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YOUR BUSINESS RESUME... FROM ACCEPTABLE TO EXCEPTIONAL

OVERVIEW

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THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUR RESUME

The purpose of your resume is to get you an interview. Your job is to develop a resume (or more than one) that will catch the employer’s eye and make them want to interview you. This workshop is designed to give an in-depth guide to writing a competitive resume.

Candidates today are competing for jobs in a global economy. In response to each job ad, employers receive a flood of resumes, sometimes hundreds. You will only be considered for a position if you can show the employer that you know who you are, what skills you possess and what you can offer. Therefore, it's vital that you understand the employer's needs and how you can fulfill those needs. Once you know what the employer wants, it's easier to make them want you.

Employers look to fill jobs because the jobs are designed to solve problems. The secret to getting the interview is to identify the employer's problem and show them how you can solve it. Grab their interest by showcasing accomplishments that connect with what they do or want to do. You want to identify with their needs and get an employer to think, "I want this person doing that at my company." Solving employers' problems is like saying, "I know what’s going on in your office. Here's how I can help you."

You can write your resume and cover letter to show an employer what you have to offer. Most job seekers focus on their own skills and experience and never really connect with the employer's needs.

Apply this approach not only your resume, but to interviewing, as well. Solving problems will turn your resume into an interview because your skills will answer their needs.

To Identify What Your Next Employer Needs

- 1) Thoroughly analyze the job posting and read between the lines. Find the employer's problem. Why are they hiring in this position? Isolate and infer what skills, experiences and personality will be needed to be successful in this position. Then compose a problem statement for that job. For example, "This employer needs someone who can connect with mid-sized clients and cultivate new business for the product division of their multinational company."
- 2) Research the employer. Study the company web site and other internet or library resources. Talk to current or former employees. Is there anything that stands out that is new or different?
- 3) Listen attentively during interviews with employers and recruiters.

Practice Identifying with Employer Problems

Select 3 job postings you want to pursue. For each, complete the following statement:
"The problems that this employer wants me to solve are _____. " Write that statement on a sticky note, and stick it on computer. Seeing it there will help you focus while you write your cover letters and tailor your resume for each job.

UNDERSTANDING THE RESUME SELECTION PROCESS

Most employers look at a resume for 10-30 seconds. Why?

- 1) Time. They are dealing with a large volume of resumes – sometimes 100's
- 2) They are looking for specific skills and /or experience (from the job description)

Then they put your resume in one of two piles:

- 1) The pile for further consideration (possibly an interview)
- 2) The "no" pile

SECTIONS OF YOUR RESUME



Most people read from top to bottom and left to right. You should always put the items most related to your desired job toward the top of your resume. In general, we list the sections below in the order they usually appear in a resume. However, if necessary to suit your needs, you can re-order them.

There are many possible sections in a resume. Below we list the more common section titles, but you may need to develop your own titles based on your needs. Your information may fit in more than one section. Do not be repetitive, choose which section to put it in.

CONTACT INFORMATION

- Include your name, address, phone number, email address.
- DO NOT put your contact information at the bottom of your resume.
- DO NOT take up a ton of space at the top with an oversized heading.

- If you do not live locally, but have a friend that does, consider using your friend’s address. Some employers favor local applicants. (In a job interview, you can always tell the employer you are living between two locations until you are employed full-time there.).

OBJECTIVE

Employers want to know what skills you have, how you can do the job and what you can do for them. An objective focuses on *you* and what *you* want. Many objectives are vague and do not have enough detail to be worth the amount of paper it takes up. We do not recommend using objectives.

SUMMARY/PROFILE

An acceptable way to start your resume is with your **Education**. Another option is to start with a **Summary/Profile** that provides a “snapshot” of what you have to offer. This replaces what used to be the Objective. In this section you would focus on your strongest skills, accomplishments and experience that are relevant to the job you are seeking or sums up the experience you have that will lead to success in the position. This section is written in either paragraph or bulleted format below your contact information.

When you begin writing your Summary/Profile you will need to analyze and summarize your past positions, education, and community activities. You will also have to perform a careful analysis of your strengths, experience, interests and personal characteristics.

