

Resumes and Job Interviews Resource Guide

Your Resume

Chris Q. Surname

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1234 Olive Trail
Long Beach, CA 90800
(310) 123-4567
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Contact Information

Objective

Objective
A sales and marketing internship allowing me to utilize my leadership and communication skills and apply my knowledge of the health care industry.

Education

Education
Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN
Krassman School of Management
B.S. in Management
• Marketing Major
• Human Resources Minor

May 2009
Major GPA: 3.2/4.0
GPA: 2.9/4.0

Familiar Computer Applications
Microsoft Office
Microsoft Access

Manage Communications
Internet Explorer

Special Course Project
• Acted as chair liaison for Memorial Hospital as part of Western Working team project
• Conducted research and prepared report on more efficient communication systems

Volunteer Service
Volunteer, Memorial Hospital Pharmacy, Michigan City, IN December 1998 to May 1999
• Prepared prescriptions to meet diverse needs of patients and customers
• Covered various pharmaceutical products from different suppliers, limited billing
• Occurred over 100 hours of volunteer service at health care facility

Work Experience
Cashier, A-1's Supermarket, Michigan City, IN May 1995-August 1997
• Trained new employees in customer service and efficient money handling
• Balanced cash register drawers and maintained high level of accuracy
• Assisted manager with inventory and ordering procedures

May 1995-August 1997

Sales Associate, Nona's Cottage, Michigan City, IN July 1993-November 1994
• Balanced registers and processed items in a high-volume counter

Leadership Activities
Delta Omicron Pi Professional Fraternity
• Central Committee Co-Chair
• Treasurer
• Publicity
Delta Gamma Society
Kappa Kappa Gamma Fraternity
• Management Ambassador
Purdue Water Ski Club
March of Dimes Walk-Assemble



Experience

Honors & Activities



Download this
booklet at
<http://mcifas.com/fcs.html>

UF UNIVERSITY of
FLORIDA
IFAS Extension

This educational booklet compiled and designed
by the University of Florida - Martin County
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Resume Writing Tips

Your resume should represent your best abilities truthfully. Employers do not have the luxury to spend more than a minute of their time reading your resume. It must be **eye-catching, short and brief**. The purpose of your resume is to get you in the door. Your interview gets you further ahead in getting the job you desire.

• Reverse Chronological Format Resume

Commonly used by people with *job specific titles and experience with no major gaps, chronologically listing your most recent job first*. This resume format is appropriate when you have specific job related experience and background. Generally people with professional experience in their field of specialization are comfortable using this resume format.



• Functional Format Resume

This is more commonly used where the *experience and education may not have a steady continuation, or long history of experience*, which makes it impractical to be listed chronologically. **Summarizing the education, experience and skills make this resume format attractive.** Listing your education and experience briefly can be compensated in the summary.

• Combination Format Resume

This resume format utilizes the best features of both the chronological and functional format resumes. *Commonly used when there is a lack of or not enough job specific experience and qualifications. New graduates* can use this resume format comfortably since it has more flexibility to adapt many variable backgrounds and experience.

Guidelines in writing a professional resume:

- Keep your objective **brief**, to the point and in line with your education and experience. Never exaggerate your qualifications, skills or lie on your resume. It's quite likely that your exaggerations will be exposed during a background check or an interview, and it might also taint your reputation in the industry.

Background checks can include:

- reference checks
- credit checks

- criminal background checks
- past employment verification
- education verification and
- social security number traces to verify identity.

- **Prioritize your accomplishments and skills** on your resume according to impressiveness, uniqueness and relevance to the prospective position. Resumes are scanned quickly, so a recruiter may move on to the next resume if you lead with an irrelevant skill.

- **Show how you can benefit an employer** — not just list your features and skills. Explain how you made a past employer money, saved them money or improved a process or product. Think about instances where you went above and beyond the call of duty.

- **Include your dates of employment.** The absence of dates makes recruiters scrutinize your employment history even more closely.

- Do not over write your resume with out of place **big words** and endless text; leave **spaces** and lines between each section.

- Use **bulleted** sentences, not paragraphs, to describe your work experience in your resume. **Begin with action words**, such as “developed,” “initiated,” or “managed.” Action words add strength to your resume.

- **Summarize your qualifications and experience** related to your field, do not list odd jobs, training's and courses.

- Make and save a **text (.txt) format copy** of your resume. This is useful to copy and paste online and elsewhere.

- Avoid sending your resume as an **email attachment** to employers unless you are invited to do so — which is often the case. Some potential employers may not have the software (or version of the software) that is needed to open the resume attachment, and many employers are very concerned about viruses in email attachments.

- Try to use specific **key words** in your resume related to your field. This allows employers and recruiters to easily find you when searching for your talents, skills, expertise and education.

- Avoid mentioning **hobbies and interests** when writing your resume, they often aren't relevant to the position you're applying for. Concentrate on describing your key experiences and skills.

- Do not use fancy or colored **paper**. Use the brightest white paper, and stay away from cheap quality papers.

Effective Resumes: An ‘Objective’ Debate

By Erin Hovanec

Those in favor say job objectives are the simplest, quickest way to target a specific position. Those against charge that objectives waste valuable space and limit you to just one position when you might be qualified for others.

Putting Your Goal on Paper

Job objectives work best for two types of job seekers:

- Those who know exactly what job they want, and
- Those whose career goal isn’t obvious on their resumes.

If you include an objective, **place it directly under your name and contact information.** An objective typically begins with “to.”

For example, “Objective: To obtain a position ...”

- Your objective should be simple, specific and brief — **no more than two or three lines.**
- It should highlight what you have to offer the company, such as a **specific skill or experience.** A recruiter is more interested in what you can give the company than what you hope to get from it.

Here’s an example of an effective job objective:

Objective: To obtain an entry-level account management position in financial services utilizing my strong analytical and interpersonal skills.

- Review your objective each time you send a resume and make sure it fits the job you’re applying for. Just as you should have **several versions of your resume, you should also have several versions of your job objective.**

Summarizing Your Skills

Not 100 percent sure what job you want? You may find a summary statement more effective than an objective. **While an objective focuses on the job, a summary statement focuses on the job seeker.**

A summary statement is a **one- to two-sentence overview that captures the essence of your skills and experience.** It highlights what makes you a qualified candidate as well as what makes you different (and better) than other applicants. Highlight the experience that is most relevant to the job.

Here’s an example of a strong summary statement.

Summary: Public relations professional with five years of experience managing PR campaigns across multiple media, working with national and local press and coordinating large-scale events.

Highlighting Your Achievements

Sometimes a job objective is too targeted, and sometimes a summary statement is too short to highlight all your accomplishments. If that’s the case, you have another option: A summary of qualifications.

A **summary of qualifications** is similar to a summary statement, but differs in two key ways:

1. It’s formatted as a list of items rather than a single statement, and
2. It highlights specific accomplishments rather than general achievements.

It’s most **useful for job seekers who have a long work history or who are applying for senior positions.** It’s an effective way to highlight the most important, relevant parts of a long, detailed resume.

This section goes by many names, like **“Key Accomplishments”** and **“Career Highlights.”** It’s placed just where a job objective or summary statement is, **under your contact information.**

A summary of qualifications is a list of your most significant career accomplishments.

For maximum effectiveness, the list should include **no more than five items and be results-oriented.**

The summary of qualifications is usually a list of short phrases. You can use a **bulleted list**, with each qualification on its own line. Or, to conserve space, you can arrange them in paragraph format, with a period after each one. Here’s an example of an effective summary of qualifications.

Summary of Qualifications:

- *Skilled pharmaceutical sales manager/executive with nine years sales experience and advanced degree in biology.*
- *Consistently surpassed annual revenue goals by 35 percent-plus.*
- *Named 2001 “Salesperson on the Year.”*
- *Managed regional sales staff of 175.*

Job objectives, summary statements, summaries of qualifications — all are useful resume options. Your best choice will depend on your experience and the type of job you’re interested in.

It's All About Words

Words Every Resume Should Include

Every word on your resume counts in today's competitive job market — especially those that refer to soft skills. Soft skills are increasingly important in the workplace. In fact, 86 percent of employers considered soft skills to be among their most important hiring criteria in a recent survey by two University of Massachusetts economists.

'Teamwork'

Teamwork is more important than ever in the workplace. The ability to work well with others to accomplish a common goal is vital for a harmonious workplace. Employees are often organized into teams to manage projects. And many employers believe collaboration increases the quality of work and improves productivity. A team player is an attentive listener, a cooperative colleague and is willing to help others.

'Flexibility'

Employers value workers who are flexible and able to juggle multiple tasks simultaneously. In other words, it's sometimes just as important to be a jack-of-all-trades as a master of one. You can show that you're flexible by demonstrating a willingness to take on new and varied projects and an ability to handle changing priorities and deadlines. Ultimately, being flexible doesn't only increase the odds that you'll get a job — it also improves your chances of keeping it should layoffs occur.

