**TIPS FOR RESUME DESIGN**

The following tips for resume design will help ensure that your resume is easy to read and can be parsed to a resume database properly.

### LENGTH

A one-page resume works well for the recent graduate.  If you have extensive work history, two pages are reasonable.  If you are eliminating information that will help you obtain the interview just to keep your resume to one page, you are only hurting your chances of securing the interview.  If you do go to two pages, make sure the most important information is stated on the first page.  Be sure to include your name and contact information on each page of the resume. Be careful and do not take up too much space listing references.

**APPEARANCE**

* Keep the resume design simple and uncluttered.
* Use standard font styles (Times New Roman and Arial are standard however Times New Roman can sometimes space funny inside of Word so make sure its legible. Sans-serif fonts like arial or Calibri tend to work better)
* Use a font size from 10 to 14. Font sizes of 10 and 12 are standard, with some titles and headings in a larger font.
* Avoid 'fancy' styles (italics, underline, fancy fonts etc.).
* Do not use horizontal or vertical lines, graphics, charts, tables or boxes. They don't parse well to resume databases and they often print out looking funky.
* Use one font throughout and use **bold** of the same font for section headings.
* Use common names for section headings (i.e., Education, Experience, Technical Sills, etc.)
* Put your name at the beginning of the resume, with contact information phone number and email on separate lines, immediately following the name.
* Avoid abbreviations, except for popular acronyms.
* Be concise in your descriptions of projects and work experience. Longer is not necessarily better!
* Place dates on the right-hand side of the resume in order to de-emphasize them.  You do not want them to distract the reader, but at the same time, you want them to be easy to find. Use tabs to get over to the right side of the page and to ensure that everything lines up…using spaces to get across the page will cause things to get out of line.
* Maintain one-inch margins and a portrait (“tall”) layout. If you need to change the top and bottom slightly to keep a one page resume then do so but don’t go any less that 0.7 for the top and bottom margins.
* The paper should be a light color such as white, or slightly off white. You can buy cotton-fiber resume paper at most office supply store – it can be expensive. These papers are slightly heavier than standard “20 bond weight” paper. Look for 24 or 28 bond paper. The heavier paper not only looks better, but also is more durable. A smooth finish will print better than linen or coated finish paper. Fancy resume paper is not needed if you choose a heavier white paper with a smooth finish.

**CONTENT**

The skills and knowledge resume format is used by **most students** and others with limited work experience. In the skills resume, internships and volunteer work often replace job experience. Also, it is okay to include any academic organizations. Employers understand that most students will not have three major employers and a Pulitzer Prize before graduation.

* Education
* Academic Awards/Accomplishments/Organizations
* Specialized Skills
* Work Experience (including internships and volunteer work)
* Interests/Activities
* References

Begin your resume with a heading which includes your name, address, phone number and email address. This is usually centered at the top or left justified.

Omit personal information such as age, sex, or marital status.

Objective statements are not necessary. If you choose to use an objective statement the most professional objective statements are ones that are specifically tailored to the specific job you are applying for. If you are being very general with your job search and have a general objective statement i.e. “looking for an associate position with a progressive firm that has growth potential” leave it out.

The **education** section should identify your training by listing the university(s) attended with degree(s) conferred, major, and grade point average. Begin with your most current college experience and include dates attended and/or expected graduation date on the right hand side of the paper.

The **awards and** **accomplishments** section can come after education and highlights specific areas in which you have excelled, including leadership activities, memberships, and honors or awards. Include any organizations you were involved with especially professional organizations such as the American Marketing Association list any offices you held or leadership roles with these organizations.

A well-organized **skills** section can be placed after the accomplishments. This should include all relevant skills. You can break it up into two sections if you want and have the secondary section be “additional skills” that may be helpful but not necessary to the job – could potentially show and employer the opportunity for advancement or additional duties. Use words such as proficient in, knowledge of, etc. to describe a skill set.

The **work experience** section comes next and details the most recent positions or areas of expertise first and continues in reverse chronological order. Usually you will list at least three jobs. As a student you can also list internships, projects such as a field based learning class project, or volunteer work. Remember to list dates on the right side of the page – most recent first, and concisely describe the position, duties, and accomplishments while on the job.

An optional category to your resume is an **interests and activities** section. This is a small concise place where you can take a moment to list some things about you that an employer may find interesting. This section allows you the opportunity to show an employer who you are. Often times employers want to know who you “really “ are and can tell a lot about a person. You have to be careful not to list something offensive or so radical that it could harm your chances. But if you are passionate about helping to bring clean water to African youth say so or teaching inner city kids basketball or working with the elderly – say so!

Finally the **references** section should be at the end of your resume. Many employers are used to seeing References Upon Request. If this is the only thing standing in the way of a one page and two page resume use this or leave it out completely. If you want to include references an efficient use of your paper would look something like this.

Name Name Name  
Company/Title Company/Title Company/Title  
Phone/Email Phone/Email Phone/Email

Instead of listing them one after the other vertically down the page – use tabs to list them at the very bottom of the page horizontally. An employer may appreciate you being up front and forthcoming with the information – it shows that you have readily available references that think highly of you!

**ADDITIONAL TIPS**

Stay away from templates as they can be tricky to work with and may cause you to omit information because it doesn’t fit or work in the template that could be valuable.

Any resume should be reflective of who you are, your industry and the job for which you are applying. There are plenty of guidelines but no two look alike. It’s okay to distinguish yourself with in some parameters from other candidates – so make your resume unique to you.

All resumes and cover letters (unless otherwise specifically requested) if sent electronically should be saved as a PDF and sent as a PDF. This will preserve the integrity of your resume and the layout and design that you worked so hard to get just right. Just note that often and especially with large companies they will request it in word because they are loading them into a resume reader or database. Many will accept a PDF and if so it’s a general rule of thumb to send docs as PDF’s in so many cases not just with a resume!!