

INTRODUCTION

The Minister/Church Relations Department of the Southern Baptists of Texas convention is proud to serve pastors and churches through our resumé service. The SBTC does not make recommendations but sends resúms as referrals to any church that requests them. Churches and organizations may receive resúms upon their request for consideration for vacant ministry staff positions. Ministers may also participate in the ministry of *Next Step* resumé service by requesting to have their resumé sent to churches and organizations requesting assistance.

The SBTC has also produced a *Pastor Search Committee Manual* that is designed to assist churches through all aspects of working with search committees from the selection to the work itself. The manual is user-friendly and versatile enough to be used by any size church and for any ministerial search committee. The SBTC will provide these manuals at no cost to any church requesting them. Additionally, the staff of the SBTC is available to provide training for search committees.

This resumé guide is designed to help ministers in the preparation of a ministerial resumé. As it is often the first contact that a church or organization will have with a minister, the resumé is a vital tool for individuals seeking the *Next Step* that God has for them. A resumé should be carefully **thought through, prayed through, and worked through**. It may just be the tool that God uses to lead his servant to his or her next place of ministry.



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- a ministry of
Cooperative Program
giving of SBTC churches -

The PURPOSE of a Resumé

The purpose of a resumé is to introduce an individual to a person or group of people in an organization charged with the task of recommending someone to fill a vacant position within that organization. The goal of the resumé is to facilitate an opportunity for an individual to interview for a desired position. Its function is never to tell everything about a candidate, but rather to entice a committee to look more closely at him or her.

Obviously, no instrument can accurately depict the whole picture of anyone’s life or career, but the idea is to provide enough information to attract an organization to the skills one can bring to it. The word *resumé* comes from a French word meaning, “**to sum up,**” or “**summary.**” Thus, an individual is left with the task of summing up his or her life in a brief amount of space. The information supplied must be both accurate and honest. The function of the resumé is not to impress, but to facilitate the working of the Holy Spirit of God in one’s life as well as the organization to whom it is sent.



The INTEGRITY of a Resumé

Integrity is not something one deserves, develops, or even earns, it is who he or she is. One cannot lose his or her integrity, but it can be given away. No position, however enticing it may seem, is worth sacrificing one's character to achieve it. Moreover, a position gained under faulty premises, in the long run, will not be worth having and most certainly forfeit the blessings of God.

It should go without saying that all of the information on an individual's resumé must be truthful and accurate. Untruths, half-truths, exaggerations, or untrue implications should be meticulously avoided. Those who would entertain the privilege of being God's servant must avoid even the appearance of deceit. A person's resumé is a reflection of that individual's true identity and may be the very first impression a church or committee receives of him or her. It is therefore incumbent upon that individual to represent the highest level of integrity that the church and the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ demands.

The LENGTH of a Resumé

Simply stated, more is not always better. A search committee is not likely to be impressed by one's ability to speak at much length about him or herself. Resumés should be both precise and concise! Certainly a resumé should accurately convey all the pertinent information one wishes a committee to know; however, that data should be succinct, not verbose. Generally, a resumé should be no more than 2-3 pages maximum.

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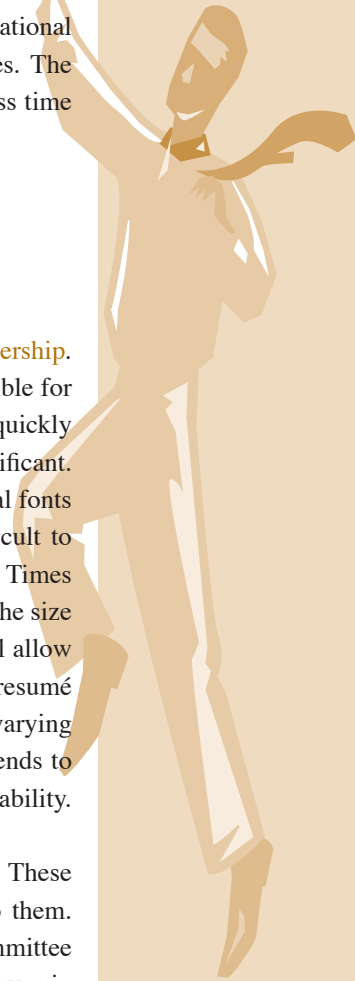
The ORGANIZATION of a Resumé

A basic rule of resumé to keep in mind is the principle of ten seconds. This means that the average amount of time that an individual will invest in the reading of a resumé is about ten seconds. In that case, the resumé must be both attractive and appealing. Careful thought should be given to the order of the information included. Generally, committees are interested in a candidate's personal information, educational background, ministry experience, and available references. The more difficult it is for someone to read a resumé, the less time they are likely to spend on it.