'Detail-Oriented'

Employers want to know that they can trust workers to handle a project down to the last detail. Being "detail-oriented" means being organized and meticulous about your work. It also implies that you can work without constant supervision and act independently.

'Self-Motivated'

Employers value employees who are self-starters. These workers can generate their own ideas and follow them through to fruition. A self-motivated worker goes the extra mile. She regularly takes on tasks that may not be part of her job description. She's inspired to work hard not just to reap rewards but also for personal satisfaction.

Words That Weaken Your Resume

More than just your accomplishments make your resume stand out — how you communicate them matters too. A strong resume gives potential employers a concise, clear picture of your skills and experience. It's the crucial first step in securing an interview and hopefully a job offer. For maximum impact, keep your **resume as concise as you can**. You need to include **all your achievements in only one to two pages**, so don't waste space on meaningless words. Plus, an employer doesn't want to spend time trying to understand vague phrases or decipher confusing jargon.



'Assist,' 'Contribute' and 'Support'

An employer won't know what you did if the wording on your resume is too vague. Words like "assist," "contribute" and "support" all say (or don't say) the same thing. They say you helped, but they don't say how. They beg the question: Exactly how did you assist, contribute or support a person or project? Use these words sparingly and always follow them with a description of your role and responsibilities. Let an employer *know the part you played and how you affected the outcome*.

'Successfully'

Of course you want to show all that you've accomplished on your resume. Your achievements will be more impressive if you give concrete examples of what you've done and how you've been successful. You don't need to use words like "successfully" or "effectively" to show an employer that you're a good worker; your experience should speak for itself. Instead of explicitly saying that a project was successful, *state your achievements clearly and factually. Then give examples of how or why the project was a success*.

'Responsible For'

The phrase "responsible for" can make your resume feel like a laundry list. Instead of just listing your responsibilities, try to stress your accomplishments. Your resume will also have more of an impact if you quantify your accomplishments. *Use figures to show how you affected growth, reduced costs or streamlined a process. Provide the number of people you managed, the amount of the budget you oversaw or the revenue you saved the company*.

‘Interface’ and Other Buzzwords

Don’t flower your resume with fancy words. By trying to sound intelligent or qualified, you may end up annoying or confusing your reader. You don’t want an employer to need a dictionary to discover what you really did at your last job.

Avoid buzzwords that have become cliché and words that are unnecessarily sophisticated. “Synergy” and “liaise” are examples of buzzwords that have been overused and abused.

Say what you mean plainly and simply. For example, instead of “interface,” say “work.” Instead of “impact,” say “affect.” Instead of “utilize,” say “use.”

Here’s what you always SHOULD include in your resume: **Keywords.** *Recruiters use keywords to search for resumes.* So choose some of the basic, important keywords in your field and pepper them throughout your resume. ~ *Caroline Levchuck*

Resume Keywords

When you sit down to create your resume one of the first feelings that hits you is that you cannot complete the sentences without using the same words over and over again.

Take the time to review this list and locate words that suggest your attitude towards your role. Avoid using the same words as everyone else and particularly beginning each section with a repeat of what has gone before. Great resources: a **dictionary** and **thesaurus**.

Leadership

Developed	Managed	Revitalized
Directed	Drove	Guided
Led	Organized	Inspired

Initiative

Devised	Set Up	Originated
Designed	Initiated	Started
Formulated	Established	Created
Generated	Introduced	Redesigned
Launched		

Achievement

Achieved	Obtained	Delivered
Attained	Completed	Secured
Negotiated	Effected	Demonstrated
Produced	Increased	Expanded

Performed	Succeeded	Conducted
Improved	Enhanced	Implemented
Surpassed	Accomplished	

Problem Solving

Analyzed	Evaluated	Solved
Investigated	Eliminated	Corrected
Utilized	Reduced	Identified
Tackled	Reorganized	Reviewed
Resolved	Reshaped	Strengthened
Streamlined	Simplified	Examined
Revised		

Using Resume Keywords

Many employers use database technology to store and search the resumes that are sent to them by potential employees. Employers and recruiters search these databases using industry-specific keywords. **Keywords are nouns and phrases that highlight technical and professional areas of expertise, industry-related jargon, achievements, projects, task forces, job titles, etc.**

If your resume does not contain at least some of the keywords that the employer is using, then your resume will be skipped by the computer, even if you have all of the experience and skills required by the job.

Some experienced job seekers may enhance their resume by including many of these keywords in a “**Summary of Qualifications**” near the top of their resume. This section may also be called a “**Professional Summary**” or, where appropriate, simply “**Skills.**” While most graduating seniors’ resumes do not benefit from such a summary, it is still imperative to include the appropriate keywords in the text of your resume.

Here a few basic principles for using keywords in your resume:

- The best source of keywords is the **actual job listing**, which is likely to contain many, if not all, of the keywords that an employer will use to search the resume database.
- Include plenty of keyword nouns and noun phrases throughout your resume. If you have a “Summary of Qualifications” section at the beginning of your resume, try not to repeat verbatim the contents of this section.
- If you are applying for technical positions, you can

list your skills, separating each noun or phrase by a comma.

- In some fields, a simple list of skills does not sufficiently describe the job seeker's background. Where appropriate, **include accomplishments**, as well, but be sure to include enough keywords to satisfy the computer searches.

Here are two examples, taken from Job Searching Online for Dummies, by Pam Dixon:

Keyword summary, example 1

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Award-winning corporate controller with more than ten years' experience in two \$500 million corporations. Impressive record in implementing financial record database architecture that saved over \$2 million annually. Proficient in Oracle, Prism, Red Brick, and SAP systems, as well as MS Project, Excel, Word, PowerPoint, and FrontPage."

Keyword summary, example 2

SKILLS

- Languages: C, SQL, C++, Assembler, Pascal
- Software: Oracle Developer 2000, Informix NewEra, FoxPro
- OS: UNIX, Windows NT/95/3.11, MS-DOS
- RDBMS: Oracle7, Informix 7

There are several ways to determine what keywords are appropriate for your industry and job.

- Look through recent job ads online. Certain words will reappear consistently. Those are your "key" words. Make sure your resume contains the keywords and concepts used in the particular job listing you are applying to.
- Talk to people in the career field you are targeting, and ask them what keywords are appropriate to the positions you are applying to. Visit **professional association Web sites**, and read the content carefully. Many of these are loaded with industry-related jargon which may be appropriate for your resume.
- Find a copy of **Electronic Resume Revolution**, by Joyce Lain Kennedy.
- Try the Occupational Outlook Handbook, an excellent resource produced by the U.S. Dept. of Labor. <http://www.bls.gov/oco/>

Other important ideas:

- If you're still in college, try to get at least one **internship** in the career field you're targeting. Even if you're internship lasts only a few weeks, you will significantly increase your keyword count.
- You should have a minimum of 4 industry- or job-specific keywords. The ideal is to have **at least 12 keywords**.
- Choose both general and specific keywords: For example, general = psychology; therapist; psychologist. Specific = addiction; behavioral therapy.

How to Handle a Gap in Your Job History

by Cynthia Wright

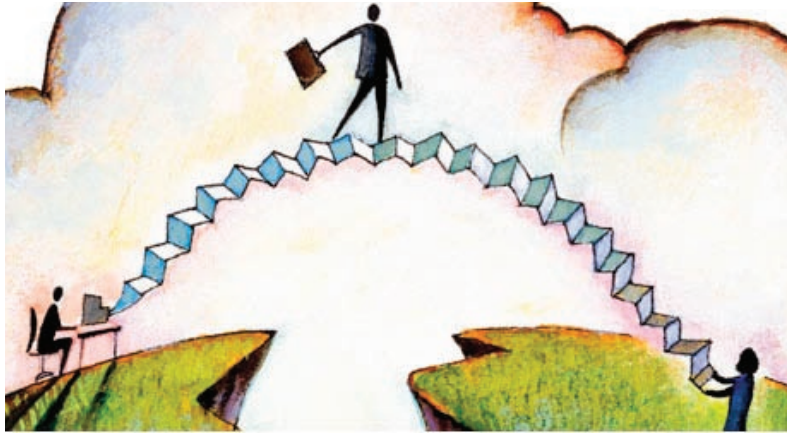
When you think of The Gap, we all think of the clothing store with the super skinny models and cute ads, right?

Well, in the wonderful world of resume writing and job searches, a gap in employment is a totally different ball game. In fact, it's one of the things that causes the most stress and fear in the hearts and minds of the job-seeker. Let me tell you why.

Looking for a job in itself is a full-time job. You are at a point in your life when you are at your most vulnerable. Anything out of the ordinary on your resume will intensify that stress and fear. When you are stressed out, chances are you may not be thinking as clearly or logically as you ordinarily would when life is great and things are rolling along. But as they say, stuff happens. Life happens. So do layoffs, new babies, sick relatives, and a host of other occurrences that can result in a significant gap in your resume.

