

Guide to Resume Writing



Marketing yourself on paper. A resume is intended to get you an interview, where you will have a chance to further describe what you can contribute to an organization and differentiate yourself from the competition. The key is to keep your resume well-organized, concise, and accomplishment-focused.

HOW TO DEVELOP YOUR RESUME

Step One: Brainstorm

Begin by brainstorming a list of experiences and skills that you might want to include in a resume. Consider your academic background, paid and volunteer work or internships, research projects, extracurricular activities, awards, and special skills. Once you have compiled your list, you can start organizing this information into the appropriate categories and focus on tailoring the information you include to the industry that you are targeting.

Step Two: Choose a Format

There are three main resume formats, each emphasizing different strengths. Choose the one which best highlights the experiences you want the employer to notice. Avoid using resume templates that come with word processing applications; they are often difficult to customize and are recognizable to employers.

Chronological

- This is the traditional format and most familiar to employers.
- Experience within each section is listed in reverse chronological order -- starts with the most recent.
- Effective for those with applicable internships and employment experience.
- Highlights past employers and titles.
- Accentuates trends in work history such as promotions and increased responsibility.

Functional

- Qualifications and skills are categorized by function.
- Highlights most relevant or unique skills and knowledge; focuses less on where and when experience was obtained.
- Easier to draw from non-work experience.

- Work history is usually summarized in a brief section at the end of the document.
- Ideal if experience is not directly related to career objective or if background is varied.

Katherine Nguyen
kathynguyen@rice.edu

School Address: Lovett College
6310 Main Street
Houston, Texas 77005

Permanent Address: 4329 34th Avenue
Seattle, Washington
cell: (713) 555-8524

EDUCATION

Rice University, Houston, Texas
Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering expected May 2010
GPA: 3.85/4.00

Relevant Coursework: Kinetics and Reactor Design, Process Dynamics and Control, Separation Processes, Thermodynamics, Material/Energy Balances, Physical and Organic Chemistry

Computer Skills: UNIX, FORTRAN, PASCAL, C++, MATLAB

College du Leman, Geneva, Switzerland
Technical Writing course, Summer 2008

EXPERIENCE

Schlumberger, Lafayette, Louisiana
Chemical Engineering Intern, Summer 2009

- Researched maximum build rates for drilling tools in short radius environments.
- Calculated annular pressure buildup for producing wells in high temperature zones.
- Assisted with internal inspections of various heat exchangers, vessels, and reactors.

ExxonMobil, Baytown, Texas
Research Intern, Summer 2008

- Analyzed performance of economizers on process furnaces to determine cleaning requirements.
- Designed and implemented system to automatically collect and analyze gas chromatogram data and reactor conditions from four micro reactors using Varian Star GC software.

Rice University Chemistry Department, Houston, Texas
Teaching Assistant, Fall 2007 and Spring 2008

- Evaluated student learning and provided feedback on coursework for General Chemistry I.
- Led small group and individual sessions to supplement classroom instruction.

ACTIVITIES & HONORS

Tau Beta Pi Engineering Honor Society
Senior Interviewer, Student Admissions Council
Co-captain, Lovett College Beer Bike Team
Rice University Cycling Team
National Science Foundation Scholarship

Sample Chronological Resume



Christopher Hyslop

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Objective

To obtain a position in publishing or advertising.

Skills

PUBLISHING & DESIGN

- Assisted in copy editing of weekly Houston newspaper.
- Developed programs that increased circulation of weekly newspaper by 6% and tracked reader response.
- Contributing writer for *The Rice Graduate*.
- Designed layouts for publications printed by various student organizations.
- Created CD cover designs for a number of local bands.

MARKETING & ADVERTISING

- Planned storyboards for 3 locally-aired commercials.
- Proposed and designed print ads selected for use in local magazines.
- Implemented strategic plan for marketing ad campaign at Rice University using data collected from student focus groups.
- Composed promotional materials and assessed consumer response.

TECHNICAL & STUDIO

- Utilized a range of graphics and design software in completing projects.
- Demonstrated ability in artwork development using various mediums, including watercolor, acrylics, charcoal, oil, and ink.