Possible titles for the Summary/Profile section are:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| • Objective | • Areas of Interest |
| • Profile | • Areas of Impact |
| • Professional Profile | • Accomplishments |
| • Summary of Qualifications | • Selected Accomplishments |
| • Professional Qualifications | • Related Skills and Achievements |
| • Core Competencies | • Skills Summary |

Many people make the mistake of making a vague statement listing soft skills with no proof of successful use of these skills. *Anyone* can say they have skills.

Statements that are carefully worded and talk about accomplishments or tasks can send the employer the same message, but provide a context in which you have used those skills.

Sample Weak, Vague Statement

“Professional, motivated Salesperson with excellent customer service and organizational skills”.

This is an empty, generalized statement that does not really tell me anything about what you can do. *Anyone* can say they have skills.

Examples of Summary Good Summary/Profile Sections

Example 1:

Public relations professional with two years experience managing public relations campaigns across multiple media, working with national and local press and coordinating large-scale events. Proven ability to solve problems and meet challenging goals. Excellent oral and written communication skills.

Example 2:

Completing a degree in Business Administration with substantial experience in operations management. Proven ability to provide the highest level of corporate services while consistently reducing expenditures. Fully knowledgeable in all aspects of warehousing, purchasing, security, facilities planning, and cost control. Established competitive bidding process for maintenance contracts reducing 30% overhead costs and increasing service quality.

EDUCATION

- Use reverse chronological order.
- List Drexel University and any other college/university you have attended.
- Include name, city and state, degree(s), anticipated graduation, concentration(s) and minor(s).
- Put GPA on your resume if it is a 3.0 or higher. Write it out of a 4.0 (3.2/4.0).
- If you studied abroad, include this school.
- You can also bullet items like academic honors and scholarships, projects, research, seminars, and certificates that are relevant to your target jobs. You can put these items in a section called ‘Academic Projects and Awards,’ ‘Special Projects’ or ‘Honors and Awards.’
- After a few years of experience, you may choose to move **Education** to the bottom of your resume.
- Include *relevant* seminars, coursework or certifications. It shows a commitment to life-long learning and self-development. You may include it here or create a Professional Development section.

EXPERIENCE

Experience is by far the hardest and most important area on your resume. The keyword here is **Experience**, not Employment. While it may include the jobs you have had (both full-time and part-time), it also includes other relevant experience such as co-op, unpaid internships, volunteering, community service, organizations, activities and coursework and academic projects.

Your objective is to put your information in order of importance to the employer. This may mean that you have to do a little re-arranging each time you send your resume out. To effectively market your experience, you may want more than one section for “experience”. Here are a few examples of sections people have used to “sell” their skills:

- Related Experience, Other Work Experience
- Professional Experience, Related Academic Projects, Volunteering Experience
- Sales & Marketing Experience, Additional Business Experience

To prepare for writing about your experience, you need to give some thought to all of the different experiences you have had. For each experience:

- Brainstorm a list of all of the tasks, experience and projects you had in the position.
- Use the ‘Writing Accomplishment Statements’ process below to develop your job descriptions.
- Separate those that are related to the jobs you are seeking from those that are not. Choose sections and organize your experience to focus on those that are related.

Writing Accomplishment Statements

Accomplishment statements illustrate the skills you used or actions you took in your jobs and the results of your “work.” Avoid using “responsible for” and “duties included.”

Accomplishments may include:

- **Saving** time or money (*i.e.*: finishing projects on time/early; projects being under budget)
- **Increasing** productivity or customer satisfaction
- **Reducing** costs or complaints
- **Improving** or streamlining procedures or products
- **Eliminating** problems (small and large scale)
- **Overcoming** small and large challenges
- **Enhancing** performance or quality
- **Managing** a crisis effectively
- Any **unique contributions** or **special projects** or assignments you worked on

Think about these areas to see if you can come up with some **quantifiable accomplishments**.

- **Quantifiers:** %, \$, Frequency (daily, monthly, etc.)

How else can you measure your contributions?

- Compare your performance to that of other new hires, others in the department, the same project from last year (whether you did it or not).
- Look for ways to show how you excelled, exceeded expectation and outperformed peers.