No matter how diligent, hardworking, and responsible you are, it is possible that you may find yourself out of work for a significant period of time at some point in your career. The key point to remember is not to let this gap in employment hurt you during your job search.

Just because you are not working does not mean that you can't keep busy.



Keeping busy means staying involved in your profession. In fact, it's a lot easier to re-enter the workforce if you keep your skills sharp and your job knowledge up-to-date.

Here are some suggestions to **help you stay connected to your career while conducting your job search:**

- Find a **consulting assignment or project**. Many times, employees who are “in-between” jobs supplement their knowledge (and income) by taking contract or consulting assignments. Sometimes these assignments can result in full-time, permanent positions.
- Take a class in a subject related to your profession.
- Volunteer with an organization or become a mentor.
- Read trade journals and attend seminars in your field of expertise.
- Write an article for a publication in your area of expertise. Many freelance writing assignments pay well.
- Maintain your network of industry contacts. An example of this networking approach involves a friend of mine who was laid off from Lucent Technologies. When I met him for lunch the other day, he didn't seem very upset, and I was curious as to why. He told me he had “his list.” When I inquired as to what exactly “his list” was, he told me that he kept track of all of his colleagues who got laid off from Lucent and where they went! Brilliant. Guess what? One of the people on his list went to a start-up telecommunications company. As a result of keeping track of his colleague, my friend has a third interview and a great shot at an excellent opportunity in his field. So, it makes a lot of sense to keep a current list of contacts.

A gap on a resume glares out at a recruiter or hiring manager. *If you've spent your employment gap doing freelance work, consulting, or mentoring, be sure to list that experience in the Professional Experience section of your resume. Include the name of the organization,*

job functions, dates, and city and state. In other words, treat it as you would a regular job!

Let's look at the worst-case scenario.

Your resume has a large gap. You may want to consider a **functional resume as opposed to a chronological resume**. But be forewarned! A functional resume is a potential red flag to employers because it suggests that the job-seeker may have something to hide, so use caution before using a functional resume.

Recruiters and hiring managers prefer chronological resumes because they are easier to read and list skills and job functions as they apply to each position.

A functional resume does not.

If you have an extensive gap in employment, you may want to **address it in your cover letter** to the prospective employer. Include a brief one- or two-sentence explanation, but do not go into detail about a long illness or a frustrating job search. Rather, state that you were out of the workforce for whatever reason, and explain that you are eager to return. If the gap in your employment happened a long time ago, don't bother mentioning it at all. Employers are not interested in what happened in 1984!

Should the subject of your employment gap come up during an interview, explain why simply and briefly. In other words, use the exact same brief, simple explanation you used in your cover letter. Obviously, they were impressed enough with your background (despite any gaps) to invite you in for an interview!

Regardless of the reasons for your employment gaps, always maintain a positive, optimistic attitude, and be sure to let the hiring manager know that you are excited and ready to return to work!

Avoid These 10 Resume Mistakes

by Katharine Hansen



1. Resume lacks focus.

A sharp focus is an extremely important resume element. Given that employers screen resumes for between 2.5 and 20 seconds, a resume should show the employer at a glance what you want to do and what you're good at. In a recent study by Career Masters Institute, employers wanted resumes to show a clear match between the applicant and a particular job's requirements. A **“general” resume that is not focused on a specific job's requirements was seen as not competitive.** In an even more recent study by CareerBuilder.com, 71 percent of hiring managers preferred a resume customized for the open position.

One way to sharpen your focus is through an objective statement. Your objective statement can be very simple and straightforward; it can be simply the title of the position you're applying for, which can be adjusted for every job you apply for. Or you can embellish your Objective statement a bit with language telling how you'll benefit the employer. Something like:

Objective: To contribute strong _____ skills and experience to your organization in a _____ capacity.

You could have several versions of your resume that are essentially the same except for the objective. A specific objective is always better than a vague or general one.

To sharpen your focus, you can also add a section called something like “Summary of Qualifications,” “Profile,” or the like. Such a section can contribute to powerful resume opener that draws the reader in; it can be part of the top third of your resume that showcases your best selling points, catches the prospective employer's attention, and immediately demonstrates your value as a candidate. “Think of this section as an executive summary of your resume,” writes my partner, Dr. Randall Hansen. “Identify key accomplishments that will grab the attention of an employer.”

You can use your Profile/Summary section to position yourself for each job you target by tweaking the wording to fit each type of position.

2. Resume is duties-driven instead of accomplishments-driven.

Resumes should consist primarily of high-impact accomplishments statements that sell the job-seeker's qualifications as the best candidate.

Never use expressions such as “Duties included,” “Responsibilities included,” or “Responsible for.” That's job-description language, not accomplishments-oriented resume language that sells.

After all, if you were an employer and wanted to run a successful organization, would you be looking for candidates who can perform only their basic job functions, or would you want employees with a proven track record of accomplishments? In these days in which most resumes are placed into keyword-searchable databases, you won't find employers searching resumes for words like “responsibilities,” “duties,” or “responsible for.”

Instead, focus on accomplishments that set you apart from other job candidates. In each job:

- What special things did you do to set yourself apart?
- How did you do the job better than anyone else?
- What did you do to make it your own?
- What special things did you do to impress your boss so that you might be promoted?
- What were the problems or challenges that you or the organization faced?
 - What did you do to overcome the problems?
 - What were the results of your efforts?
 - How did the company benefit from your performance?
 - How did you leave your employers better off than before you worked for them?
- How have you helped your employers to:
 - make money
 - save money
 - save time
 - make work easier
 - solve a specific problem
 - be more competitive
 - build relationships
 - expand the business
 - attract new customers
 - retain existing customers

Accomplishments are the points that increase reader's interest, stimulate a request for a job interview, and really help sell you to an employer -- much more so

than everyday job duties. In the above-cited study by Career Masters Institute, content elements that propel employers to immediately discard resumes include a focus on duties instead of accomplishments, while documented achievements were highly ranked among content elements that employers look for.

Some job-seekers list accomplishments in a separate section or isolate accomplishments from duties/responsibilities when describing their job functions. I don't support this practice because everything on your resume should be accomplishments-driven. If you label only certain items as accomplishments, the reader's assumption is that the other things you did were not accomplishments.

Be sure also that the accomplishments you list support your career goals and that you tailor them to the job you're targeting with this resume.

3. Resume items are listed in an order that doesn't consider the reader's interest.

In listing your jobs, what's generally most important is your title/position. So list in this **preferred order: Title/position, name of employer, city/state of employer, dates of employment.** I can't tell you how many resumes I've seen that list dates first. Dates can be important to some employers, but they're generally not as important as what your position was and whom you worked for.

Education follows the same principle; thus, the **preferred order for listing your education is: Name of degree (spelled out: Bachelor of _____) in name of major, name of university, city/state of university, graduation year, followed by peripheral information, such as minor and GPA.** If you haven't graduated yet, list your information the same way. Since the graduation date you've listed is in the future, the employer will know you don't have the degree yet.

By the way, the Resume Ingredients Rule is also the reason that **experience and education are listed in reverse chronological order on your resume;** it's assumed that your most recent education and experience are most important and relevant to the reader.

Also consider whether your education or your experience is your best selling point and which should therefore be listed first. Generally, **brand-new graduates list**

education first, while job-seekers with a few years of experience list experience first. When job-seekers add value to their education by attaining an MBA or other graduate degree, they often switch education back to the more prominent position because it now becomes the hot selling point. In fields such as science and higher education, in which education remains a more important selling point than experience, education tends to be listed first consistently. In many countries outside the U.S., education is also considered more important than experience.

4. Resume exposes the job-seeker to age discrimination by going too far back into the job-seeker's job history.

The rule of thumb for someone at the senior level is to **list about 15 years worth of jobs.** Age discrimination, unfortunately, is a reality, and even more likely, employers may think you're too expensive if you list too much experience on your resume. Similarly, **don't provide the date of your college graduation if it was more than about 10 years ago.**



5. Resume buries important skills, especially computer skills, at the bottom.

There are few jobs today for which computer skills are not important. Yet many job-seekers, even those in technology fields, tend to tack a "Computer Skills" section to the end of their resumes. **If computer skills are relevant to your field, list them in your Summary or Profile section.** That way, they'll catch the reader's eye in the first third of your resume. If you are in the technology field, list your technical skills in a separate section called something like "Systems Proficiencies," but be sure it's on the first page of your resume.

Similarly if language and international-business skills are important in the type of job you seek, list them in your Summary or Profile section, not at the end of your resume.

6. Resume is not bulleted.

Use a bulleted style to make your resume more reader-friendly. In the above-cited study by Career Masters Institute, use of bullets was the 2nd-highest ranked

preference by employers, and density of type (paragraphs rather than bullet points) was ranked highly as a factor that would inspire employers to discard a resume.

