coffee
- Filled salt, pepper, sugar, cream, condiment, and napkin containers
- Escorted customers to their tables
- Described and recommended menu items to customers

HIGHLIGHTS

- Work well in a high pressure environment
- Strong background in all phases of conflict resolution
- Self-starting, goal-oriented strategist whose confidence, perseverance and vision promote success
- MAC and PC literate
- Proficient in MS Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint and Publisher

NANCY ROSE

4589 Mime Road Corona, CA 95876 (951) 555-2198

nancy.rose@yahoo.com

EDUCATION

Norco College-Riverside Community College District
Associate of Arts: Social & Behavioral Sciences

Norco, Ca
2007

Corona High School
High School Diploma

Corona, Ca
2005

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

New Church
Office Aide

Norco, Ca
January 2008 to Present

- Answer telephones, directed calls and took messages.
- Compile, copy, sort and file records of business transactions
- Complete inventory, order material and maintain supplies
- Assist in the planning and coordination of church events

Norco College ASNC
Office Aid

Norco, Ca
August 2006 to Present

- Assist in Student Government events on and off campus
- Prepare agenda items for club meetings
- Compile information packets, fliers and brochures
- Complete various office duties as needed
- Provide students with information and assistance on a daily basis

SKILLS

- Work well in a high pressure environment.
- Trained in all areas of data entry
- Proficient in Microsoft Office Applications: Word, Excel, Access, Publisher and PowerPoint
- Extensive experience in customer service.
- Self-motivated, organized and efficient

QUALIFICATIONS

- Skilled at encouraging others and developing rapport.
- Quickly learn procedures and methods.
- Enjoy working with people.
- Dependable - can work without supervision.
- Computer literate - can quickly learn new software.

CERTIFICATES

- Operations & Production Management Certificate
- Office Assistant Certificate

COVER LETTER SAMPLE

Ethan R. Williams

7658 North Leland, Oceanside, CA 90788

erwilliams@jnet.com

Phone: 879.457.3290

Date

Mr./Ms. Recruiter's Name
Recruiter's Title
Company Name
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name:

The opening paragraph should state why you are willing and how you became attracted to this particular company and position. Mention specific characteristics of the company that have impressed you. Name the position for which you are applying. If you were referred, mention the source from which you learned of the opening.

In the middle paragraph, draw attention to your qualifications and/or experiences that are relevant to the potential employer. If you have held a particular job or worked on special projects that directly relate to the opening, highlight this experience. Convince your reader that this valuable experience makes you right for the job. Do not repeat the content of your resume, but fill in the blanks your resume leaves open. If you have qualifications that are not noted on your resume, this is an ideal opportunity to discuss them.

The closing paragraph indicated your desire for a personal interview. Repeat your phone number in the letter and offer any assistance to help with a speedy response. You may also ask if the company will be reciting in your area or if they desire additional information or references. It is also a good idea to follow up each resume and cover letter with a phone call. If you plan to do this, state in the paragraph when you will be calling the company. This closing paragraph should only be a couple of sentences and be assertive in getting you an interview.

Sincerely,

(Your Signature Here)

YourName Typed

COVER LETTER READS:

Dear Mr./Ms. Last Name:

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Sincerely,

(Your Signature Here)

Your Name Typed

REFERENCE SHEET SAMPLE

Ethan R. Williams

7658 North Leland, Oceanside, CA 90786

erwilliams@unet.com

Phone: 879.457.3290

References

Name of Personal Reference
Job Title of Reference
Employer/ Company
Employer City, State, and Zip
Reference E-mail Address
[(123) 123-4567 Reference Phone Number]

Dr. Leo Marvin
Psychology Department Head
ABC College
City, State Zip
leomarvin@abccollege.com
(123) 333-3333

Dr. Sandra Martinez
President and CEO
XYZ Corporation
City, State Zip
ceo@xyz.org
(789) 999-9998

Mr. Aaron Randally
Professor
Computer Information Systems
Hood University
City, State Zip
professor@randomschool.edu
(818) 246-2468