The STYLE of a Resumé

The style of a resumé should facilitate ease of readership. One's goal should be to make it as easy as possible for any committee to learn as much as they can as quickly as possible. For that reason, font style and size are significant. The style should be consistent and easy to read. Unusual fonts should be avoided. These can be distracting and difficult to read. Instead, a font that is easy-to-read is preferable; Times New Roman or Arial are the most common. Moreover, the size of the font is important. While minimizing the font will allow for more information on a page, it will also make the resumé less attractive and more difficult to read. Additionally, varying font size within the resumé is never a good idea as it tends to distract rather than attract and reduces the resumé's readability.

The headings of a resumé should be readily apparent. These should be highlighted to alert the reader's attention to them. Cute phrases or headings should be avoided as the committee already has a set of information which it seeks to discover in order to compare it to similar information on other resúmes they receive. Headings should be underlined or bold-faced and may be written in all capital letters.



The FORMAT of a Resumé

A resumé should be as easy to read as possible. The goal should be to make it user-friendly. If electronic format is used, it needs to be simple to open and done in a Word Processor that most people are likely to have. Microsoft Word 97 or higher is the most common Word Processor. If an individual or committee cannot open an electronic resumé, they will seldom go to the effort to have it changed to a format they can read.

The QUALITY of a Resumé

Generally a poor resumé is less preferable than no resumé at all! Poor copies of resúmes speak poorly of the candidate. Moreover, if the print is not straight on the page or the ink on your printer or copier is faded, or for some other reason the quality of the paper or print is poor it will adversely affect a committee's impression of a candidate. Before a resumé is sent, it should be proofread carefully. Poor grammar or spelling or inaccurate information will turn off a committee and leave the impression that the resumé was hastily assembled. It would be a good idea for the candidate to have someone else proofread the resumé before it is sent to look for any errors. Handwritten resúmes should never be submitted.

The CONTENT of a Resumé

It is important to remember that when it comes to resúmes, one size doesn't fit all! That means that before a resumé is sent, the candidate should know for whom it is intended. It is possible that an individual will want to have more than one version of his or her resumé, especially for those who are interested in the possibility of combination positions. For example, someone interested in either a position in music or youth or a

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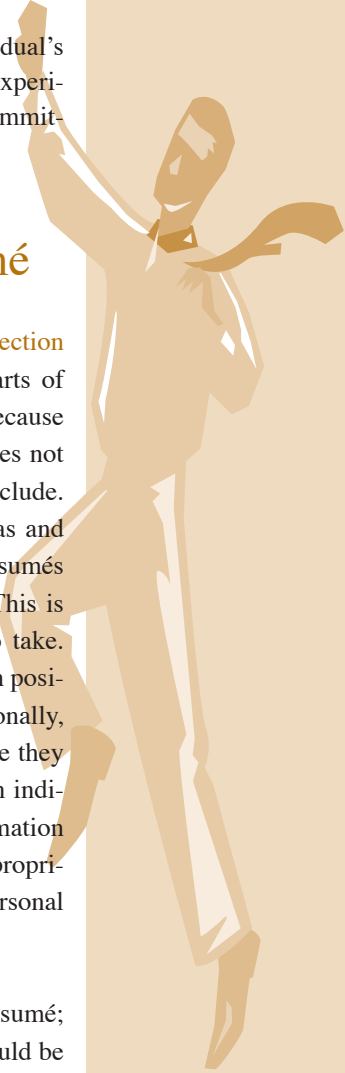
combination of both should not have the same resumé for all positions. The same would be true for those who are open to either an associate position or a senior pastor position. The idea is that different positions will require different skills, so the resumé should reflect skills and experiences appropriate to the position being sought.

Obviously, a resumé cannot convey the whole of an individual's life and ministry. Instead pertinent ministry skills and experiences should be included so as to highlight them for a committee's consideration.

The REFERENCES of a Resumé

Careful thought should be given to the reference section of a resumé. This is one of the most vital parts of the resumé. It is well to remember that just because an individual will say something nice about a person does not necessarily make them the most effective reference to include. Certain references will be more effective in certain areas and for specific positions sought. However, the phrase, "résumés available upon request" should generally be avoided. This is an extra step that a committee is not likely to wish to take. Instead, candidates should customize this section for each position with the most effective references available. Additionally, permission should be secured from the individuals before they are included on a resumé as a reference. When listing an individual as a reference always check to see that any information included about him or her is accurate. Make sure any appropriate titles are included as well as correct addresses and personal information.

There is no set number of references to include on a resumé; however, too few leaves the impression that no others could be found, while too many appears as overkill. Three to six references is usually a sufficient number to include. The references should reflect a healthy balance of professional as well as personal relationships.



Practical Suggestions

There are no standard formats governing all resumés. There is most certainly room for an individual's creativity to be displayed. However, a few simple suggestions may be helpful in the process.