Use bullets consistently. Some job-seekers bullet most of their resume but don't bullet the Profile/Summary section, for example. Or they will list the overall scope and responsibilities for each job in an unbulleted section before beginning a bulleted section describing accomplishments. Given that the reader can't easily discern a rationale for why some material is bulleted and other material isn't, it's best to bullet consistently throughout the resume.

7. Resume uses a cookie-cutter design based on an overused resume template.

Most resumes created from a Microsoft Word template are instantly recognizable to employers as such. There's nothing wrong with that except that employers have seen a million of them, so they don't stand out. The employer immediately senses a certain lack of imagination in the job-seeker. These templates are also somewhat inflexible and contain problematic formatting. "Using a template or any kind of boilerplate to demonstrate your value to a company is the worst thing you can do to yourself when job hunting," says Nick Corcodilos of Ask The Headhunter. "You're supposed to be uniquely qualified so the company will choose you instead of some cookie-cutter drone — right? Do you really want a template?"

8. Resume lacks keywords.

Job-hunting today increasingly revolves around the mysterious world of keywords. Employers' reliance on keywords to find the job candidates they want to interview has come about in recent years because of technology. Inundated by resumes from job-seekers, employers have increasingly relied on digitizing job-seeker resumes, placing those resumes in keyword-searchable databases, and using software to search those databases for specific keywords that relate to job vacancies. Most Fortune 1000 companies, in fact, and many smaller companies now use these technologies. In addition, many employers search the databases of third-party job-posting and resume-posting boards on the Internet.

Pat Kendall, president of the National Resume Writers' Association, notes that more than 80 percent of resumes are searched for job-specific keywords.

The bottom line is that if you apply for a job with a company that searches databases for keywords, and your resume doesn't have the keywords the company seeks for the person who fills that job, you are pretty much dead in the water.



9. References are listed directly on your resume.

Never list specific references directly on your resume. List them on a separate sheet, and even then, submit them only when specifically requested by an employer.

Even the phrase, "**References: Available upon request,**" is highly optional because it is a given that you will provide references upon request. If you couldn't, you would have no business looking for a job. The line can serve the purpose of signaling:

"This is the end of my resume," but if you are trying to conserve space, leave it off.

10. Resume's appearance becomes skewed when sent as an e-mail attachment and/or resume is not available in other electronic formats.

Have you ever noticed that when you send a resume (or any document) as an attachment from your computer to someone else's computer, it sometimes doesn't look the same on the other person's computer as it did on yours? Maybe it has more pages on the other computer, or maybe Page 2 starts at the bottom of Page 1, or maybe the fonts are different.

If you are regularly sending your resume as an e-mail attachment, you may want to experiment with sending it to friends' computers to ensure that the formatting appears consistently from computer to computer.

Beyond a resume that can be sent as an e-mail attachment, it's crucial these days to have at least one type of electronic version of your resume for sending via e-mail and posting to Internet job boards. It's an absolute must these days because, as noted earlier, 80 percent of resumes today are placed directly into keyword-searchable databases. A text version of your resume is the most common and preferred format for electronic resumes.

LAYOUT WORKSHEET FOR ORGANIZING YOUR RESUME

Name in slightly larger type and bold

123 Main Street, Stuart, FL 34994 • (772) 555-5555 • E-mail: yourname@yahoo.com

Choose ONE of these to be placed next, either: Objective - Summary - or Summary of Qualifications

OBJECTIVE

To obtain an entry-level account management position in financial services utilizing my strong analytical and interpersonal skills.

- It should **highlight what you have to offer the company**, such as a specific skill or experience.
- Your objective should be simple, specific and brief — no more than two or three lines.
- You can have several resumes to fit different jobs, with only one change - the Objective.

SUMMARY

Public relations professional with five years of experience managing PR campaigns across multiple media, working with national and local press and coordinating large-scale events.

- A **summary statement focuses on the job seeker, in a one- to two-sentence overview that captures the essence of your skills and experience**. It highlights what makes you a qualified candidate as well as what makes you different (and better) than other applicants.

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Award-winning corporate controller with more than ten years' experience in two \$500 million corporations. Impressive record in implementing financial record database architecture that saved over \$2 million annually. Proficient in Oracle, Prism, Red Brick, and SAP systems, as well as MS Project, Excel, Word, PowerPoint, and FrontPage.”

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS (OR Key Accomplishments OR Career Highlights)

- Skilled pharmaceutical sales manager/executive with nine years sales experience and advanced degree in biology.
- Consistently surpassed annual revenue goals by 35 percent-plus.
- Named 2001 “Salesperson on the Year.”
- Managed regional sales staff of 175.
- A **summary of qualifications** is similar to a summary statement, but differs in two key ways:
 1. Formatted as a list of items which include **no more than five items and be results-oriented**.
 2. It highlights your most significant career accomplishments
- It's most **useful for job seekers who have a long work history or who are applying for senior positions**. It's an effective way to highlight the most important, relevant parts of a long, detailed resume.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Consulting
- Presentations
- Project Management
- Requirements Management
- Technical Pre-Sales

SKILLS

- Languages: C, SQL, C++, Assembler, Pascal
- Software: Oracle Developer 2000, Informix NewEra, FoxPro
- Operating Systems: UNIX, Windows NT/95/3.11, MS-DOS

SYSTEMS EXPERIENCE AND PROFICIENCIES

- Client Server Technologies
- Web-Based Technologies
- Internetworking Concepts, such as firewalls, communication protocols, proxy/caching servers
- Microsoft Internet Information Server 4 and 5
- Windows NT 4 and 2000 Server

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Solutions Architect, Kandle Power Software, Albuquerque, NM *2002 to 2004*

- Managed 70 accounts throughout Washington, Northern California, Idaho, and Oregon.
- Promoted from Implementation Consultant.
- Administered organization-wide needs-assessment; identified critical training needs and requirements.
- Oversaw software platform design and custom solution delivery for multimillion-dollar accounts.
- Communicated detailed product knowledge to support consulting engagements.
- Collaborated with customers, partners, and internal constituencies to ensure successful implementation of solutions; mentored and assisted associate services staff.

* Use italic lettering (slanted) for the Title of your position, city, state, dates - as shown above.

* Use bullets and start with “action” words, for example: “Managed ...”

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM
- Information Systems Programmer Training Program, New Mexico Power Software, Albuquerque, NM:
 - Management and Leadership
 - Project Management (PMI Certification Curriculum)
 - Microsoft Windows 2000 Server
 - Java2 Programming Language
 - Customer Service
- Certified _____
- Licensed _____
- Include any technical schools, previous job sponsored training

NOTE:

- Get your resume to fit one page only.
- Spellcheck using the computer software, and also have someone proofread it for grammar and spelling.

References: The Keys to Choosing and Using the Best Job References in Your Job Search

by Randall S. Hansen, Ph.D.

If you're like most job-seekers, you may not have put much thought into whom you'll want to use as references when potential employers request them. We're often so busy polishing our resumes and cover letters, researching the companies, and preparing for interviews, that we neglect a very important part of the job search process — requesting people to be references.

How can this article assist you? By helping you see the importance and value of choosing the “right” people to be references, by providing examples of how to develop a references page, and by offering you other keys to using references strategically in your job search.

Perhaps you're saying to yourself, “references don't really matter.” While it's true that most employers will not conduct a detailed background search on you, many employers will at least contact at least one or two of your references. Do not underestimate the power of your references. Remember, the employer is preparing to make a big investment in hiring you, and wants to be sure you are who you say you are. Having a few good references can be the deciding factor in your getting the job offer. Similarly, having one bad — or lukewarm — reference could cost you the job.

So what are the keys to using job references? Here's one list of the eight keys to choosing and using the best job references in your job search.

1. Don't even bother with those generic “letters of recommendations.”

Employers don't want to read letters written in the past to “whom it may concern.” Employers want to be able to contact and communicate (via phone or email) with a select group of people who can speak about your strengths and weakness and fit for the job you are seeking. Plus, these letters don't have much credibility

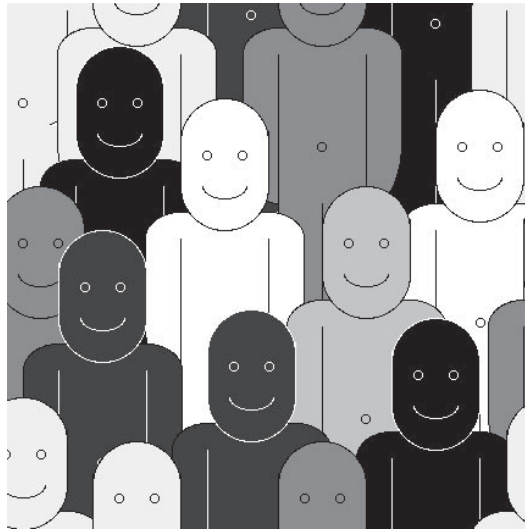
because anyone who would write a letter for you would likely say only good things about you.

