Building a Great Resume

Resume Checklist

Sections in a Resume

1) Contact Information
- ☐ clearly, accurately presented at the top
- ☐ includes current address(es) - permanent and temporary
- ☐ includes telephone number(s) where you can be reached
- ☐ includes email address(es)

2) Objective
- ☐ typically includes type and level of position sought
- ☐ may include type and size of organization sought
- ☐ emphasizes strongest qualifications and skills relevant to desired job
- ☐ avoids trite words such as challenging, stimulating, etc.

3) Education Section
- ☐ name and location of the university, college, or training institution in which you are/were enrolled
- ☐ degree or program in which you are/were enrolled and date of graduation
- ☐ major, minor, concentration, and/or special interest
- ☐ GPA and/or major GPA (optional)
- ☐ relevant honors and awards
- ☐ other degrees, additional education, certificate programs, study abroad, etc.
- ☐ for graduate students, thesis and/or dissertation title

4) Related Coursework Section (optional)
- ☐ list courses applicable to position in order of relevance
- ☐ use courses to supplement experience

5) Experience Section - Each paid, volunteer, extracurricular, or co-op experience relevant to your objective includes:
- ☐ title held, organization name, city, and state (also country if not U.S.)
- ☐ dates position held
- ☐ position description uses action verbs to stress transferable skills, previous accomplishments, and effectiveness (*not* a mere summary of past duties and responsibilities)
- ☐ specific examples of related results and responsibilities supporting your objective (they should *quantify* results or responsibilities, e.g. increased sales by 25%, and should also *qualify* that you did a good job, e.g., was commended by supervisor for dependability and outstanding performance)

6) Extracurricular Activities Section (optional)
- lists organizations and positions held
- ☐ emphasizes leadership roles and transferable skills

7) Special Skills Section (optional)
- lists any language skills, computer skills, laboratory skills, etc.
- ☐ order according to relevance

Things to Consider

√ **Organization**
- ☐ sections placed in descending order of importance as they relate to your objective
- ☐ within sections, order points according to job relatedness
- ☐ use headings to help establish a common ground with employer (Special Training, Teaching Experience, Research Experience)

√ **Content**
- ☐ supports and substantiates objective
- ☐ stresses transferable professional skills, accomplishments, and results
- ☐ only contains personal data relevant to your objective, e.g. language skills, computer skills
- ☐ only contains essential information - eliminate all words and characters that are not key

√ **Language**
- ☐ free from grammatical, spelling, and punctuation errors
- ☐ expressed in a succinct manner
- ☐ uses action verbs to begin phrases
- ☐ short action-oriented phrases (not complete sentences)
- ☐ written in the active rather than passive voice
- ☐ uses the vocabulary of the working world, e.g. Strategy Consulting, Outdoor Education

√ **Overall Appearance**
- ☐ makes an immediately favorable impression
- ☐ easy to visually navigate (sufficient white space)
- ☐ inviting to read
- ☐ looks professional

√ **Layout and Space Utilization**
- ☐ more space between sections than within sections
- ☐ adequate margins
- ☐ consistent alignment (centered, right justified, etc.)

√ **Highlighting and Emphasis**
- ☐ gives an overall pleasing visual effect
- ☐ uses different letter styles and sizes (capitalized, italicized, and bold headings)
- ☐ well-balanced - does not use highlighting and emphasis too often

√ **Printing and Reproduction**
- ☐ paper is high quality, heavyweight bond
- ☐ paper is white, ivory, or light grey
- ☐ reproduction is clear and professional

Adapted from *Careers: Choice and Challenge*, George Washington University (1993)

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