1

A Ministry Resumé Is Not the Same as a Secular Resumé

There is a distinction between a ministry resumé and a secular resumé. The interests, experience, content, structure, and intent can be dramatically different. Secular background and experience may be included on the resumé, but should not be the focus. Ministerial search committees will be looking for background, skills, experiences, and passions that will be conducive to effective service in their field of ministry. Thus, serving the Lord with them in ministry should always be the focus.

2

Include Your Name on the Top of Each Page – in Case the Pages Get Separated

This is a simple matter, but can be extremely important. Keep in mind that when a committee receives a resumé, they generally will have a sizable number with which to deal. Each of those will be copied and disseminated to each member of the committee. It is possible that all the resumés will be copied together and pages could easily be separated.

3

Be Positive and Specific but Not Braggadocios

Certainly an individual should seek to convey all the experiences and skills that he or she can bring to a position. However, excessive self-flattery tends to appall more than appeal. There is a fine art in positively communicating one's ability and experience without sounding arrogant. For this reason, careful thought should be given to the wording of the resumé. It would be helpful to obtain feedback from a trusted friend before submitting a resumé to a committee.

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Simple Is Better

Here one should resist the temptation to be ostentatious. Unusual paper sizes or colors do not help and tend to distract. While good quality paper should be used, white, beige, or gray are the best colors to employ. Moreover, packets of information are generally unhelpful. Video and audio tapes should only be sent upon request. Booklets, even professionally produced, appear as overkill and can be counterproductive. In addition, it is not necessary to have a resumé professionally copied as long as it is reproduced with care.

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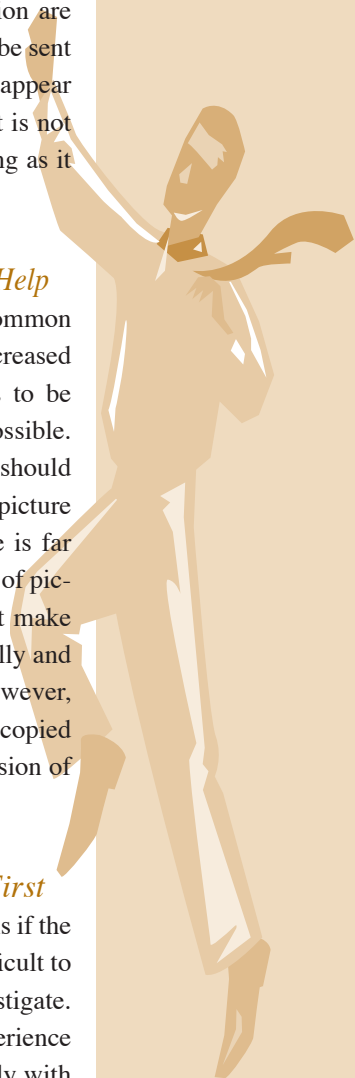
Photos Are Optional – but Hurt as Often as They Help

With increased computer technology, pictures are more common aspects of resúés than ever before. However, with increased technology come higher expectations. If a picture is to be included on a resumé, it should be the best quality possible. Pictures stapled or loosely included with the resumé should be avoided. Additionally, the type and quality of the picture should be carefully considered. A poor quality picture is far less preferable than no picture at all. Moreover, the type of picture included should be well thought out. Pictures that make an individual appear stiff or distant on one extreme or silly and unprofessional on the other are counterproductive. However, a professional quality picture scanned or professionally copied onto the resumé can provide an added touch. The inclusion of family members in the picture may also be a good idea.

6

List Experience in Order with Most Recent First

If a resumé is hard to read, it will likely be unread. That is if the information is not logically arranged or is otherwise difficult to interpret, most committees will not take the time to investigate. Therefore information should be easy to find. In the experience section, places of service should be listed chronologically with the most recent place of ministry listed first.



7

Color Headings or Fonts Are Not Always Helpful

While color adds a nice feature to a resumé, it should be remembered that generally committees will make copies of all the resúmes received so that only one member on the committee will have the original copy sent. In many cases, a color copy machine is not available making resúmes more difficult to reproduce. Often the color sections, if reproduced in black and white will not copy well and be more difficult to read.

8

Duties Included Section Is Optional – Be Brief and Specific

It may be helpful to include a brief paragraph under each place of service giving a simple explanation of the types of duties that were involved. This section should be brief and specific. Action words are helpful to clearly communicate the experience gained. Remember the goal is to keep the resumé within two or three pages, so economy of words is important.

9

Include Email Address in Personal Info If Available

As in every situation, all information available should be included in the resumé. Today, many committees prefer email communication as it is quicker and less expensive. Therefore, if an individual has the ability to use electronic communication, that data should be included in the personal information section.

