

# Résumé

## 4. Résumé

### *What is a Résumé?*

A résumé ...

..... is a marketing tool that communicates to a prospective employer that you are able to solve his problems.

..... is a documentation of those accomplishments of yours that are targeted to your career goal as well as to the prospective job and employer.

..... shows that you have the skills, qualifications, as well as the credentials to meet the specific requirements of the job and thereby meet the needs of the prospective employer.

..... is spared only 30-second to read, and therefore **MUST** be carefully designed and easy to understand; it should contain what is necessary and sufficient to communicate the message.

..... has the only purpose to get you invited for the interview.

### *Formats of Résumés*

There are two main résumé formats: the **reverse chronological** and the **functional** format.

#### **Reverse chronological format résumé**

This format emphasizes continuous development of your career. Titles and employment dates are important. It is widely accepted by hiring authorities and employment professionals.

You would use this format if ...:

..... your career shows continuity and upward growth.

..... your career goal is comparable to your recent experience.

..... you apply in traditional organizations / industries.

..... your previous employers were prestigious.

## **Functional format résumé**

This format emphasizes skills and abilities as well as qualifications and credentials without relating them to any employer. The focus is on the qualifications, i.e. what you did, not where and for how long you did it. Therefore, titles and employment dates are de-emphasized. It is not as widely accepted as the reverse chronological format.

You use this format if .....

..... you are a career changer.

..... you have gaps in your employment history.

..... your most convincing accomplishments have come out of volunteer work or significant life experiences

..... you want to emphasize skills and experiences you have not gained in recent jobs.

..... you re-enter the job market after an absence.

This kind of résumé will not be discussed.

## ***Anatomy of a Reverse Chronological Résumé***

There are mainly five sections that make up your résumé:

1. Heading
2. Positioning Statement
3. Employment Section
4. Education
5. Miscellaneous Sections

### **Heading**

This lists name, address, telephone number, e-mail. You may include your cell phone number and fax number. Do not furnish your current work number or e-mail-address!

The traditional way to set up the heading is the centered one. Anything else is the creative style and is, within appropriate limits and depending upon where you send it to, also fine.

## **Positioning Statement**

This statement summarizes you as a candidate for the job. Possible titles for a positioning statement are: summary of qualifications, highlights of qualifications, strengths, areas of expertise, career summary, or profile. Always remember the role you apply for as well as the needs of the prospective employer! Make a careful selection of what you present. It should serve the only purpose of supporting your candidacy for this role and to invite you for the interview!

It should include:

- Your professional role.
- Skills you possess that qualify you for this job.
- Summary of professional experience that qualifies you for this job.
- Languages in addition to English: oral and writing skills.

It can be presented as a statement of several sentences or in bulleted format. The bulleted format is quicker to read and makes it easier to understand the essentials.

## **Employment Section**

Possible titles for this section are: Employment Section, Work Experience, Professional Experience. What you choose depends on what you want to include. Internships and volunteer work for example may be included in this section. However, in this case this section should, for example, be named Professional Experience (since you were not employed).

In general, you list your entire employment history. However, the further you go back, the lesser information is needed about the jobs you held, unless what you did back then is very important for the prospective position.

You always start with the current position. The following information is necessary:

1. Name of company / organization
2. Location of the company (city and state)

3. Length of employment
4. Title / position held
5. Scope and magnitude statement
6. Accomplishments

### **Length of employment**

You may include month and year or just the year. However, including the month is common.

### **Scope and magnitude statement**

The scope-part describes the nature of your work. What was the overall aim that you headed for by doing your daily routine? What was the nature of your work? You want to use action words: managed, ensured, directed, trained, oversaw, supervised, etc.

The magnitude-part answers questions such as: how big, how many, how much, in what time frame.

### **Accomplishments**

Instead of a list of duties, tasks and responsibilities, it is more valuable to the prospective employer that and how you can solve (their) problems.

The prospective employer wants to see how you respond to problems/challenges/opportunities, and is interested in the kind of action you take to solve the problem as well as in the results of your action. Your actions as well as the outcome and consequences are also the necessary proof of the skills you claim to possess. Therefore, list accomplishments.

### **Education**

This section appears in the beginning of your résumé if you are still studying, or if you have very limited work experience. You will also put this information in the beginning of you résumé, if the credentials are critical to the prospective job, or if your credentials are outstanding so

that they differentiate you from your competitors. In all other cases, the education section is listed at the end of the résumé. The highest degree is listed first. You list degree, program, graduation month and year as well as the school.

### **Miscellaneous Section**

The following can be included in the miscellaneous section:

- Internships (if not listed in education or professional section)
- Professional Associations
- Honors and Awards
- Professional and Community Service (if not listed in education or professional section)
- Language Skills
- Projects
- Depending on the prospective job you may include publications and speaking engagements
- 

### **Absolute No-no's**

Do not furnish any personal information such as birth date, marital status, photograph, etc. unless you apply for positions with companies/organizations that are not based in the US. Passport or social security number must never be provided in the résumé.

### ***Some P's of Résumé Writing***

#### **Packaging**

- Use quality paper.
- Absolutely no spelling mistakes.
- Use legible font type and size.
- Keep a one-inch margin on all four sides of the page.
- Use single space within a section, double space between sections.
- Limit your résumé to two pages.

- Do not use abbreviations.
- Use words and terms relevant to the industry and the prospective job.
- Use short phrases and sentences.
- Use active language.
- Use as few I-statements as possible.
- Be consistent in both layout and content.

## **Personality**

No one résumé looks like another. You are strongly encouraged to portray your own personality. Even though there are limitations and recommendations to keep in mind, stay authentic, use your own words. At the same time, use power language and action words to convey your accomplishments. Use a variety of words, not always the same ones. Use adverbs and adjectives to qualify your actions and outcomes.

## **Positioning of Information**

Make it easy for the reader in order to support your intention, i.e. being invited for the interview:

- Organize the data of your résumé so that it is most easily accessible and comprehensible.
- Select headlines that support your message.
- Assign more space to the recent position(s) than to the earlier jobs.

## **Punch**

It is a skill to choose those accomplishments which most match the needs of the potential employer. Omit any information which might not only be not helpful but which may also be confusing or create doubts regarding your candidacy. Highlight the skills that are needed for the prospective job and employer. You have the task to tailor your résumé to the requirements of the prospective job. Past accomplishments sell well because they communicate your skills to the potential employer. On this basis, the potential employer calculates your success in managing the future tasks. However, stick to the truth and do not stretch too much.

REMEMBER: A mismatch is worse than no match!

***References***

Block J. A., Betrus M. (1997). 101 Best Resumes. McGraw-Hill.