

Drafting A Winning Resume and Portfolio

Market Your Unique Brand



STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the chapter you will be able to ...

- Differentiate between types of resumes.
- Prepare a winning resume.
- Recognize the value of a professional portfolio.
- Write a cover letter.

Every successful fitness program includes a chart that indicates visually where you started, where you are at the present time, and where you are headed in the future. In a career fitness program, this chart is called a *resume*. Eventually, in the course of job hunting, you will be asked to present a resume to a prospective employer. Most career counselors caution that the resume alone is not going to get you an interview without an active social network, strong contacts, or an introduction inside a company. At the same time, a strategic resume can lead to an interview. Most resumes are transmitted electronically and scanned by computer programs. This approach is useful to employers who receive hundreds of resumes daily; however, it is much easier for your resume to be rejected if it is not strategically composed and formatted. This chapter will help you gain a competitive edge in developing a winning resume and portfolio, which can potentially reach countless employers.

A resume is a document that you compose to communicate your background and value to an employer. At best, it is a marketing tool used to gain an interview. It is also a strategic review of your skills in terms of a specific job objective as well as a useful memory jogger in an interview to respond to such common questions as "Tell me about yourself," "Why should I hire you?" and "What skills do you bring to this job?"

In this chapter, you will become familiar with three resume formats: functional, chronological, and a creative combination. You will understand the value of a portfolio that presents concrete samples of your work products to further highlight your past performance. In addition, you will understand the importance of cover letters and application forms as part of your job-search strategy. Once you have completed this chapter, you will be prepared to craft your own winning resume.

Life is 10 percent
what you make of
it, and 90 percent
how you take it.

—Irving Berlin



Your Resume as a Marketing Tool

You are creating your marketing program to sell the brand: YOU. The appearance of this document is critical. It is a reflection of you as a potential employee. It is equivalent to your unique photo or thumbprint. You are in control of its look and content so take care in creating this document. Spend as much time preparing and crafting it as you would when preparing for an important date. Your advertisement—the resume—must be concise and interesting enough to attract your potential employer. As you read a job description, look for the skills that are required to perform the job. Strategically, because of the widespread use of computerized scanning software, your resume must incorporate the exact words found in the job description for which you are applying or you risk being eliminated from the running. You must get past the computerized selection process before a potential employer ever sees your resume. Then, the human screener will quickly review your document, often no more than 10 seconds before deciding to put your document on the reject or further consideration pile. Your challenge is to make it easy for the reader to see the connection, the fit between you and the job.

In addition to job-specific skills, there are critical skills that all employers want regardless of the specific job. Employer surveys always cite communication skills (the ability to listen, write, and speak effectively) at the top of the list of essential skills. Strategically, through your resume, you must indicate that you have these skills and show how you have demonstrated them. If your resume is clearly composed, without spelling or grammatical errors, it will make a positive first impression about your communication skills. Check it carefully to avoid being eliminated for careless errors.

You will then highlight these skills by providing a brief description of an achievement, plan, or event that you conceived and implemented. These brief descriptions will demonstrate how effectively you communicate. Other skills you might include would be examples of your flexible learning style, computer/technical literacy, multicultural or foreign language experience, and teamwork capabilities. Such talents are always high on the list of skills that employers find desirable in a candidate.



▲ A resume customized for the job for which you are applying, accompanied by a well-written cover letter, will be much more effective than a general resume.

THE CHALLENGE OF YOUR RESUME

Assuming you pass the scanning screening, who will be reading your resume and why would she or he care enough to have you proceed to an interview? Will your resume be compelling and credible? Did you carefully present your resume as a polished and professional product?

Employers receive hundreds of resumes and cover letters for any open position. Every resume must be reviewed and only the top 8 or 10 candidates are invited to an interview. Given the precious seconds that you have to

TIPS FROM THE PROS

Creating the connection between you and the job—that is, the “fit” in terms of the position and work environment—immediately enhances your chances of making it to the interview and getting the job. Here’s how to do it:

- Focus on accomplishments as well as job duties.
- Think about your target audience and the specific job description. Remember you are selling yourself.
- Use hard data to back up your statements—for example, “I increased retail sales by 25%, which resulted in \$10,000 in quarterly revenue.”
- Ask associates and friends to review your resume for content and appearance.
- Always include a cover letter with your resume.

present yourself as one of the best possible job candidates, your resume needs to sell your “value” to the company so the reviewer *wants* to read more. After listing your specific job objective, which will be custom tailored for each opening, you will exercise your competitive edge by strategically emphasizing how your skills and experiences match the job description.