Work History

The Houston Press, November 2008 - Present
The Paper, September - May 2007
Publications Office, Rice University, September - May 2007

Education

Rice University, Houston, Texas
B.A. in Art and Managerial Studies expected May 2010

Activities

Copy Editor, The Thresher
Photographer, The Campanile
Rice Student Volunteer Program
College Representative, Rice Honor Council
Rice Social Dance Society

Sample Functional Resume

KIMBERLY L. STEVENS

6320 S Main Street
Houston, Texas 77005
(713) 555-7563
kstevens@rice.edu

OBJECTIVE

Position as a Financial Analyst with a consulting firm.

EDUCATION

Rice University, Houston, Texas
Bachelor of Arts in Economics and Sociology expected May 2010
GPA 3.75/4.00

Universidad de Salamanca, Salamanca, Spain
Advanced level coursework in Spanish language and literature, Summer 2009

FINANCIAL EXPERIENCE

Pricewaterhouse Coopers, Houston, Texas Sept 08 - May 09
Developed a theoretical model of statistics to calculate tax estimate for US Income Tax Returns. Designed tax-planning strategies for clients on foreign assignments.

Merrill Lynch, Stafford, Texas Summer 2008
Performed database operations and revised strategic guides for financial planning. Collaborated with clients in developing individual programs for investment consultations.

GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCE

Congressman Bill Archer, Washington, DC Summer 2007
Researched tax proposals and served as liaison for the House of Ways and Means Committee. Implemented methods to respond to constituent inquiries more efficiently using the Internet.

LEGAL EXPERIENCE

Vinson & Elkins LLP, Houston, Texas Jan - May 08
Edited and summarized proposals for prospective clients in Litigation Section.

HONORS & ACTIVITIES

Rice Program Council, Treasurer
College Women's Intramural Volleyball Team
Habitat for Humanity
National Merit Scholar
Rice Board of Governors Scholarship

Sample Combination Resume

Combination

- Combines the above formats, providing more flexibility in how information is arranged.
- Usually organized to display experiences with descriptions in reverse chronological order grouped under skill headings.
- Allows employer to clearly see both history and specific skills.
- Works best when there are consistent themes in one's experience that demonstrate relevant qualifications.

It is important that your resume is attractive and easy to follow. Be consistent with your layout of text within sections and your font selections. You can use capital letters, bold face, italics, and indentations to organize and emphasize important information; also pay attention to your use of white space. Your resume should only be as long as necessary to present your qualifications and experience that are relevant to the position (which is generally one page for traditional college students).

Step Three: What to Include in Your Resume

The following sections are typically used in a standard resume.

Heading

This section includes your name, street address, telephone number, and e-mail address. Your name should be at the top center of the page in bold print and a slightly larger font than the other text in your resume. Use formal names and avoid the use of abbreviations. You may wish to include both your school address (in the upper left) and permanent address (upper right).

Objective Statement

The objective statement is optional and is used to provide the reader with an idea of your career interests. It can be useful if you are targeting a specific position or if your career goal is not obvious from the content of your resume. If you choose to include an objective statement, it needs to be beneficial to the person looking at your resume. Make sure that it is specific but brief and that the body of your resume supports this goal.

Education

The education section is usually of particular importance for university students with limited work experience and others who want to highlight their degree(s). Present your post-secondary education in reverse chronological order, beginning with your studies at Rice. It is not necessary to include high school information unless there is something specific about your accomplishments that is applicable and warrants mentioning (e.g., valedictorian, National Merit Scholar); this information becomes less relevant as you advance in your education. You should include information on which institutions you have attended, their location, the degree(s) you received, and the date (or expected date) of graduation. You may also include your GPA (if it is above a 3.0; list your GPA in your major area if it is above a 3.0 but your cumulative is not), class standing, elective concentrations, thesis and dissertation topics, or study abroad experience.

Work/Experience

You can draw from a variety of areas to develop this section. Besides traditional employment, you can include relevant experience gained through temporary jobs, work-study, internships, volunteering, military experience, significant academic assignments, or extracurricular activities. Each entry should state the name of the employer or organization, the location, dates of employment or involvement, the position title,

and a brief description of your responsibilities and accomplishments. If your experience is not directly relevant to the field to which you are applying, emphasize those duties or responsibilities that demonstrate transferrable skills such as: leadership, initiative, teamwork, adherence to deadlines, creativity, or special knowledge and specific skills (e.g., technical writing/research, statistical analysis, public relations, project management).

