

How to create a job-winning RESUME

HEGI FAMILY CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTER

The **resume** is your most important job search tool. Your resume should effectively summarize your qualifications for the type of position you are seeking.

In developing a **resume**, you should:

- ◆ Pay careful attention to spelling, punctuation, grammar and style
- ◆ Organize information in a logical fashion
- ◆ Keep descriptions clear and to the point
- ◆ Limit to one page, if possible
- ◆ Use a simple, easy-to-read font
- ◆ Use good quality white or off-white bond paper

* Download our *Resume & Cover Letter Writing Guide* for more help at www.smu.edu/career/careersmu/resume_guide/ccassistance.html *

BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE RESUME

A resume is a professional reflection of you as a potential employee. Your resume should include your qualifications, education background, work experience, honors, activities, and any other area that might be relevant to an employer you are seeking. The goal is to present a resume in which you have confidence. Follow these eight steps in creating a more effective resume.

STEP 1 – GET STARTED

How do you get started? - You should begin your resume with a heading that includes your name, address, phone number, and e-mail address. You may want to include a permanent address and alternate contact information if needed. Include zip and area codes.

What is your objective? - Prepare a brief, clear statement stating the type of work you are seeking, the field you are interested in, and the skills and strengths you bring to an organization.

STEP 2 – INVENTORY YOUR EXPERIENCE

What have you learned? - The **Education** section highlights the knowledge you have acquired and can include training, certifications, or licensure. List all degrees earned (or date to be earned), majors, concentrations, institutions. Your degree should be listed before or after the university. You may also want to include your GPA (especially if cumulative or major GPA is 3.0 or higher), relevant coursework, academic honors, study abroad, or % of college expenses you have provided. Dean's list, honor societies, academic awards may all be listed here, but if you have many activities and awards you may want to include them in their own section.

What have you done? - The **Work Experience** section highlights your work-related (paid or unpaid) accomplishments. Employers want to know what you have accomplished, and what you bring that is worthy of consideration. Experience includes full-time paid jobs, academic research projects, internships or co-op positions, part-time jobs, or volunteer work.

When describing each experience, give the position, title of organization, city, state, and dates employed. Use action verbs to introduce the statements describing your accomplishments and duties in the job. Quantify people, products, or profits if you are able to.

STEP 3 – IDENTIFY YOUR SKILLS

Skills and competencies can be included in **Summary of Qualifications**. These should be supported by the Education and Experience sections. There are three different types of skills you can include in your Summary of Qualifications.

1. **Technical/Professional Skills** - Skills performed in a job, task, or class, acquired by reading, training, or education. For example: "Proficient in Unix, Oracle, Oas LAN."
2. **Functional Skills** - Skills related to people, information, or things transferable from one field or occupation to another. Be able to identify several strengths in the categories of data (organizing, problem-solving, creating...), people (communicating, supervising, teaching...), and things (maintaining, operating, coordinating...).
3. **Personal/Adaptive Skills** - Skills that represent your style of working coordinating with your personal traits. For example: "Described by supervisor as patient, creative, persistent, and energetic."

STEP 4 - MATCH YOUR EXPERIENCE AND SKILLS WITH AN EMPLOYER'S NEEDS

The content of your resume should change between applications to different jobs. You will want to mention skills that you possess if they are skills required for the job. Additionally, the wording of experiences and skills can be changed to acclimate to the type of position you are looking for.

STEP 5 - ORGANIZE YOUR RESUME EFFECTIVELY

You want to organize your resume the way that you want yourself to be reflected. Name and objective should always be first, however you should organize what is the most important to you (and to your targeted employer) from the top of the page down. Keep in mind that additional categories can be created to represent your various strengths. Some additional sections are: Honors/Awards, Leadership Activities, Relevant Skills and Experience, Special Interests, or Accomplishments. If one area outweighs another as an asset, then it should come before other sections.

References should be included last if you want to incorporate them into your resume. You can indicate "References Available Upon Request" at the bottom of the page. You can also incorporate a separate reference page with name, title, and contact information of each reference. Make sure that the names listed are aware that you have included them as a reference.

STEP 6 - CREATING YOUR DRAFT

Length of resume - You want your resume to be pleasing to the employer who will be looking it over. If the resume is too lengthy or jumbled, your potential employer may disregard it. Most undergraduates should keep their resume to one page, but two pages are an option for those with more experience. If you are leaving out vital information because you want to keep it to one page, then add a second page. Be sure to include your name on the second page, and staple the two pages together.

Phrases - Use brief, yet descriptive phrases, rather than sentences.