2. Never, ever list names of references on your resume.

References belong on a separate sheet of paper that matches the look and feel of your resume, but is simply titled “**References**” or “**Reference List.**” Never give references to employers until they request them, but do be sure and keep a list of references with you when interviewing so that you can be prepared to present them when the employer asks. If you have a job-search portfolio, keep the list in your portfolio.

3. Think strategically about reference choices.

What kind of reference do you want? You want the people who will make the strongest recommendations for you. Former supervisors do not have to be references, especially if they did not know all your accomplishments or you fear they will not have glowing things to say about you. Sometimes former co-workers, or supervisors in other departments who know your work, make the best choices. Again, the key is people who know your strengths and abilities -- and who will say positive things about you.



4. Consider different categories of references.

Overall, you ideally want about **three to five** references - people who can **speak highly of your accomplishments, work ethic, skills, education, performance,** etc. For experienced job-seekers, most references should come from previous supervisors and co-workers whom you worked closely with in the past, though you may also choose to list an educational (mentor) or personal (character) reference.

College students and recent grads have a little more flexibility, but ideally you should have several references from **internships or volunteer work** in addition to professors and personal references. Avoid listing family members; clergy or friends are okay for personal references. **Former coaches, vendors, customers, and business acquaintances** are also acceptable.

5. Get permission to use someone as a reference.

Before you even think of listing someone as a reference, be sure and ask whether the person would be comfortable serving as a reference for you. Most people will be flattered — or at least willing to serve as a reference — but you still need to ask to be sure. Be prepared for a few people to decline your request — for whatever reason.

6. Collect all the details for each reference.

Make sure to get complete information from each reference: full name, current title, company name, business address, and contact information (daytime phone, email, cell phone, etc.).

7. Keep your references informed (and perhaps coached).

Make sure each reference always has a copy of your most current resume, knows your key accomplishments and skills, and is aware of the jobs/positions you are seeking. Again, the best references are the ones who know who you are, what you can accomplish, and what you want to do.

8. Be sure to thank your references for their help.

Don't forget to thank your references once your current job search is complete. Some companies never contact any references, some only check the first one or two, and some check all. Regardless, these people were willing to help you, and thanking them is simply a common courtesy.

One final note: If you are really unsure of what your references will say about you, you have the option of **hiring one of several job reference companies**. For a fee, the company will contact each of your references and report back to you what they said about you. Ideally, though, you should not need to use these services.

Questions a potential employer might ask one of your references:

- Can you please describe how you know the candidate? And for how long?
- How would you rate the candidate's skills in _____?

- Can you describe the candidate's communications abilities?
- How well does the candidate work under pressure?
- Can you describe the candidate's attitude toward work?
- How well does the candidate take constructive criticism?
- How well does the candidate interact with co-workers?
- Is the candidate a team player?
- How would you describe the candidate's honesty and integrity?
- Can you describe the candidate's key strengths and weaknesses?
- How receptive is the candidate to new ideas and procedures?
- Given a description of the position the candidate is applying for, do you think the candidate is a good match?
- If you were in a position to hire this candidate for a similar position, would you do so?
- Can you describe the candidate's leadership, managerial, or supervisory skills?
- Do you have any additional information or comments that might help us make a better decision about this candidate?

Resume Cover Letter



It is always a good idea to **send a cover letter with your resume** — regardless of whether the employer requests one. It is proper business etiquette to send one, and it affords you another opportunity to sell yourself in addition to your resume.

The **main purpose** of resume cover letters is to **tailor your application to a specific job**. Your resume acts as a general advertisement about yourself and the cover letter explains why your skills and work experience are applicable to the specific job. The resume cover letter also gives you an opportunity to show your personality, so use it.

If at all possible, you should **address your resume cover letter to a specific individual within the company**. Otherwise, your resume is more likely to get lost in the shuffle. Conduct a little research about the company or call them and ask who to send it to if a contact name is not overtly supplied.

In the standard resume cover letter **format**, the introduction should **clearly state what position you are applying for**. This should not only be the focus of the opening paragraph, but it should also be the **focus of the opening sentence**. One sentence should be enough for the opening paragraph of your resume cover letter, but you may want to consider using an additional sentence to mention the name of a personal contact within the company who recommended the job to you or to briefly mention your qualifications for the job.

The body of your resume cover letter should contain your sales pitch. Use several sentences to mention the specific job skills and accomplishments that make you the ideal candidate for the open position. Elaborate by using brief examples to explain why your unique job skills make you the right person for the job. Don't painstakingly list all your wonderful qualities; just stick to the qualities that are relevant to the open position.

In the conclusion of the resume cover letter, state your desire to meet with the company recruiter or hiring manager in person. To facilitate this, provide your preferred contact method and invite the employer to contact you at anytime to set up the interview. Close the paragraph by thanking the employer for considering your application.

SALLY B. JONES
7124 S. DeCoto Street
Any Town, Any State 36254
Telephone: (815) 879-2680

January 30, 2007

Mr. Smith - Director of Human Resources
Raymond Kate Associates
524 Fair Lane Street
Any City, State 78194

Dear Mr. Smith:

I am responding to your advertisement in The City Tribune (dated 1/20/00), regarding the Pharmaceutical Representative position. Please find enclosed my resume showing my education, experience, and background.

I have over 7 years experience in the sales and marketing field, and 3 years experience as an LPN staff nurse.

Throughout my sales and marketing career I won top sales awards, and trained other sales representative's specific sales techniques to increase their sales. I enjoy working with the public, as well, demonstrating products, and educating others in their uses. I believe I would excel in pharmaceutical sales because I truly find sales a challenging and rewarding career; as well, my nursing background offers an advantage in better understanding the products I would sell.

May I arrange an interview to further discuss my qualifications? I am available for an interview at a mutually convenient time.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sally B. Jones

Thank You Letter

Impressive job interview thank you letters should only be a **page or less in length**. Interview thank you letters that are longer than a page would be distracting and may make you appear to be desperate. Just like a resume or a cover letter, a thank you letter will be scanned. Remember, the employer receives a large number of these letters everyday. Read sample interview thank you letters to see how they're structured.

Job interview thank you letters may be **delivered via regular mail or email**. Not only has email become an acceptable method to send resume and thank you letters, it may be the preferred method. Although regular mail may have a more personal feeling, email has the advantage of being quicker. What is more important: a perceived nuance of seeming personal or the advantage of getting to the employer quicker and keeping your name in the employer's memory?

The one thing that you should definitely do after an interview is send a job interview thank you letter. First of all, it's the polite thing to do, and, it will leave a **positive impression** in the recruiter's mind. It is also an ideal opportunity to reiterate your interest in the position and mention experience or skills that weren't discussed during the interview.

You should certainly send a thank you letter **after a second interview**. What would you do if someone made breakfast and lunch for you? Would you only show your appreciation after breakfast? Take the opportunity to maintain your positive image and keep your name in the mind of the employer.



1/10/07

Attn: Mr. Alex Smith
Raymond Kate Associates
4854 Bay Street
Millington, Virginia 58745

Dear Mr. Smith:

Just a note to say thank you for giving me the opportunity to interview with your company for the position of loss control specialist, I enjoyed our conversation and feel my experience and education would complement Raymond Kate Associates. I look forward to being able to put my extensive knowledge and experience of working with environmental protection agencies to bring about effective safety programs to your company.

As we discussed I have enclosed 3 letters of recommendation from my professional acquaintances. In addition, I am also enclosing some of the safety programs I designed so you can see first hand the type of work I am capable of performing to bring about the successful safety programs the government requires in organizations today.

Again, thank you for your time. I am looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Bill J. Collins

How to Create and E-Mail a Plain Text Resume

By Christopher Jones

Unlike Microsoft Word and other word processors, plain text does not allow bold, italics or different fonts. While it may seem boring, this simplicity allows recruiters to view resumes the same way regardless of the software they use.

Tools You'll Need

If you don't already have a text editor (and most people with computers do), you can get one for free online. As far as text editors go, I like two in particular:

1. Notepad: If you're running Microsoft Windows software on your computer, chances are you have Notepad, which is Microsoft's default text editor.

2. NoteTab Light: If you don't have Notepad or can't find it on your computer, you can download NoteTab Light for free here: http://www.download.com/3000-2352_4-10294450.html

Creating Your Plain Text Resume

There are two ways you can enter your resume into a text editor.

• **From scratch:** Once you've found a text editor, start it up and begin typing in your resume. Keep the organization clean and simple as you will not be able to use bold, italics or fonts in different sizes.

• **Copy and paste:** If you cut and paste a formatted resume into a text editor, you'll notice that a lot of the formatting will be lost. Your font will be uniform and any text with bold or italics will be replaced with plain text.