Action Verbs to Demonstrate Accomplishments & Skills

Management Skills

administered
analyzed
assigned
attained
chaired
consolidated
contracted
coordinated
delegated
developed
directed
evaluated
executed
improved
increased
organized
oversaw
planned
prioritized
produced
recommended
reviewed
scheduled
strengthened
supervised

Communication Skills

addressed
arbitrated
arranged
authored
collaborated
convinced
corresponded
developed
directed
drafted
edited
enlisted
formulated
influenced
interpreted

lectured
mediated
moderated
negotiated
persuaded
promoted
publicized
reconciled
recruited
spoke
translated
wrote

Research Skills

clarified
collected
critiqued
diagnosed
evaluated
examined
extracted
identified
inspected
interpreted
interviewed
investigated
organized
reviewed
summarized
surveyed
systematized

Technical Skills

assembled
built
calculated
computed
designed
devised
engineered
fabricated
maintained
operate
overhauled
programmed

remodeled
repaired
solved
upgraded

Teaching Skills

advised
clarified
coached
communicated
coordinated
demystified
developed
enabled
encouraged
evaluated
explained
facilitated
guided
informed
instructed
persuaded
set goals
stimulated
trained

Financial Skills

administered
allocated
analyzed
appraised
audited
balanced
budgeted
calculated
computed
developed
forecasted
managed
marketed
planned
projected
researched

Creative Skills

acted
conceptualized
created
customized
developed
directed
established
fashioned
founded
illustrated
initiated
instituted
integrated
introduced
invented
originated
performed
planned
revitalized
shaped

Helping Skills

assessed
assisted
clarified
coached
counseled
demonstrated
diagnosed
educated
expedited
facilitated
familiarized
guided
motivated
referred
rehabilitated
represented

Clerical/Detail Skills

approved
arranged

catalogued
classified
collected
compiled
executed
generated
implemented
inspected
monitored
operated
organized
prepared
processed
purchased
recorded
retrieved
screened
specified
systematized
tabulated
validated

More Verbs for Accomplishments

achieved
expanded
improved
pioneered
reduced
resolved
restored
spearheaded
transformed

Use descriptive phrases that demonstrate your accomplishments when presenting your experience. Begin each statement with an action verb, followed by a noun that relates to the skills and experience desired for the position (Hint: nouns can be keywords found in the job description).

Emphasize your contributions to the organization -- perhaps you designed a database that improved efficiency or you were responsible for creating a newsletter or procedures manual that is now being utilized by the organization. Quantify your accomplishments whenever possible; facts and figures are always more convincing than vague descriptions. Also, provide examples that support your statements. Instead of merely saying you are "creative," list some of the new ideas you came up with and describe their impact.

Arrange your descriptive phrases in order of relevance to the position of interest. You can use bullet points or a paragraph format, just be sure that the information is well-organized and manageable.

Other Sections

Depending on the length of your resume and whether you have any additional information to present that is relevant, you may wish to include sections such as: Skills, Honors and Activities, Interests and Hobbies, or Languages. These sections provide a place for you to highlight community activities, leadership roles, public service, publications, research, special training, languages in which you are proficient, hobbies, and other activities that support your objective. Be sure to think about why you are including each piece of information and remember that it is better to highlight a major accomplishment (e.g., spent a summer trekking through Italy or had a story published) than to simply provide a list of everything you have ever done.

References

It is not necessary to include the statement "references available upon request" on your resume. You should prepare a separate document to list your references, using the same heading and paper as your resume. Include their name, title, work address and phone number, email address, and a brief statement on how you know them. Generally, employers will request that you provide them with three to five references that they may contact. Your references should be people that know

Resume Checklist

1. **Resume format.** Does it say "Read Me!"?
2. **Appearance.** Is it brief? Did you use an interesting layout? Type clearly? Appropriate and consistent format?
3. **Length.** Are the key points concise? Is it one full page?
4. **Significance.** Did you select your most relevant experiences? Did you highlight your accomplishments?
5. **Communication.** Do your words give the "visual" impression you want? Is your job objective clear?
6. **Conciseness.** Does your information focus on the experiences that qualify you for the position?
7. **Completeness.** Did you include all important information? Is the connection made between the job and your experience?
8. **Reality.** Does the resume represent you well enough to get an interview?
9. **Skills.** Does your resume reflect the skills necessary for the job?

you well and can provide enough detail regarding your work ethic, capabilities, and character. References are usually past employers or professors with whom you have worked closely. Be sure to ask each person for permission before listing him or her as a reference, and it is a good idea to provide that person with a copy of your resume so he or she can better speak to your experience and career goals.

Center for Career Development

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