Your advertising message starts at the very beginning of your resume. Your special skills, experiences, and strengths must focus on how these will be of benefit to the employer. A valuable addition to your first page (of no more than a two-page resume) is to define the value that you will add that will directly benefit the company. For example, if you helped a program get started, raised sales or profits, added a new procedure, or helped design a marketing campaign, that achievement should be mentioned. Facts and activities that highlight your accomplishments, professionalism, and knowledge will impress a reviewer.

TYPES OF RESUMES

The most widely used types of resumes include the following:

- **Scannable paper.** A specially formatted hard copy resume used by employers to scan into a computer database. The database can then be searched for keywords to help identify applicants with qualifications or job openings.
- **Electronic.** An ASCII text-only resume stripped of formatting to ensure the file will transmit correctly from any e-mail, Internet, or electronic interface to an employer’s resume-tracking software.
- **Online/Web-based.** A resume in HTML format published to a web server for viewing over the Internet with a web browser program. This format adds flexibility in that it supports incorporation of more sophisticated elements such as animated graphics as well as sound and video clips.

The use of online resumes is most common in high-tech industries and is effective as a link from a personal to a business website. Also note that an online resume should be used in addition to standard paper and electronic resumes.

BENEFITS OF ONLINE RESUMES

The benefits of developing and posting a well-designed online resume are numerous:

- A well-developed online resume is a powerful tool for displaying your expertise in computer technology (e.g., HTML, website and graphic design).
- Listing the URL to your online resume is effective in a networking e-mail.

- Listing the URL for your resume in your paper and electronic resumes can also expand your job-search marketing effectiveness.
- An online resume can be a useful meeting or interview follow-up tool. It may provide an important opportunity to initiate further communication with your contacts.
- Having business cards available with your website URL may be more appropriate or convenient to give to contacts or potential employers in some networking situations than offering your printed resume.
- Employers and recruiters constantly search the Internet for candidates with specific job skills.



SUCCESS strategies

Winning Online Resumes

- Use key action words and skill words that fit the job (e.g., *creative, team player, organized, and technology savvy with Adobe software, blogs, and wikis*).
- Use key words related to the job description and the employer's industry.
- Highlight relevant accomplishments that are closely related to the job.
- Emphasize nouns for industry-specific terms (e.g., *accountant* instead of *accounting*).
- In email attachments, use MS Word and Plain Text.
- Emphasize measurable skills and other accomplishments under the heading of Work Experience.



Portfolio and Digital Resume Alternatives

An electronic portfolio is becoming an essential addition to a resume for the strategic job hunter. Your portfolio is a summary of your work products that you create and showcase in your unique way on a webpage.



▲ For many jobs, an electronic resume will be required.

With an electronic portfolio, information can be easily stored. A portfolio provides a personal and vivid picture of your work qualities; it differentiates you as a unique brand. *Branding* is best defined as broadcasting your distinctive product or message. *The challenge and appeal is to creatively capture the attention of your audience.*

Once the work is organized, you can enhance an electronic portfolio by adding sound, music, pictures, graphics, and video to highlight your authentic brand. In summary, electronic portfolios are both practical and effective. The benefits include quick access, easy storage, and immediate updating. The following template is a way to organize the contents of the portfolio. View the potential power of a personal portfolio from the example shown below.

Electronic Portfolio Sections

Name: John Smith

Branding Title: "Motivating Every Student Toward Full Potential"

Site Navigation

- Home
- Career Objective
- Professional Portfolio
- Field Experiences
- Teaching Samples
- Education
- Honors and Awards
- References and Testimonials

(Sample Cover Letter or inserted video introduction for the Electronic Portfolio):

Hello, I am John Smith. Welcome to my personal portfolio. As an elementary teacher for your

announced opening beginning in the spring of 2012, I believe you will find me to be an exceptional candidate. I have recently completed all of my field work and teaching credentials at the State University of New York. My youth volunteer experiences, working with children to increase their self-esteem, and my personal commitment that every child deserves a bright future are values that I put into practice. I have a passion for students' success as evidenced by the videos in my teaching samples.

Please view my site for more in-depth information on my qualifications. I look forward to meeting with you for a personal interview.

Sincerely,

John Smith

VIDEO AND SOCIAL MEDIA RESUMES

A video resume could be part of an overall portfolio management strategy and would have the potential of enhancing your online presence across the Web. Imagine a company advertising an exciting new venture and requesting that candidates provide a two-minute video resume in order to proceed to the next stage of a personal interview. You would be challenged to present your skills, accomplishments, and personality through this medium.