If you are using a text editor, your document should **automatically be saved as text**. Double check this by making sure your document has a **“.txt”** file extension. Also, text editors do not typically have spell check, so copy and paste your text resume into Microsoft Word or another word processing program with spell check. Spell check the document. Be sure to make any necessary changes to the text document and save it again.

Creating a Plain-Text E-Mail

If a job description asks you to include a plain-text resume in the body of an e-mail, make sure your e-mail software is set to send plain text. Otherwise, your e-mail browser will add formatting to your resume and the recruiter may assume you didn't follow instructions.

The method for sending a plain-text e-mail depends on the e-mail program you're using. I've included directions for some major e-mail programs below. If your e-mail program isn't listed, look in the “help” section of your e-mail or consider calling your Internet Service Provider.

• **Yahoo! Mail:** Create a new e-mail. At the bottom of the e-mail, click the “plain text” button. Then, simply copy and paste your resume into the e-mail. You may have to make some minor formatting changes.

• **Hotmail:** Create a new e-mail, in the pull-down field labeled “Tools” make sure the “Rich Text Editor” is off. You'll be able to tell if you've successfully turned the Rich Text Editor off as all the formatting options will disappear from your composition screen. You may have to make some minor formatting changes.

• **Microsoft Outlook:** Create a new e-mail, click on the “Format” button and choose the “Plain Text” option. Simply copy and paste your resume into the new e-mail. You may have to make some minor changes, but most of your formatting should remain intact.

Helpful Formatting Tips

• **Use all caps to make headers stand out** from body text. Since plain text does not allow for bold and italics, it can be difficult to distinguish between resume sections. I use all capital letters for “OBJECTIVE,” “WORK EXPERIENCE” and “EDUCATION” to give them prominence.

• You can use **bullets** in a plain-text document, but it's not as easy as clicking a button. If you want to use a bullet point in your plain-text resume, copy and paste this bullet (•) without the parentheses into your resume. Otherwise, you can use an asterisk (*) or dashes (—).

• **Avoid using the “Tab” key**, because plain text when saved may not retain the tab command. Instead, use the **space bar**.

• Always **e-mail a copy** of your plain-text resume **to yourself** before sending it to a recruiter. This gives you a chance to see the resume as the recruiter will see it.



Should You Use a Resume Writing Service?

By Caroline Levchuck

When you spend as much time as we do researching resumes, you begin to see just how important a good one really is. Consider:

- The majority of recruiters spend less than three minutes reviewing a resume, according to a survey conducted by a major human resources association.
- Simple typos or grammatical errors can automatically disqualify a resume from consideration.
- Many companies receive hundreds of thousands of resumes a year, making it even more difficult for yours to stand out.

These are just some of the reasons job seekers turn to professional resume writing services. Here are some thoughts on how to get the best result when working with a resume writing service.

They're Resume Writers, Not Miracle Workers

- *Been out of work for a while?*

A resume writing service can help smooth gaps on your resume.

- *Looking to change careers?*

A resume writing service can help translate your current skills to another industry.

- *Been out of the job market for an extended time?*

A resume writing service can make certain your resume looks and feels contemporary.

- *But be realistic in your expectations.*

Resume writers cannot create experience or expertise where there is none. And not all resume writers are career experts, so they may not be the best resource to get advice on broader career issues.

The Pros of Using a Pro

If you have a tight budget or fancy yourself a word-smith, you may be hesitant to use a professional resume writer...but consider the benefits. Professional resume writers write resumes — every day. You do it far less often. Or rarely. Or never. Think about this when considering hiring a professional:

- A good resume writer knows what recruiters want — and don't want — to see in a resume.
- A professional resume writer, particularly one

who specializes in your industry or experience level, will know (and include) keywords that will help recruiters find your resume when searching online.

- Most services guarantee an easy-to-read, error-free resume.



Some job seekers find that the peace of mind they get from a professionally prepared resume is worth the cost, which can range from \$50 to \$1,000.

Nobody's Perfect

Again, professional resume writers write resumes. Every day. But sometimes, that can be a “disadvantage.” When choosing a service, be wary of these common pitfalls:

- Make sure the resume writer delivers not just form but substance. Some professionally written resumes contain canned or clichéd language that show you've used a service and not a very good one at that.
- Make sure the resume writer conducts a thorough, detailed interview with you. Send any back-up material you think they need, even if they don't request it.
- If possible, work with a resume writer who specializes in your industry or experience level.
- Ask in advance what your final resume will look like.
- Avoid services that offer cookie-cutter formats.

Buyer Beware

- Before you hire a professional resume writer, take a look at THEIR resume.
- Select a reputable company with a proven track record, or look for someone who is a member of a professional resume writers association, such as the Professional Association of Resume Writers and Career Coaches.
- Finally, agree on a price and delivery date and get them in writing.
- Confirm that you'll receive your resume in electronic format so you can print your own copies at will. Read it over yourself to be certain it's perfect before sending it out. If chosen carefully, a professional resume writer can give you the resume you need to get the job you want.

Interview Tips

Although they seem easy, many people find open-ended questions to be difficult to answer during an interview. Practice your responses to these sample interview questions:

- *What are your best qualities?*
- *What makes you think you are the ideal candidate for this position?*
- *What would be your ideal job?*

There are several **nonverbal communication skills** which are very important for impressing interviewers:

- Greet the interviewer with a firm handshake, but don't try to crush the person's hand. A firm handshake evokes strength and enthusiasm.
- During the interview, maintain steady eye contact with the interviewer.
- Sit up straight and be attentive to what the interviewer is saying.
- Dress in proper business attire.
- Use positive facial expressions.
- Show your eagerness to hear back for the interviewer and let him/her know you are thankful for this interview opportunity.

You should definitely let an interviewer lead the interview, but it is **entirely appropriate for you to ask questions during a job interview**:

- What opportunities would I have for advancement?
- What would be my approximate starting salary and is there a benefits package?
- How will my progress be evaluated, and how frequently will I have a job evaluation?
- What are the current goals for the department, and what would be the expectations for my role?
- Do you have any additional questions or concerns about my qualifications that I could address during this interview?
- How will the rest of the job search process proceed?

Here are several **basic facts that you should collect** before going to a job interview:

- Names, titles, and backgrounds of key people in the organization.
- Major products or services provided by the company.
- Volume of business (revenue and profit).
- Number of employees.
- National and international office locations.
- Structure of the company.
- Names and strengths/weaknesses of major competitors.
- Company's reputation in the marketplace.
- Latest news about the company or news that could affect the company.



- Awards.
- Community involvement.

There are several items that you should **bring to a job interview**:

- A briefcase (to look professional and to carry things easily).
- Pen and paper.
- Extra copies of your resume.
- Work samples (if appropriate).
- Business card.
- List of references.
- Don't assume that sending something later will be acceptable.

Proper Interview Attire:

Formal business attire is almost always preferred for any job interview. Regardless of whether employees wear formal attire at the prospective workplace, you should **dress to impress and show respect** to your potential employer. It's more likely that you'll be looked down upon for under dressing, not overdressing.

- Avoid wearing large pieces of jewelry or heavy makeup. These may distract the interviewer and, thus, detract from your performance during the interview.
- You should also avoid wearing cologne or perfume. The interviewer may not only find the odor to be distracting or offensive, but may also be allergic to the ingredients.



Your 3-Minute Commercial

This is a well thought out, brief, rehearsed presentation of — not necessarily in this order:

- who you are
- what you're looking for
- why you're in the situation you're in, and
- why someone would want to hire you.

You can use this presentation in its entirety, but most of the time you'll use the parts that are relevant in these kinds of situations:

- In response to the interviewer when they ask "Tell me about yourself"
- When you meet someone in a professional setting
- When someone asks you about yourself in a social setting

The best way to create your 3-minute commercial is to follow an outline such as this:

1. Brief overview of where you've been

- Your area of expertise, background and knowledge
- Why you're looking for a job

2. Your objective

- Industries or areas you're exploring
- What kind of position you're looking for
- If this is a career change, brief explanation of how your skills transfer and why you're interested in this field

3. More details on you

- Your strengths
- Your experience (positions and overview of responsibilities)
- Specific accomplishments (ways you've been valuable) that illustrate how you've applied your strengths

4. Education if relevant and/or recent

5. Recap your objective

Write down only the key points to support your outline. Then say it out loud - practice - time yourself - ask someone to listen and give feedback. Be specific, brief and flexible in your presentation

Five things interviewers scrutinize

1. Your skills and abilities: the things you actually do.
2. Your personal characteristics and attitudes
3. Your ability to communicate
4. Your potential
5. How the interviewer feels about you.

Five rules of elegance

1. Listen to the question. If you didn't hear or understand something, ask for clarification
2. Only offer information that answers the question. Don't talk too much.
3. Think through and share relevant facts.
4. Take time to pause or reflect before you answer a question. A little silence is OK.
5. Only share positive information.

Why did you leave your company? Why are you looking?