Formula for Writing Accomplishment Statements

Action Verb + Object + Context + Results

- **Action verb:** *managed, planned, exceeded, initiated*
- **Object:** *managed website design project, planned a promotional event, exceeded monthly sales quota*
- **Context:** (describe and quantify) interesting detail: who you did it for, time frame, number of people, size of budget, type of population
- **Results:** the effect of your effort (quantify again when possible) on to implementation, improved sales, increased enrollment

Analysis of an Accomplishment

- Managed and reconciled (action verb) → a cash drawer (object) → of up to \$3,000 daily (context and quantifiers), → maintaining accurate end-of-day balance (results)

Examples of Accomplishments

- Promoted from sales associate to assistant manager within five months of initial hiring.
- Designed homepage and electronic mail distribution list for the Drexel Marketing Association and increased member participation at club events by 20%.
- Streamlined filing procedures for student health insurance records, resulting in a reduction of required staffing.

Guidelines for Experience Section

- Use reverse chronological order.
- Include name or company, city and state, title held and dates of employment – including months.
- Describe your position using action verbs (**See Action Verbs list**).
- Use past tense for past jobs and present tense for current positions.
- Give specific accomplishments instead of listing general duties.
- Focus on relevant information. Put those accomplishments most related to your target at the top.
- Avoid lumping several accomplishments into one bullet.
- Use synonyms instead of using the same word repeatedly. Also, try to avoid the word “assisted.”

- Do not write a laundry list for your job descriptions. The first two jobs should have around five bullets. Older positions should have around three bullets.
- Make sure formatting is consistent from one job to another (pay attention to the dates).
- Consider keeping a detailed version of your resume that lists *all* of your accomplishments and responsibilities (and not just those that focus on your target job). This is particularly helpful so that you can refer back to this resume later in your career to recall other accomplishments or experience that may be relevant to positions you are seeking at that time.

ACADEMIC PROJECTS AND PAPERS (OR SPECIAL PROJECTS OR RELATED PROJECTS)

- You may wish to include academic projects/papers on your resume to highlight class experiences and knowledge that may be relevant to an employer.
- If you use ‘Special Projects’, you can include *relevant* projects from class, volunteering, personal experiences, etc.
- This information may also be woven into Related Experience above.

SKILLS

- Always have a Skills section.
- You should include computer skills, language skills and certifications or licenses.
- If you only have ‘computer skills’, you may choose to use that as your section title.
- If you have many computer skills, you may want to break them down into Software, Hardware, Operating Systems, Languages.
- If you have language skills, specify your skill level as 1) basic spoken Spanish, 2) conversational Spanish, 3) fluent in reading, writing and speaking Spanish.

ACTIVITIES

- List activities in order of relevance. Highlight leadership/responsibilities.
- You may choose to use different section titles such as Volunteer Experience, or Volunteer & Leadership Experience. You can include college, community and professional organizations.
- You may choose to set this section up similar to the ‘work experience’ section if you want to bullet specific accomplishments, leadership experience, or describe the relevance of the activity.
- Descriptions are not necessary. Only describe the ones you would like to highlight or you feel focus on a particular skill you would like to sell.
- Collegiate sports are fine to list, but do not go into detail unless you had a leadership role.

REFERENCES

- Include: Name, title, company, company address, phone, email, and **how you know them** (for example: She was my supervisor at ABC company for 3 years; He was my colleague at ABC for 1 year; He was my professor for three courses at Drexel University).
- Have references ready before you start sending resumes. Some companies ask for them up front or during the screening interview. Only give them if/when asked.
- **Do not put them on your resume.** Also, do not put *References available upon request* on your resume.
- You should have 5-6 references (preferably employers, co-workers or faculty). You can vary the use of them so they are not overused. If you have used the same references several times and will need to use them again, touch base, thank them for their efforts, apologize for any inconvenience and ask whether they are still willing to help you as a reference. This shows appreciation and respect.
- Put them on a separate piece of resume paper with the same heading as your resume and cover letter.
- Ask permission from your references before giving their contact information to employers.
- Supply each reference with an updated copy of your resume so they can talk intelligently about you.
- Send them a job description after you have given the employer their name as a reference.

- Give them a head's up call or email if you know they will be called by an employer.
- If you know that they have been called, make sure you send a thank you note.