A visual CV (*Curriculum Vitae*) is essentially defined as an expanded online portfolio. This format allows all types of interactive content to be restructured into a traditional resume format with additional links to blog posts. You can change colors as well as add video, photos, and downloads. Using a visual CV makes it possible not only to tell but to actually show someone what makes you a great candidate for a position.

Similar to a visual CV, the content in social media resumes as found in Facebook and LinkedIn focuses more on the present compared to a traditional resume that often tells people what you have done in the past. Facebook has become the "it" company of the technical world with a user base in the hundreds of millions. With permission from the Facebook page owner (you), employers have access to information about you! Facebook now links employers and corporate recruiters. It is important to ensure that the security settings on your Facebook page allows potential employers to see only what you want them to see.



FACTS & FIGURES

LinkedIn

What do Microsoft, Netflix, IBM and Target have in common? The answer is that they all use LinkedIn to recruit candidates for employment! Recruiters search for people with relevant skill sets and experiences that match a list of company requirements.

LinkedIn is the Internet location for professional visibility. There are members from all 500 of the Fortune 500 companies

comprising 130 different industries and as well as more than 2 million companies with LinkedIn Company Pages.

Source: Alison Doyle, About.com Guide, retrieved on August 19, 2011 from <http://jobsearch.about.com/od/networking/a/linkedin.html> and <http://press.linkedin.com/about>

LinkedIn is viewed as the branding and professional network. Millions of users are utilizing LinkedIn as their digital resume website in order to attract job offers. In today's competitive market where brand is a key element of survival, LinkedIn is a magnet for self-promotion.

CREATING YOUR RESUME

As you now move closer to producing your own resume, visualize a pyramid or triangle with the job objective at the top and everything beneath it supporting that objective. In actuality, you will design a fresh, distinct resume for each job objective. You will craft your basic resume by the end of this chapter and then, as specific jobs become available, you will tailor your basic resume so that it reflects the specific language and skill sets of the job description. Remember, there are no jobs titled "anything." The job objective is a concise and precise statement about the position you are seeking. This may include the type of firm in which you hope to work (e.g., a small growing company, a local artisan bakery). A clear objective gives focus to your job search and indicates to an employer that you've given serious thought to your career goals. A job objective is sometimes referred to as a goal, professional objective, position desired, or simply objective. It can be as specific as "Parole Officer in L.A. County", "Human Resources assistant in an accounting firm," or "junior programmer"; it can be as general as "management position" or "administrative assistant." The more specific the objective statement, the better, because a clear objective enables you to focus your resume more directly on that target. The effect is pointed, dramatic, and convincing. In choosing information to include in your resume, avoid anything that may not be considered in a positive light or that has no relationship to your ability to do the job (e.g., marital status, number of children, political or religious affiliation, age, photos). When in doubt, leave it out.

To begin the rough draft of your resume, prepare a hard copy or word document version of 5 × 8 index card for each job you've held (see Exhibit 10.1). The index card will contain the following items:

1. Name, address, phone number of employer, and immediate supervisor at work site
2. Dates employed (month/year to month/year)
3. Job title
4. Skills used

Once you have clear descriptions of your past jobs and skills, you can begin to develop the background for your resume and/or portfolio by completing Exercise 10.1, "Resume/Portfolio Review." From your research, integrate your answers with the categories.

EXHIBIT 10.1 Resume Index Card (The Format Can Easily Be Adapted for Use in Creating a Computer File)

Elaine's House of Coffee
555 Stevens Circle
Roanoke, VA 23640
(540) 555-1211

April 2010 - Present

Supervisor:
Joe Smith

Position:
Bookkeeper & Shift Supervisor

Functions:

Management

Communications

Bookkeeping

Skills Used:

Related well with continuous flow of people.

Attentive to detail; organized; energetic.

Bilingual—Spanish/English

—Coordinated service with customer needs, documented payroll, interviewed and scheduled employees.

—Welcomed guests. Directed staff in performing courteous and rapid service. Responded to and resolved complaints.

—Maintained records of financial transactions. Balanced books. Compiled statistical reports.