Focus on what you want to move toward — not what you want to get away from. Of course your answer will depend on your circumstances. Here's some ideas you can play around with:

- The company is downsizing.
- My position is being eliminated.
- I want to work for a small company.
- I want to move into a more progressive industry.

Five things that put you in a position of strength

- Research: Find out what the company does, who runs it, their philosophy and culture, brief history and financial status.
- Know the pay range for the position and where you fit in.
- Coach and follow up with your references.
- Prepare answers and questions that reflect a "what can I do for you" attitude.
- Know your strengths, expertise, reason for job hunting and objective like the back of your hand.

Words describing your abilities:

- analyze • research • follow through on details • envision • organized • coordinated • persuade • prioritize • problem solve • work well with people • develop procedures • plan • train • monitor • motivate • create • promote • lead • be a team player • write • communicate • present • manage • work with computers

Illegal Interview Questions



- Do you have responsibilities or commitments that will prevent you from meeting specified work schedules?
- Do you anticipate any absences from work on a regular basis? If so, please explain the circumstances.

Age? Date of Birth?

Age based inquiries should be avoided because state law prohibits discrimination against persons **age 40 and older**. An age inquiry may be made to ensure a person is old enough to work for the job being filled, or if the job is among the few where age discrimination is permitted such as physically dangerous or hazardous work, or driving a school bus.

Example of Illegal Questions

- How old are you?
- When is your birthday?
- In what year were you born?
- In what year did you graduate from college/high school?

Possible Legal Alternatives

- Are you over the age of 18?
- Can you, after employment, provide proof of age?

Marital - Family Status (often alludes to sexual orientation)

The purpose of these “family” inquiries is to explore what some employers believe is a common source of absenteeism and tardiness. Typically, these questions are asked only of women making the inquiry clearly unlawful. However, even if such inquiries are made of both men and women, the questions may still be suspect. Such information has been used to discriminate against women because of society’s general presumption that they are the primary care givers. If the employer’s concern is regular work attendance, a better question would be, “Is there anything that would interfere with regular attendance at work?”

Example of Illegal Questions

- Are you married or do you have a permanent partner?
- With whom do you live?
- How many children do you have?
- Are you pregnant?
- Do you expect to become have a family? When? How many children will you have?
- What are your child care arrangements?

Possible Legal Alternatives

- Would you be willing to relocate if necessary?
- Travel is an important part of the job. Do you have any restrictions on your ability to travel?

Personal

Minimum height and weight requirements are unlawful if they screen out a disproportionate number of women or minorities. Unless the employer can show that a height or weight requirement is essential for job performance, such inquiries should be avoided.

Example of Illegal Questions

- How tall are you?
- How much do you weigh?

(Questions about height and weight are always illegal unless it can be proven that there are minimum requirements to do the job.)

Possible Legal Alternatives

- Are you able to lift a 50-pound weight and carry it 100 yards, as that is part of the job?

Disabilities

Inquiries about a person’s disability, health or worker’s compensation histories are unlawful if they imply or express a limitation based on disability. Under the federal Americans with Disabilities Act, any inquiry at the pre-employment stage, which would likely require an applicant to disclose a disability, is unlawful. Employers must avoid such inquiries or medical examinations before making a bona fide job offer.

However, an employer may inquire about an applicant’s ability to perform certain job functions and, within certain limits, may conduct tests of all applicants to determine if they can perform essential job functions, with or without an accommodation.

Example of Illegal Questions

- Do you have any disabilities?
- Have you had any recent illness or operations?
- Please complete this medical questionnaire.
- What was the date of your last physical exam?
- How’s your family’s health?
- When did you lose your eyesight/ leg/ hearing/ etc.?

Possible Legal Alternatives

- Are you able to perform the essential functions of this job with or without reasonable accommodations? (Let the interviewer thoroughly described the job.)

- Will you be able to carry out in a safe manner all job assignments necessary for this position?
- Are you able to lift a 50-pound weight and carry it 100 yards, as that is part of the job?
- Note: Medical exams are legal AFTER an offer has been extended; results should be held strictly confidential except for reasons of safety.

National Origin / Citizenship

Inquiries about a person's citizenship or country of birth are unlawful and imply discrimination on the basis of national origin. A lawfully immigrated alien may not be discriminated against on the basis of citizenship. The Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 require employers to verify the legal status and right to work of all new hires. Employers should not ask applicants to state their national origin, but should ask if they have a legal right to work in America, and explain that verification of that right must be submitted after the decision to hire has been made. To satisfy verification requirements, employers should ask all new hires for documents establishing both identity and work authorization.

Example of Illegal Questions

- Where were you/your parents born?
- What is your native language?
- What is your country of citizenship?
- Are you a US citizen?

Possible Legal Alternatives

- Do you have any language abilities that would be helpful in doing this job? (Legal if language ability is directly relevant to job performance.)
- Are you authorized to work in the United States?

Arrest Record

There are laws that prohibit inquiries about past arrest records but permit consideration of a current arrest. If an applicant is under arrest for an offense that is substantially related to the job, an employer may suspend judgment until the case is resolved, advise the applicant to reapply when the charge is resolved, or refuse to employ the applicant. A current employee who is arrested may be suspended if the charge is substantially related to the job.

An employer may not refuse to employ or discharge a person with a conviction record unless the circumstances of the conviction substantially relate to the circumstances of the job. If an inquiry about convictions is

made, the employer should add a clarifier, "A conviction will not necessarily disqualify you from employment. It will be considered only as it may relate to the job you are seeking". Anyone who evaluates conviction record information should be knowledgeable about how such data may be used.

Example of Illegal Questions

- Have you ever been arrested?

Possible Legal Alternatives

- Have you ever been convicted of ____ crime? (Legal if the crime is reasonably relevant to the job; e.g. embezzlement for a banking job.)

Military Service

It is unlawful to discriminate against someone because of membership in the National Guard, a state defense force or another state or Federal Reserve unit. Questions relevant to experience or training received in the military or to determine eligibility for any veteran's preference required by law are acceptable.

Example of Illegal Questions

- What type of discharge did you receive?

Possible Legal Alternatives

- In what branch of the Armed Forces did you serve?
- What type of training or education did you receive in the military?

Affiliations

Example of Illegal Questions

- What clubs or social organizations do you belong to?
- Do you go to church?

Possible Legal Alternatives

- List any professional or trade groups or other organizations that you belong to that you consider relevant to your ability to perform this job.

Race/Color/Religion

This question may discourage an applicant whose religion prohibits Saturday or Sunday work. If a question about weekend work is asked, the employer should indicate that a reasonable effort is made to accommodate religious beliefs or practices. An employer is not required to make an accommodation if doing so would create an undue hardship on the business.

Example of Illegal Questions

- All questions are illegal.

Possible Legal Alternatives

- Are you available for work on Saturday and Sunday?

Salary Negotiation

- Use a **salary calculator**

<http://www.resumes.com/salary.html> has a simple and fairly accurate method to estimate your industry's salary range. There are also several other reliable comparisons.

- Compare job listings in your industry.
- Contact employment agencies or professional recruiting firms.
- Call professional trade associations.
- Review trade periodicals.
- Examine free salary surveys online at job search engines such as Monster, HotJobs or CareerBuilder.com.

Remember, salary is only one element of a job compensation package. An attractive compensation package can make an entry level salary seem more desirable.

Here are some other **benefits that you need to evaluate** when considering a job offer:

- Health and dental insurance plans
- Paid vacation
- Paid sick leave
- Retirement or 401K savings plans
- Bonuses
- Tuition reimbursement
- Stock options.

Additional Salary Negotiation Tips:

- You must ask for a salary raise and other benefits; it does not happen automatically.
- Do your homework before you ask for a raise. Check the Internet for the average pay scale in your field and position and what your needs are.

- Evaluate your responsibilities and accomplishments yearly; try to move up in both areas and use your improvements and accomplishments to negotiate your salary.

- From time to time, you should also review your benefits and bring those to the table for negotiations, such as hours of work, company vehicle and additional vacation time.

- Tell the prospective employer that you're very interested in the position, but will need some time to consider the job offer. You should take at least one day to consider the offer, but several days would be ideal. Taking a day or less to respond will not allow you ample time to evaluate the necessary factors for developing a counteroffer, and it will also imply eagerness on your party, thereby weakening your bargaining power.

- It's more likely that you will gain more respect from the prospective employer and not offend the employer, if you try to negotiate a higher salary or compensation package. Asking for more money leaves the impression that your skills are valuable. Don't be concerned that the employer will summarily dismiss you if you ask for more money. The employer offered you a job because you were the top choice, so find out how badly the employer wants you.