SAMPLES OF ACTION VERBS THAT DESCRIBE YOUR FUNCTIONAL SKILLS

- Abstracted
- Achieved
- Acquired
- Acted
- Adapted
- Addressed
- Advertised
- Advised
- Advocated
- Aided
- Answered
- Anticipated
- Applied
- Approved
- Arranged
- Ascertained
- Assembled
- Assessed
- Assisted
- Attained
- Audited
- Augmented
- Authored
- Bolstered
- Briefed
- Brought
- Budgeted
- Built
- Calculated
- Cared
- Charged
- Chartered
- Checked
- Clarified
- Classified
- Coached
- Collaborated
- Collected
- Comforted
- Communicated
- Compared
- Completed
- Complied
- Composed
- Computed
- Conceived
- Conducted
- Conserved
- Consulted
- Contributed
- Contracted
- Converted
- Coordinated
- Copied
- Correlated
- Counseled
- Created
- Critiqued
- Cultivated
- Dealt
- Debated
- Defined
- Delivered
- Designed
- Detected
- Determined
- Developed
- Devised
- Diagnosed
- Directed
- Discovered
- Discriminated
- Dispatched
- Displayed
- Dissected
- Documented
- Drafted
- Drove
- Edited
- Eliminated
- Empathized
- Enabled
- Enforced
- Enlightened
- Enlisted
- Ensured
- Established
- Estimated
- Evaluated
- Examined
- Exceeded
- Excelled
- Expanded
- Expedited
- Experimented
- Explained
- Explored
- Expressed
- Extracted
- Facilitated
- Fashioned
- Financed
- Fixed
- Followed
- Formulated
- Fostered
- Founded
- Gained
- Gathered
- Gave
- Generated
- Governed
- Guided
- Handled
- Headed
- Helped
- Identified
- Illustrated
- Imagined
- Implemented
- Improved
- Improvised
- Inaugurated
- Increased
- Indexed
- Indicated
- Influenced
- Initiated
- Inspected
- Instituted
- Integrated
- Interpreted
- Interviewed
- Introduced
- Invented
- Inventoried
- Investigated
- Judged
- Kept
- Launched
- Learned
- Lectured
- Led
- Lifted
- Listened
- Located
- Logged
- Made
- Maintained
- Managed
- Mapped
- Maximized
- Mediated
- Memorized
- Mentored
- Met
- Minimized
- Modeled
- Modified
- Monitored
- Narrated
- Observed
- Obtained
- Offered
- Operated
- Ordered
- Organized
- Originated
- Overcame
- Oversaw
- Participated
- Perceived
- Perfected
- Performed
- Persuaded
- Planned
- Practiced
- Prepared
- Presented
- Prioritized
- Produced
- Programmed
- Projected
- Promoted
- Proposed
- Protected
- Proved
- Provided
- Publicized
- Published
- Queried
- Questioned
- Raised
- Ran
- Ranked
- Rationalized
- Read
- Reasoned
- Recorded
- Received
- Reduced
- Referred
- Related
- Relied
- Reported
- Researched
- Responded
- Resorted
- Revamped
- Reviewed
- Scanned
- Scheduled
- Schemed
- Screened
- Set Goals
- Shaped
- Skilled
- Solicited
- Solved
- Specialized
- Spoke
- Stimulated
- Strategized
- Streamlined
- Strengthened
- Stressed
- Studied
- Substantiated
- Succeeded
- Summarized
- Synthesized
- Supervised
- Supported
- Surveyed
- Sustained
- Symbolized
- Tabulated
- Talked
- Taught
- Theorized
- Trained
- Translated
- Upgraded
- Utilized
- Validated
- Verified
- Visualized
- Won
- Wrote