Format - Balance the layout by making all four margins about equal. The resume should be pleasing at first glance. Use some white space—important information should stand out for the reader.

Production - Use good quality bond paper, in a conservative color such as white, gray, or beige.

Verbs - Choose active verbs describing your skills, abilities, and accomplishments. Use present tense for current activities, past tense for prior tasks. Do not include first person pronouns, such as "I" or "my."

A few useful verbs can be used to describe an abundance of job skills:

• Management Skills

administered	developed	increased
assigned	established	oversaw
attained	executed	produced
delegated	improved	supervised

• Communication Skills

addressed	formulated	reconciled
composed	mediated	resolved
directed	negotiated	translated
explained	promoted	wrote

• Research Skills

analyzed	examined	researched
clarified	identified	reviewed
conducted	investigated	solved
diagnosed	organized	surveyed

• Technical skills

adapted	devised	repaired
applied	fabricated	solved
calculated	maintained	upgraded
designed	operated	utilized

• **Teaching Skills**

advised evaluated informed
 coordinated explained instructed
 enabled facilitated stimulated
 encouraged guided tutored

• **Financial Skills**

administered computed planned
 allocated estimated projected
 appraised managed reconciled
 balanced marketed reduced

• **Creative Skills**

created instituted originated
 composed invented performed
 founded integrated revitalized
 initiated introduced shaped

• **Helping Skills**

advocated educated referred
 aided expedited represented
 assisted familiarized resolved
 demonstrated motivated supported

• **Clerical or Detail Skills**

approved compiled executed implemented processed tabulated
 arranged distributed generated prepared retrieved validated

STEP 7 - ASK FOR COMMENTS ON YOUR RESUME

Get a second opinion on your resume. You know your intentions, but your wording might not be clear. A second opinion can help you correct mistakes before a potential employer does. Second opinions can come from: A friend, advisor, employer, or professor. You can also visit with a Career Counselor at SMU Career Services during Counselor-on-Duty (COD) hours for a critique, or you can schedule a personal appointment.

STEP 8 - EVALUATE YOUR RESUME

How does it look? Here is a checklist to help you evaluate:

CONTENT

- Content is directly related to your job objective
- Name is at the top of the page and highlighted by large font
- Descriptions are active verbs with a consistent verb tense; current job is in present tense while past jobs are in past tense
- Repetition of words or phrases is kept to a minimum
- Capitalization, punctuation, and date formats are consistent
- There are no typos or spelling errors
- There is a rationale for each piece of information included

ORGANIZATION

- The best assets, whether education, experience, or skills, are listed first
- The document is easily reviewed; categories are clear and text is indented when needed
- The dates of employment are easy to find and are in a consistent format
- Listings in different sections run from most recent to least recent

FORMAT/DESIGN

- Bolding, capitalization, are used minimally and consistently
- Margins and line spacing keep the page from looking too jumbled or crowded
- Spacing and font size are consistent
- Font is easy to read and no smaller than 10 point size, preferably 11 point.
- Resume is printed on quality bond paper, 8x11 inches

HEGI FAMILY CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Hughes-Trigg Student Center

214-768-2266 (phone)

214-768-4292 (fax)

Visit us anytime at www.smu.edu/career

Name in 20-24 Point

Address, Apartment, Dallas, TX 75200 Phone Number Email@hotmail.com

OBJECTIVE Seeking position with name of company, utilizing needed skills (fill in the blanks)

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- 4 years experience in management
- Highly motivated—financed 100% of education
- Mastered Microsoft Office software through coursework, with an emphasis on Excel through work-related accounting duties

EDUCATION **Bachelor of Business Administration in Finance** **Graduation:** May, 2006

Southern Methodist University Dallas, Texas

Overall GPA? GPA in Major?

Relevant Coursework?

WORK EXPERIENCE

Accounting Technician Feb., 2003 - Present

City of Waco Water Department, Waco, Texas

- Utilize finance background, along with computer abilities to research approximately 6,000 commercial accounts, dating back five years
- Research and calculate rates through the City's ERU system, with approximately \$18,000 appropriated for credits to customer accounts
- Improved efficiency of the City's drainage fee structure, increasing revenue for the utility drainage department

Day Manager Mar., 1999 - Feb., 2003

Buckingham's Clothing, Dallas, Texas

- Closed reports of daily financial activities and supervised 20 employees
- Provided excellent customer service
- Facilitated the bank reconciliation and quarterly reports through Quick Books Pro
- Performance commended through pay raises, bonuses, and increased responsibilities

ACTIVITIES

- American Association of Accounting
- Waco Chamber of Commerce
- Scout Master, Troop #342
- Student Foundation

REFERENCES Available upon request