How to deal financially with a job loss

By Steve Bucci • Bankrate.com



Dear Debt Adviser,

I just got laid off from my job. I never missed or have been late with a payment in about 13 years. I have several credit cards and owe a total of about \$24,000. I want to be responsible for what I owe. I don't want to declare bankruptcy. I can make the minimum payments on some of the cards and would want to keep at least one for emergency purposes only. Is it possible to get them to lower my minimum payments until I get back on my feet without "freezing" all my credit? Thanks. ~ Dan

Dear Dan,

You are not alone. I personally went through this crisis four times. By the second time, I figured out a few things. By the fourth, I was getting pretty good at making the best out of a really miserable situation.

I'm going to assume that if you stopped using cash for living expenses, you could **make your minimum payments on your credit cards**. Based on that assumption, your goal during this difficult financial time is to **minimize expenses and protect your cash by using credit**.

Yes, this is unexpected advice from the Debt Adviser, but I recommend you use your credit cards to tide you over, but only in the short term, and only for essentials — and that includes living expenses.

This is almost the opposite advice that working people are given. But you aren't working, hence the difference. Using credit will protect your irreplaceable cash and allow you to continue making minimum payments for a longer period, thus **protecting your credit rating**. Unless you have a big stash of the green stuff somewhere, it is important not to exhaust your supply. If you run out, you may have to use **cash advances, which are hugely expensive and will increase your risk profile**.

Remember, this is a short-term solution while you are looking for a job. **Once you are back on your feet, get those credit cards paid off as fast as you can!**

Look at your monthly expenses and cut them to the bare bones. You may have already done this, but take

another look and make sure you haven't overlooked anything. Then, **get a copy of your credit report and make sure it looks as good as it can**. Dispute any out-of-date or inaccurate items. A **positive credit report is an important job hunting tool**. Many employers get a copy of your credit report as a part of their

pre-hiring background check. It would be best for you if you can keep your report looking good and stable. Often, employers will not ask why your credit report is terrible; they will just move on to the next candidate.

Often I advise communicating with creditors, but don't be too quick about it. Your job loss situation is none of their business unless you can't make payments. Call or write them only when you know for sure that you will be unable to make a payment. If you are unable to make all your payments, ask your creditors for a **hardship program that will allow you to make lower payments**. **Hardship programs typically last only three to six months**.

If you are still unable to make the payments required under the hardship program, or the creditors will not enroll you in one, it's time to let them know you can't pay until you secure another job. **Consider visiting with a reputable credit counseling agency for help at this point**.

If you prefer to do it on your own, **communicate in writing with your creditors** and let them know you are unable to pay the monthly amount required in the card agreement, but that you intend to resume paying as agreed as soon as your situation is resolved.

It is likely that most people in the working world will experience a layoff or other involuntary job change sooner or later.

Here are some other things I've learned that may help others in this situation:

- Build up savings for the next time. **Six months of living expenses** is still a good number to shoot for.
 - Don't carry large balances on your credit cards and never for more than 90 days.
 - Bankruptcy should be a last resort.
 - Consider visiting with a reputable credit counseling agency.
 - Don't let it drive you crazy. This too shall pass!
- Good luck!

Job-Seeker's Glossary of Key Job-Hunting, Career, Job-Search, and Employment Terms

- **Assessments** — These tests ask you a series of questions and try to provide you with some sense of your personality and career interests. You shouldn't rely on the results of these tests by themselves, but the results can be a good starting point for discovering more about yourself and your interests and considering careers you may not have thought of.
- **Background Check** — Used by employers to verify the accuracy of the information you provide on your resume or job application — and beyond. On the rise as prices fall on these services. Items checked include: employment verification, educational background, degrees, references, credit history, medical records, driving record, court records, criminal records, and more.
- **Benefits** — An important part of your compensation package, and part of the salary negotiation process. Note that every employer offers a different mix of benefits. These benefits may include paid vacations, company holidays, personal days, sick leave, life insurance, medical insurance, retirement and pension plans, tuition assistance, child care, stock options, and more. Can be worth anywhere from 20 to 40 percent of your salary.
- **Career Branding** — Helps define who you are, how you are great, and why you should be sought out. Branding is your reputation. Branding is about building a name for yourself, showcasing what sets you apart from other job-seekers, and describing the added value you bring to an employer.
- **Cold Call** — When a job-seeker approaches an employer (usually through an uninvited cover letter) who has not publicly announced any job openings.
- **Contract Employee** — Where you work for one organization (and its salary and benefit structure) that sells your services to another company on a project or time basis. Compare to freelancer.
- **Counter Offer/Counter Proposal** — A salary negotiation technique used by job-seekers when a job offer is not at an acceptable level. Almost all elements of a job offer are negotiable, including the salary, non-salary compensation, moving expenses, benefits, and job-specific issues.
- **Curriculum Vitae** — also called a CV or vita and similar to a resume, but more formal, and includes a

detailed listing of items beyond the typical resume items, such as publications, presentations, professional activities, honors, and additional information. Tends to be used by international job-seekers, and those seeking a faculty, research, clinical, or scientific position.

- **Freelancer/Consultant/Independent Contractor** — Where you work for yourself and bid for temporary jobs and projects with one or more employers. Freelancing is not an alternative to hard work, but many people enjoy the freedom, flexibility, and satisfaction of working for themselves.
- **Franchising** — A legal and commercial relationship between the owner of a trademark, service mark, brand name, or advertising symbol (the franchisor) and an individual or organization (the franchisee) wishing to use that identification in a business.
- **Internships** — One of the best types of work experiences for entry-level job-seekers because a majority of employers say experience is the most important factor in whether you're hired. Besides gaining valuable experience, you get exposed to the business environment and gain valuable references and network contacts.
- **Mentor** — A person at a higher level within a company or within your profession who counsels you and helps guide your career.
- **Moonlighting** — The experience of working multiple jobs (also referred to as dual or multiple jobholding).
- **Networking** — Involves developing a broad list of contacts — people you've met through various social, professional, and business functions — and encouraging them assist you in looking for a job, or job leads, offer you advice and information about a particular company or industry, and introduce you to others so that you can expand your network.
- **Recruiters/Headhunters/Executive Search Firms** — Professionals who are paid by employers to find candidates for specific positions. They often recruit candidates, but job-seekers can also approach them. Often specialize by industry or geographic region. Avoid any firms that require you to pay for their services.
- **Temping** — Working short employment stints with a variety of clients, usually through a temping agency or staffing firm. Previously temps were mostly administrative, but job-seekers can now find temping agencies covering most professions. Temping is great for building resume, learning skills, networking — and job flexibility and variety.

~ EXAMPLES ~

Example: Objective Statements

Driven to achieve, success in handling difficult and complex projects, attained maximum profit while cutting down valuable resource losses through team communication and coordination, analytical and forward thinking, executed calculated strategic cost reduction plans.

Results-oriented professional engineer offering strong education and experience base. Record of success in management and controlling multiple projects. Excellent organizational and communication skills, committed to providing the highest level of team leadership and growth.

Determined, profit-minded expeditor, not afraid to take predictable risks, skilled in strong team building, persuasive, trained and experienced in leading companies out of losses and into profits and progress.

Highly-talented office manager with great communications skills, driven to turn around undesirable and wasteful administrative systems into success stories backed by a long track record of accomplishments.

Energetic and motivated; driven by the competition and challenges in sales and marketing. Works well as a team player; driven to support fellow team members in achieving higher goals.

Suggestions: Non-Technical Skills (Keywords)

Our suggestion is to add only the most important and appropriate ones specific to the job. Non-Technical Skills separately on a new line.

Here are some Non-Technical Skills (Keywords). You can use these Keywords and edit them to match your qualities.

Collect ideas from them, or be creative and add your own Objective Keywords.

- Results-driven
- Results-oriented
- Hands-on experience
- Improving productivity and efficiency
- Facilitate improvements
- Facilitate interactions
- Fast track
- Diverse background
- Analytical
- Outstanding achievement record

Example how it will look on your resume:

• Results-driven • Results-oriented • Hands-on experience • Improving productivity and efficiency • Facilitate improvements • Facilitate interactions • Fast track • Diverse background • Analytical • Outstanding achievement record •

REFERENCES

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- <http://www.quintcareers.com>
- <http://www.careercc.com>
- <http://www.bc.edu/offices/careers/skills/resumes/keywords/>
- <http://www.bls.gov/oco/> (U.S. Dept. of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics - Occup. Outlook Handbook)
- Search for online university accreditation at U.S. Dept. of Education search engine - <http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation>

Refer to pages 11 & 12 for further explanations

- *Name* _____
- *Address* _____
- *Phone • email* (_____) _____

OBJECTIVE

- _____

AREAS OF EXPERTISE (OR SKILLS)

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE (perhaps last 3 jobs or jobs with best skills learned)

(* Use italic lettering (slanted) for the Title of your position, city, state, dates)

* Use bullets and start with “action” words, for example: “Managed ...”)

- _____

- _____

- _____

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

(include High School, GED, College, Certified, Licensed, or technical schools, previous job sponsored training)

- _____
- _____
- _____

REFERENCES (this would be on a separate page)

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