EXAMPLES OF ADAPTIVE SKILL WORDS THAT DESCRIBE YOUR PERSONAL TRAITS

- Active
- Adaptable
- Adept
- Aggressive
- Analytical
- Assertive
- Broad-Minded
- Committed
- Competent
- Conscientious
- Cooperative
- Creative
- Dedicated
- Dependable
- Determined
- Diligent
- Diplomatic
- Disciplined
- Discreet
- Effective
- Efficient
- Energetic
- Enterprising
- Enthusiastic
- Exceptional
- Experienced
- Fair
- Familiar
- Firm
- Forceful
- Honest
- Independent
- Innovative
- Active
- Creative
- Enterprising
- Instrumental
- Poised
- Sensitive
- Adaptable
- Dedicated
- Enthusiastic
- Keen
- Positive
- Sharp
- Adept
- Dependable
- Exceptional
- Logical
- Practical
- Sincere
- Aggressive
- Determined
- Experienced
- Loyal
- Productive
- Strong
- Analytical
- Diligent
- Fair
- Mature
- Receptive
- Successful
- Assertive
- Diplomatic
- Familiar
- Methodical
- Reliable
- Tactful
- Broad-Minded
- Disciplined
- Firm
- Objective
- Resilient
- Tenacious
- Committed
- Discreet
- Forceful
- Open Minded
- Resourceful
- Well-Organized
- Competent
- Effective
- Honest
- Outgoing
- Self-Confident
- Conscientious
- Efficient
- Independent
- Personable
- Self-Motivated
- Cooperative
- Energetic
- Innovative
- Pleasant
- Self-Reliant
- Sensitive
- Sharp
- Sincere
- Strong
- Successful
- Tactful
- Tenacious
- Well-Organized

CLUSTERING YOUR SKILLS

MANAGEMENT

- Developed
- Planned
- Organized
- Executed
- Supervised
- Scheduled
- Assigned
- Directed
- Coordinated
- Analyzed
- Prioritized
- Delegated
- Hired
- Fired
- Recommended
- Trained
- Trouble-Shot
- Evaluated
- Led
- Administered
- Contracted
- Controlled
- Reviewed
- Problem Solved

COMMUNICATION

- Influenced
- Persuaded
- Helped
- Directed
- Reasoned
- Sold
- Developed
- Recruited
- Negotiated
- Medicated
- Arbitrated
- Reconciled
- Merged
- Wrote
- Interpreted
- Listened
- Enlisted
- Read
- Spoke
- Presented
- Arranged
- Marketed
- Obtained

RESEARCH

- Recognized Problems
- Clarified
- Surveyed
- Interviewed
- Investigated
- Inspected
- Gathered
- Synthesized
- Analyzed
- Examined
- Diagnosed
- Reviewed
- Organized
- Evaluated
- Critiqued
- Perceived
- Collected
- Wrote
- Tabulated
- Consulted
- Interpreted
- Conceptualized
- Extrapolated
- Decided

CREATIVE SKILLS

- Innovated
- Developed
- Imagined
- Conceptualized
- Designed
- Planned
- Synthesized
- Integrated
- Abstracted
- Generated
- Perceived
- Memorized
- Discriminated
- Intuited
- Visualized
- Fashioned
- Shaped
- Directed
- Choreographed
- Performed
- Acted
- Played
- Originate

DETAIL SKILLS

- Validated
- Retained
- Checked
- Executed
- Dispatched
- Followed Through
- Implemented
- Enforced
- Met Deadlines
- Arranged
- Managed Time
- Collected
- Condensed
- Compiled
- Purchased
- Systematized
- Tabulated
- Organized
- Classified
- Collated
- Retrieved
- Recorded
- Processed
- Compared

TEACHING SKILLS

- Influenced
- Motivated
- Briefed
- Lectured
- Managed
- Motivated
- Communicated
- Advised
- Presented
- Guided
- Coached
- Tutored
- Instructed
- Enlightened
- Stimulated
- Developed Curriculum
- Adapted
- Facilitated
- Clarified
- Initiated
- Set Goals
- Developed Explained
- Invented

MANUAL SKILLS

- Operated
- Tended
- Controlled
- Assembled
- Maintained
- Cultivated
- Built
- Constructed
- Moved
- Shipped
- Improved
- Handled
- Restructured
- Created
- Adjusted
- Planned
- Arranged

HELPING

- Related Empathized
- Guided
- Supported
- Serviced
- Referred
- Attended
- Counseled Cared
- Used Sensitivity
- Listened
- Perceived
- Understood
- Acted with Team
- Mentored Advised
- Used Intuition

FINANCIAL

- Calculated
- Computed
- Planned
- Analyzed
- Managed
- Budgeted
- Kept Books
- Kept Records
- Audited
- Appraised
- Research
- Worked with Details
- Allocated
- Administered
- Developed
- Prepared
- Solved