COMMON SECTION TITLES

Choose the ones that are right for you.

Summary of Qualifications	Honors and Awards	Publications
Professional Profile	Volunteering Experience	Skills
Education	Leadership Experience	Computer Skills
Professional Experience	Other Work Experience	Language Skills
Related Experience	Professional Organizations	Certifications and Licenses
Special Projects	Professional Development	Activities

OVERALL GENERAL RESUME TIPS

General

- Final draft **FREE OF ERRORS!!!!**
- You will hear varying opinions about the length of resumes. If you were considering a career in academia or medicine, resumes (or CV's) sometimes range from 2-6 pages. However, in the business world, hiring managers give a resume 10-30 seconds. Resumes should be **1-page** for new graduates or those with less than 10-years experience.
- Have it checked by a career counselor and ask others such as professors, professionals, or parents.
- **Do not photocopy** resumes. Use laser printer and resume paper. Do not fold or staple your materials.
- **ALWAYS send a cover letter** with resume.
- When emailing, send resume as an attachment titled **firstname_lastname.doc** (unless told otherwise).
- Have **several targeted versions** of your resume for various positions. Tailor each resume you send.
- Be familiar with your resume and able to talk about any detail on it. Interviewers will ask you questions based on what is in your resume.
- When you are sending resumes, **MAKE YOUR VOICEMAIL MESSAGES PROFESSIONAL.**

Never Put on Your Resume

- Interests or information unrelated to the job you are seeking (except for work experience).
- Put your name at the top of the resume and the rest of your contact information on the bottom.
- Contact information section larger than the body of your resume – there are more important things.

Language

- **Proofread** your resume several times for spelling, grammar, formatting, clear wording. One error on your resume will leave a poor first impression with an employer and could cost you an interview!
- Do not **abbreviate** anything except states (PA, NJ, etc).
- If **acronyms** are used, consider spelling them out if there is a chance an employer will not know it.

Formatting

- **Font:** the body of your resume should be 11-12 point and preferable Times New Roman.
- Easy to read and **consistent formatting** (dashes, bullets, bold, italics, orders of things).

Tips for people with substantial work experience

- Keep resume focused and targeted to a specific job and eliminate irrelevant information.
- Prioritize experience and education sections depending upon the employer's needs.
- Focus on higher level skills and transferable skills.
- You do not need to list an entire employment history. If you are targeting a certain job and only the last 3 positions are relevant, only list those. Remember, your resume is not an “employment history”, but highlights of your qualifications and accomplishments.
- If you are applying for senior-level positions or CEO, you may need a 2-3 page document to show your pertinent qualifications and accomplishments.

TOP EMPLOYER RESUME PET PEEVES

- 1) Spelling errors, typos and poor grammar.
- 2) Failing to explain relevant accomplishments.
- 3) Missing contact information or name at top and contact info at bottom.
- 4) Missing or inaccurate dates.
- 5) Missing or unprofessional email address.
- 6) Using paragraphs instead of bullets.
- 7) Burying important information in the resume.
- 8) Poor formatting or using templates or tables.
- 9) Personal information not relevant to the job.
- 10) Broad or vague objectives or meaningless introductions.
- 11) Poor font choice. Inconsistent font size or style.
- 12) Pictures or graphics.
- 13) No easy-to-follow summary of skills and accomplishments.
- 14) Resumes written in first or third person voice.
- 15) Laundry list of every detail of every job, making resume unnecessarily long.

ACTION VERBS

Accelerated	Adapted	Advised	Answered	Ascertained	Attained
Accomplished	Addressed	Advocated	Applied	Assembled	Attended
Achieved	Adjusted	Aided	Appraised	Assessed	Attracted
Acquired	Administered	Alerted	Approved	Assigned	Audited
Acted	Advanced	Allocated	Arbitrated	Assisted	Augmented
Activated	Advertised	Analyzed	Arranged		Authored

