

CREATING A COMMANDING RESUME



This worksheet accompanies the Chronological Resume Worksheet, addressing each of the 7 – 10 main parts, but not in the sequence that you see on the actual resume. First, we will address the factual parts of your resume and then proceed to the active job descriptions and the body – the “powered-up bullet points” that constitute your key accomplishments over the span of 10 to 15 years. Other parts are derived from these accomplishments. We will address each of them in the order that it should be written.

1. CONTACT INFORMATION

This is straight forward. There are different styles that can be used (See Sample Resumes), but the key is that this information is complete and easy to read.

Telephone:

If you have two telephone numbers, list the preferred one first. Make note of the fact that both of your numbers are now professional numbers. It is critical that you, alone, are at the other end of the line, either in person or in your voicemail message. Avoid standard greetings that do not include your name and greetings that are recorded by others in the household. If your number is a family number, I suggest that you simply list your mobile phone number and be attentive to picking up messages on a regular basis.

Email:

If you have a jazzy email address, more appropriate for social interactions, create a simple, professional email. Your name, i.e. janesample@msn.com, is the best image to put forward. It is also the easiest way for readers to ping you back (to set up the interview!)

2. PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Optional Headings:

Professional Profile

Career Highlights

Work Experience

Employment History

Fill in the data under each employer. You may choose to put the name of the employer first (typically highlighted in some way, such as bolded or underlined) or you may put your title first (also highlighted). This decision usually rests on which piece of information you want to emphasize. For example, if you had an executive position (Vice President of Marketing) at a smaller, less well known company, you might go with the title first. Alternatively, if you worked at a well-known and highly regarded company, you may decide to state that first.

Dates:

Place the total number of years with one employer along the far right margin (in bold to match the company or title). If you had more than one position at this company, place the “internal” dates next to the job title.

How far back to go:

There is no hard and fast rule to answer this commonly asked question. Most important is the fact that experience that goes beyond roughly 15 years is no longer considered to be relevant. There are exceptions. Let’s say you are interested in an entrepreneurial opportunity or entrepreneurial role and you founded and ran a business for several years at the beginning of your career. This kind of background could be pertinent to the new role.

If you worked for the same company for 20 years, you can look for a breaking point in the 10 to 15 timeframe; a new role, a promotion, a time when you went from an individual contributor role to a management position. You can stop listing key accomplishments and provide 1 or 2 sentences under “Earlier Experience.”

If you worked for more than 1 company, find that breaking point and, again, switch to a brief description of “Earlier Experience.”

3. ACTIVE JOB DESCRIPTIONS

A traditional (and not very exciting!) resume typically starts a job description with the words, “Responsible for...” and then lists a number of duties that fall into the particular “job box” that would fall in a defined place on the organizational chart. The problem with this type of description is that it is entirely impersonal. It describes a title and delineates those duties that would be performed by anyone who had that title.

Personalize and Activate Your Work Assignments:

The questions you want to answer here are “What difference did it make that it was you that performed this job?” Why were you hired? What was the essential mission you were asked to accomplish? An example would be, “Hired to turn around a failing production department for a Fortune 1000 company” or “Recruited to establish an Emergency Preparedness Program in a four year university. Coordinated with FEMA to train staff and students to master standard emergency drills.”

4. “POWERED – UP BULLET POINTS”

These bullet points comprise the body of the resume. Along with active job descriptions, they make your resume come alive and depict a career story that is both compelling and “distinctively you.” They are presented in a way that grabs the reader’s attention and reflect the fact that readers of resumes “scan rather than read” these documents. Research shows that readers spend 30 seconds or less scanning a resume to make an initial decision to go forward or not in the hiring process. Bullet points are succinct and powerful statements that show how you:

Resolved Problems
Completed Projects
Achieved Goals
Made Key Contributions
Obtained Positive Results



If your career spans five years or less, aim for 8 to 10 statements. If your career spans 10 to 15 years (remember we are not highlighting activities that go further back), aim for 15 to 20 statements.

How?

Use the Power Verbs Worksheet to jump start your accomplishments in the strongest terms possible. For example...

Use “Partnered” instead of “Worked with other people”

Use “Designed” instead of “Drew up a preliminary sketch”

Use “Collaborated” instead of “Worked jointly with others”

Use “Motivated” instead of “Got team members excited”

Examples of Bullet Point Statements:

- Conducted client interviews to gather critical feedback for medical team, resulting in 8 significant improvements in the triage process.

- Orchestrated special client events, managing all scheduling, reservations, décor and door prizes. Firm was recognized for outstanding customer service in follow-up surveys.
- Researched and developed a computerized referral tracking system throughout branch locations across the U.S., significantly improving customer responsiveness and recovering an estimated \$25,000 in lost revenues annually.
- Designed and implemented a “customer care” software program, improving coordination of key data for 20 staff members and achieving an estimated 50% in efficiency.
- Promoted from entry-level trainee to buyer to department manager in 2 ½ years.
- Trained and supervised 4 finance assistants, providing each with expanded responsibilities and promotional opportunities, enabling company controller to focus on higher level management tasks.
- Exceeded top line revenue goals for 3 years, placing Tucson among the top ten producers in our company of 160 U.S. offices.

5. EDUCATION

- List your highest educational attainment first; such as your degree, the institution, the date on the right hand margin. Date is optional.
- If you attended, but did not receive a degree, from an institution, state the field of study or major.
- List continuing education or certifications that support your candidacy, dating back no more than approximately 10 years.

6. PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS/ COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

- List pertinent professional associations, highlighting leadership roles and, if appropriate, key accomplishments that fortify your general qualifications. (For example, “Spearheaded a fund raising drive for the Tucson Boys and Girls Club, generating \$12,000 for the capital projects budget”).
- Volunteer activities may all be listed (within 10 year timeframe) with the purpose of showing a well-rounded, community minded individual.



7. CAREER SUMMARY

Optional Headings:

Summary of Qualifications
Career Highlights
Executive Summary
Career Profile

This critical part of your resume is written last as it is actually a summary of all of your experience; it is also the part that will most likely be read word-for-word by the reader. It is much like the flap of a book that presents a concise, captivating snapshot of the whole volume, one that will induce the reader to read, and preferably buy, the product. The Career Summary must put forth the “Essence of You!”

Contents: (Three or four sentences)

- 1) The umbrella statement presents the number of years’ experience in your primary functions and fields or industries.
For example, “More than 15 years’ experience in regional sales management and new market definition primarily in Senior Homecare and Elderly Assistance.”
- 2) The second sentence typically addresses specific or in-depth aptitudes that distinguish you from others with similar experience. For example. “Expert in analyzing key indicators and projecting revenues and profit potential in targeted geographical areas.”

- 3) The third (and fourth) sentences highlights specific character traits that compliment experience and expertise mentioned above. I find that no more than two adjectives followed by a phrase have more impact than a list of adjectives. For example, “Strategic partner, Motivational leader. Recognized for ability to implement significant organizational improvements, while maintaining high morale and productivity.”

Note: Just as you were directed to the “Power Verbs” checklist to power up your bullet point statements, you may refer to the “One Hundred Winning Character Traits” and the “Transferable Skills” for suggestions in creating a Career Summary.

8. CAREER OBJECTIVE

The objective is optional. We recommend using your cover letter, rather than a formal statement on your resume, to customize your objective to the actual position. Simply, if you write an objective that is broad enough to cover all types of possible opportunities, it doesn't say much. If you state two or more objectives, you confuse the reader. If you narrow your objective down to your “Plan A” only, you may write yourself out of an interesting prospect. Enough said. Write a dynamite cover letter.