EXERCISE

10.1 Resume/Portfolio Review

A. PERSONAL DATA

1. Name _____
2. Address _____
3. Phone _____
4. Email/website _____

B. CURRENT JOB OBJECTIVE

C. EDUCATION

1. High school and college _____
 - a. Favorite subjects _____
 - b. Samples of best work in classes related to job objective _____
 - c. Extracurricular interests _____
 - d. Offices held _____
 - e. Athletic achievements _____
 - f. Other significant facts (e.g., honors, awards) _____
2. Other (military service, volunteer work that provided training, correspondence courses, summer activities, languages, technical skills, licenses, and/or credentials) _____

D. WORK EXPERIENCE

- Employer _____
- Length of employment _____
- Position _____
- Skills and accomplishments (These may be featured in a bulleted list following Current Job Objective.) _____
- Samples of best work if relevant _____

EXERCISE 10.1 Resume/Portfolio Review *CONTINUED*

E. ASSOCIATIONS, VOLUNTEER WORK, AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

F. SPECIAL SKILLS (e.g., language proficiency, computer skills)

TIPS FROM THE PROS

Resume templates can be found by googling "Resume Templates" or using templates from a college career center or a library's career resources, such as Peterson's Guides, Career Cruising, or Eureka.

USING ACTION WORDS

Your writing style communicates the work activity in which you have been involved. Use phrases and document experiences that both involve the reader and make your resume outstanding and active. Following are basic guidelines for selecting your "power" words:

- Choose short, clear phrases.
- If you use complete sentences throughout, keep them concise and direct.
- Use the acceptable jargon of the work for which you are applying. Remember: You want your prospective employer to *read* your resume.

**SUCCESS
strategies****Action Words**

Here are some examples of action words to include in a strategic resume:

accomplished
achieved
analyzed
arranged
built
controlled
coordinated
created
demonstrated
designed
developed
directed
effected
encouraged
established

evaluated
expanded
facilitated
guided
identified
implemented
improved
increased
initiated
inspired
interpreted
invented
led
managed
motivated

negotiated
organized
oriented
planned
processed
produced
proved
provided
raised profits
reduced costs
researched
sold
supervised
supported
wrote

- Avoid general comments such as “My duties were . . .” or “I worked for . . .” Begin with action words that concisely describe what your tasks were—for example:
 - Implemented new employee database.
 - Developed more effective interviewing procedure.
 - Evaluated and revised training program for new employees.
- List the results of your activities—for example:
 - Reduced office filing by 25 percent.
 - Designed interview evaluation form.
 - Increased efficiency in delivering services by 10%.
- Don’t dilute your action words with too many extraneous activities. Be *selective* and sell your *best* experiences.
- Target your words to the employer’s needs.



Resume Formats

The three general resume formats are functional, chronological, and combination. The next part of this chapter discusses all three in detail. The combination or hybrid resume, as the name implies, is a combination of the functional and chronological. Exhibit 10.2 provides you with a resume template that describes the categories that can be included in either format.

EXHIBIT 10.2 Resume Template

	Name Address Phone Number/E-mail Address
Job Objective	State and describe your objective as specifically as possible.
Special Skills	Put this category directly after Job Objective if your professional experience does not adequately reflect the skills that best support this job objective. <i>Examples:</i> Facility with numbers or technology, social media experience, patience, writing ability, self-taught skills, language fluency.
Education	Depending on your job objective and the amount of education you have had, you may want to place this category directly after Job Objective. (However, if your job experience is more relevant to the position or if your education is not recent, you will want to list job experience <i>prior</i> to Education.) The most recent education should be listed first. Include relevant credentials and licenses. As employers, educational institutions are usually more concerned with appropriate degrees than are other employers. Include special workshops courses and self-taught skills when they are appropriate to your job objective.
Work Experience	Describe <i>functionally</i> (by activities performed) your experience relevant to the particular job for which you are applying; start with the most relevant and go to the least relevant. Include without distinction actual job experience, volunteer experience, your work on class projects, and school and class offices held. Alternatively, if you have no breaks in employment, show your experience <i>chronologically</i> , listing your most recent professional experience first. (<i>See samples on next page.</i>) Use action verbs; do not use full sentences, unless you decide to write your resume as a narrative. Use the <i>Dictionary of Occupational Titles</i> or O*NET to help you describe accurately what you have done, always keeping in mind how your experience relates to your job objective and job description.
References	Include “References Available Upon Request” only if you have space.

If references are requested, you will need to submit their names and contact information on a separate form. Although you don't have to list specific names on the resume, have at least three people in mind who are willing to endorse your work habits, your skills, and your accomplishments. When you are job hunting, ask these people in advance if you may use them as references. Keep your references updated on your job search and inform them of your job objective so they will be prepared if a prospective employer calls. Many college placement centers act as a clearinghouse for the collection of resumes and letters of recommendation. You establish a file, and the center sends out your resume and references when you make a request. The placement center often makes this service available for alumni, and it may have reciprocal agreements with other colleges across the country.