10

Never Fax Your Resume

Even with today's better quality fax machines, it is highly unlikely that a good quality copy will be received through this medium. The result is a poor quality copy that may have fax number information on the margins and may change the pagination of the resumé. This leaves a negative impression on committees who receive it.

11

Cover Letters Hurt More Often than Help

It is not necessary, and generally unhelpful to include a personal letter to the committee. Some individuals include a general letter to the committee which becomes more time consuming to read, can give the impression that an individual is desperate to find a position, and appears impersonal. If a committee wants a personal contact with the kind of information in a letter, they will request it.

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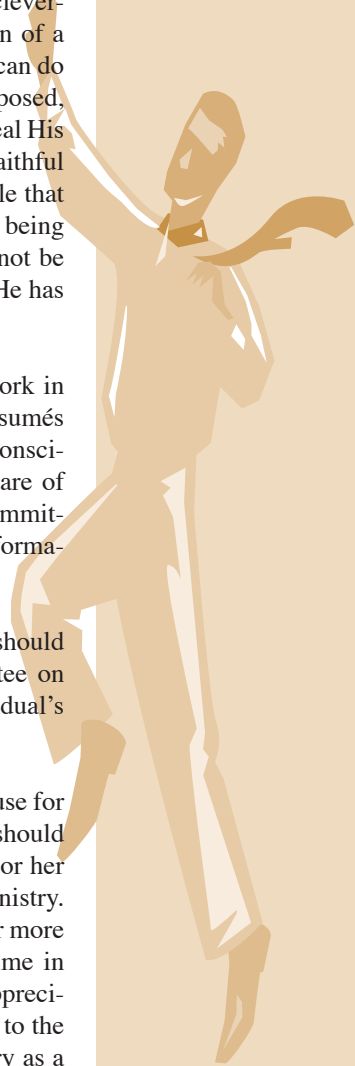
What to Do in the Meantime?

The bottom line is that any person called into service of our Lord should never be without a place to serve. It may not be for pay, and it may not be under the most favorable circumstances, but the calling and placing in ministry should always be left to the leadership of the Holy Spirit and not the cleverness of a resumé or the smooth-talking recommendation of a friend. Therefore, the most important thing that anyone can do before he or she sends a resumé, while it is being composed, and after it is sent, is to pray! It may be that God will reveal His will for him or her to remain where he or she is and be faithful in the area to which He has called them. Or, it is possible that the next place of ministry to which He will call them is being prepared for their arrival. In short, the individual may not be ready, or God may still be preparing the next place that He has for him or her to serve.

It is well to remember that search committees rarely work in the time schedules that individuals who have sent their resúmes wish that they would. Some committees will be more conscientious than others in keeping all persons involved aware of where the committee is in the process. In other cases, committees may delay weeks or even months to convey this information to candidates who are still under consideration.

Yet, however strong the urge may be, an individual should never call the committee! This only puts the committee on the spot and may frustrate them into removing that individual's name from consideration.

Waiting to hear from a search committee is never an excuse for not being faithful where you are in the meantime. One should always keep growing where he or she is, improving his or her skills, and learning how better to serve the Lord in ministry. God does not guarantee higher salaries, better benefits, or more prominent places of ministry. Many will labor a lifetime in obscure places of service underpaid and often underappreciated. This does not make that person any less important to the Kingdom of God. Others will spend their entire ministry as a bivocational minister and never serve fully-funded in a church. But the rewards of ministry are not in a paycheck, a position, or praise. The rewards of faithful service come when God's servants stand before the Father and hear Him proclaim, "Well done!"

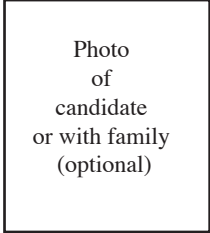


A SAMPLE Resumé Form

There are no absolute standards to which all resúmes should conform. However, the following sample is included for consideration as a general guideline:

Name (If no picture is included, this information may be centered.)

Address
City, State and Zip
Area Code and Phone number
Email address



Personal Information

Date of Birth:

Month, Date, Year

Spouse:

Name, year of marriage

Include some brief personal info about spouse such as education, business, etc.

Children:

List in order with date of birth

License and Ordination

Give the date and place of License and Ordination

Education

List Institutions attended, degrees received, and any honors specific to them beginning with the most recent.

Secular Work Experience

Briefly list any secular jobs in order beginning with most recent

Ministry Experience

These should be listed chronologically beginning with most recent. List the dates served in that position.

Non-salaried experience may also be included.

A brief statement of explanation of duties and responsibilities may be included.

Hobbies and Interests (This information may be included under the Personal Information section)

Provide a brief, honest description of hobbies and interests.

Personal Statement

Include brief statement of pertinent information about family, salvation experience, call to ministry and personal doctrinal statement. One may wish to include a ministry objective here or make that a separate heading.

References (by permission)

Make sure all information is accurate on these, especially phone numbers.