Authorized	Designated	Governed	Mediated	Rated	Sponsored
Awarded	Designed	Grossed	Merchandised	Reached	Staffed
Balanced	Detected	Grouped	Merged	Realized	Standardized
Began	Determined	Guaranteed	Mentored	Reasoned	Started
Boosted	Developed	Guided	Minimized	Received	Streamlined
Bought	Devised	Handled	Mobilized	Recognized	Strengthened
Briefed	Diagnosed	Headed	Moderated	Recommended	Structured
Broadened	Directed	Heightened	Modernized	Reconciled	Studied
Budgeted	Discovered	Helped	Modified	Recorded	Succeeded
Built	Dispensed	Hired	Monitored	Recruited	Suggested
Calculated	Displayed	Honed	Motivated	Rectified	Summarized
Captured	Dissected	Hosted	Navigated	Redesigned	Supervised
Catalogued	Disseminated	Hypothesized	Negotiated	Reduced	Supplied
Categorized	Distributed	Identified	Netted	Reevaluated	Supported
Centralized	Diverted	Illustrated	Observed	Referred	Surpassed
Chaired	Doubled	Imagined	Obtained	Refined	Surveyed
Changed	Documented	Implemented	Opened	Regulated	Sustained
Charted	Drafted	Improved	Operated	Rehabilitated	Synthesized
Checked	Earned	Improvised	Ordered	Reinforced	Systematized
Clarified	Edited	Incorporated	Orchestrated	Related	Tabulated
Classified	Educated	Increased	Organized	Remodeled	Tailored
Coached	Effectuated	Indexed	Originated	Rendered	Targeted
Collaborated	Eliminated	Influenced	Outlined	Reorganized	Taught
Collected	Emphasized	Informed	Overcame	Repaired	Terminated
Combined	Employed	Initiated	Overhauled	Replaced	Tested
Communicated	Encouraged	Innovated	Oversaw	Reported	Tightened
Compared	Enforced	Inspected	Participated	Represented	Totaled
Compiled	Engineered	Inspired	Partnered	Researched	Tracked
Completed	Enhanced	Installed	Performed	Reshaped	Traded
Composed	Enlarged	Instituted	Persuaded	Resolved	Trained
Computed	Enlisted	Integrated	Photographed	Responded	Transcribed
Conceived	Ensured	Interacted	Pinpointed	Restored	Transferred
Conceptualized	Entertained	Interpreted	Piloted	Retrieved	Transformed
Condensed	Established	Interviewed	Pioneered	Revamped	Transmitted
Conducted	Estimated	Introduced	Placed	Reversed	Translated
Conferred	Evaluated	Invented	Planned	Reviewed	Traveled
Conserved	Examined	Inventoried	Played	Revised	Treated
Consolidated	Executed	Invested	Predicted	Revitalized	Triggered
Constructed	Expanded	Investigated	Prepared	Revived	Trimmed
Consulted	Expedited	Involved	Prescribed	Routed	Tripled
Contacted	Experimented	Issued	Presented	Saved	Tutored
Continued	Explained	Joined	Presided	Scheduled	Uncovered
Contributed	Explored	Judged	Prevented	Screened	Undertook
Controlled	Expressed	Kept	Printed	Searched	Unified
Converted	Extended	Launched	Prioritized	Secured	United
Conveyed	Extracted	Learned	Processed	Selected	Updated
Convinced	Fabricated	Lectured	Procured	Separated	Upgraded
Coordinated	Facilitated	Led	Produced	Served	Used
Corrected	Fashioned	Lifted	Programmed	Settled	Utilized
Corresponded	Finalized	Listened	Projected	Shaped	Validated
Counseled	Fixed	Lobbied	Promoted	Shared	Verbalized
Created	Focused	Located	Proofread	Shifted	Verified
Critiqued	Followed up	Logged	Proposed	Showed	Vitalized
Cultivated	Forecasted	Lowered	Protected	Simplified	Volunteered
Customized	Formed	Maintained	Proved	Simulated	Weighed
Dealt with	Formulated	Managed	Provided	Sketched	Widened
Debugged	Fostered	Manipulated	Publicized	Sold	Won
Decided	Found	Marketed	Published	Solidified	Worked
Defined	Fulfilled	Mastered	Purchased	Solved	Wrote
Delegated	Furnished	Matched	Qualified	Sorted	
Delivered	Gained	Maximized	Questioned	Specialized	
Demonstrated	Gathered	Measured	Raised	Specified	
Described	Generated		Ran	Spoke	

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