Sample Functional Entry under Professional Experience

Budgeting/Financial

Analyzed and coordinated payroll record keeping, budgeted expenditures, and requisitioned supplies; prepared attendance accounting reports; and initiated budget system for \$10,000 of instructional monies allocated to the school.

Sample Chronological Entry under Professional Experience

Sales Associate

Builders Emporium, Wadsworth, TX 2008–Present
Operated cash register and made change, worked well with public, motivated fellow employees, excellent customer relations skills, increased sales 25% in two months.

THE FUNCTIONAL RESUME

A functional resume presents your experience, skills, and job history in terms of the functions you have actually performed rather than as a simple chronological listing of the titles of jobs you have held. Like any resume, tailor it to fit the main tasks and competencies required for the job you are seeking. Select and emphasize activities from previous employment that relate to the specific job sought, and deemphasize or omit irrelevant background.

The functional resume is especially useful if you have limited work experience, breaks in your employment record, or you are changing fields. You need not include dates or distinguish paid activities from nonpaid volunteer activities. By omitting previous employers' names, you downplay any stereotyped assumptions that a prospective employer may make about previous employers (McDonald's, the PTA, a school district). Similarly, highlighting skills and deemphasizing job titles help direct the future employer to the fact that you are someone with specific abilities that closely fit the present job opening. This format also can emphasize your growth and development.

To use this format effectively, you must be able to identify and write about your achievements. Samples for effectively written job functions can be found at O*NET (<http://online.onetcenter.org>; type in any job title in the search area). Be aware that some employers may prefer resumes that include exact dates and job titles.

Suggestions for Job Descriptions

Descriptions in the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles*, in O*NET, and in some Human Resources manuals provide helpful phrases and statements to use in describing your own job history and experience. The following two descriptions, for example, would be useful to you in composing a functional resume for a job in business. However, you would use only relevant sentences, adapting them to your personal background.

Office Manager

Coordinates activities of clerical personnel in the organization. Analyzes and organizes office operations and procedures such as word processing, bookkeeping, preparation of payrolls, flow of correspondence, filing, requisitioning of supplies, and other clerical services.

Evaluates office production, revises procedures, or devises new forms to improve efficiency of work flow. Formulates procedures for systematic retention, protection, retrieval, transfer, and disposal of records. Plans office layouts and initiates cost-reduction programs. Reviews clerical and personnel records to ensure completeness, accuracy, and timeliness. Prepares activity reports for guidance of management. Prepares employee ratings and conducts employee benefits and insurance programs. Coordinates activities of various clerical departments or workers within department.

Administrative Assistant

Aids executive in staff capacity by coordinating office services such as personnel, budget preparation and control, housekeeping, records control, and special management studies. Studies management methods to improve work flow, simplify reporting procedures, and implement cost reductions. Analyzes unit operating practices, such as database management, office layout, suggestion systems, personnel and budgetary requirements, and performance standards, to create new systems or revise established procedures. Analyzes jobs to delineate position responsibilities for use in wage and salary adjustments, promotions, and evaluation of work flow. Studies methods of improving work measurements or performance standards.

If you are applying for a specific job, ask the HR department for a copy of the job description; then tailor your resume to the skills listed in that description. See Exhibit 10.3 as an example of a functional resume.

EXHIBIT 10.3 Functional Resume for a College Undergraduate

ABDUL MUHAMMED

66 Cheyenne Dr.
Billings, MT 46060
(712) 555-1212
abdulm@earthlink.net

Professional Objective: Administrative Assistant

Summary of Skills

Administrative

Answered phones, scheduled appointments, sorted mail, filed
Implemented new database management system
Software programs used include Windows 7 and Office Professional
Maintained appearance of office
Created and maintained Facebook and Twitter

Bookkeeping

Handled cash register
Closed cash register at the end of the evening
Recorded cash transactions
Balanced books

Communications

Served as peer counselor for 2 years
Assisted in dental office
Demonstrated proper dental hygiene to children
Created games for children

Education

Billings Community College, Transfer Program, 2010 to present, Dean's List
Billings High School, graduated 2010

Experience

Lombard Medical Group, Billings, MT, October 2010–present
Sandy's Office Supplies, Billings, MT, February 2009–October 2010
Oakbrook Dental, Billings, MT, September 2008–October 2009
Fantastic Sam's, Billings, MT, June 2007–August 2008