

RÉSUMÉ KIT



AARP's Résumé Kit offers tips for writing a winning résumé, a list of résumé action keywords, and examples of three types of résumés to help you create a well-written, up-to-date résumé that markets your skills effectively.



AARP Résumé Kit

WRITE A WINNING RÉSUMÉ

A well-written and up-to-date résumé is central to your job search. For your résumé to capture attention, it needs to convey your personal brand—the combination of skills, achievements and abilities that show your unique value to an employer.

AARP is here to help with a variety of resources, like **www.aarp.org/WorkResources**. Featured content for job seekers includes navigating the job market, using social media, dealing with tough interview questions, writing cover letters (or not) and more.

There are three basic résumé styles. But, no matter which one you choose, some elements hold the same weight. For example, your résumé should:

- » Be free of grammatical errors and typos.
- » Be no longer than two pages.
- Have a simple black font, no smaller than 11 points, on white paper.

Every résumé should include:

- » Relevant keywords to both your industry of focus and the job you are applying for.
- » Contact information: your name, mailing address, phone number and email address.
- » A brief statement of your key experiences and strengths.
- » Relevant work experience.

- » Skills, areas of expertise and specific accomplishments.
- » Education, training and certifications.
- » Awards, professional memberships and volunteer work—if relevant to the job.

A winning résumé focuses on:

- » Your most recent relevant jobs—within the last 15 years.
- » Skills and experience that are most relevant to the job you're applying for. Include computer and IT skills.
- » Transferable skills from both work and nonwork settings (such as volunteering). This is especially important if you're changing careers.
- » Accomplishments—not job duties.
- » Results and outcomes. Quantify your achievements and use action verbs. For example, "increased sales by 40 percent," "expanded program" or "exceeded targets."

Elements to leave out of your résumé:

- » Dates of education.
- » Early job history.
- » Dates of experience beyond 15 years ago. Say "five years" instead of "1980-85."
- » Personal information, such as age, height, race, religion or health status.
- » Hobbies or personal interests unless they are truly relevant to the job.

Keywords—the Key to Success

Keywords are industry-specific terms used by employers to describe the key responsibilities of a position. For example, sales may have a different name in different industries (e.g., marketing, business development or account management). Look at the specific job posting for keywords to use in your résumé.

- » Use them when referring to job titles, accomplishments, experience, skills, education, career objectives and training.
- » Use exact keywords and language for online résumés to make sure your résumé isn't discarded.

Résumé Styles

You can choose from three basic résumé styles: chronological, functional or a combination résumé. Examples of all three types of résumé styles are included here.

Chronological

A chronological résumé works well if you have had steady employment in an industry or field and want to remain in the field.

- » List your recent work experience in reverse chronological order. Start with your most recent job and go back no more than 15 years. List job titles, employers and dates of employment (in years only). Ideally, your history will show an increasing scope of work and accomplishments.
- » Under each job, state your key accomplishments as bullet points. Use action verbs to briefly describe what you did. Then give the results or the impact of your actions, using numbers when possible.

Show the challenges you faced, the actions you took and the results. For example: "Planned and supervised five community events that raised over \$75,000 for the Springfield Homeless Shelter, helping the center stay open despite funding cuts."

Functional

A functional résumé is organized by skills and expertise. This is especially useful if you're changing careers, because it focuses on transferable skills that carry over from one field to another. It also works well if you have gaps in your work history.

Before you start, identify your main skill areas (functional areas). A list at the end of this kit has examples. Write down all your major skills, even though you won't use them all on every résumé. This includes skills gained in non-work settings, such as volunteering, hobbies or caregiving.

- » For each job you apply for, choose skill areas that are the best match. List your most relevant skills first.
- » Include applicable skills that transfer from one field to another. This is important if you are switching jobs or industries.

For example, if you were a teacher and now want to be a corporate trainer, you might choose facilitating, training needs assessment, curriculum development and public speaking as skill areas.

• List your skill areas, and include bullet points of related accomplishments under each.

For an outreach job with your local senior center, you could choose "community organizing" as one of your functional areas. An accomplishment might be:

Initiated a neighborhood watch program covering a seven-block area. Recruited over 50 volunteers, scheduled shifts and publicized the effort. Crime dropped over 20 percent in the first six months.

» Following the list of skill areas and accomplishments, include a brief job history, listing employer name, position held and dates (by year).

Combination

A combination résumé allows you to organize your résumé by skills like you would in a functional résumé, but also include a chronological list of key positions. Likewise, you could list jobs chronologically, and then include main functional (skill) areas like you would in a functional resume.

Tips for Success

Whichever type of résumé you use, some common guidelines apply:

- » Tailor your résumé for each job application.
- » Use keywords: Speak the employer's language by using all relevant keywords from the job posting to show that your skills are a good match.
- » Always cite dates of employment. Employers tend to dislike résumés that give few or no dates, which is a risk in a functional résumé.
- » Stress your actual accomplishments, not job duties or character traits. For example, instead of just saying you are a team player, describe something you accomplished on the job by using your team skills.
- » When sending an online résumé, pay attention to requirements. For example, some sites may accept only a chronological format.

To Refresh Your Résumé, Point to Accomplishments

If you're not getting results from your résumé, it could be more than a poor job market. You've had years of experience and a stellar job record. So why don't employers look at your résumé and want to hire you on the spot?

The answer may lie in one word: accomplishments. The key to writing accomplishments is to focus on results. Your résumé can be loaded with details about your previous jobs, but without compelling accomplishments, it will blend in with hundreds like it.

What Is an Accomplishment?

Accomplishments are different from your abilities, duties or strengths. Abilities are what you can do, duties are what you have done and strengths are what you do well.

Accomplishments, on the other hand, show:

- » The specific actions you have taken in a particular situation.
- » The skills and abilities you used to meet a challenge.
- » The results or outcomes you achieved.

The following example is a job responsibility, not an accomplishment: "Wrote grant proposals to numerous funding sources to support program." To turn this into an accomplishment, show the results and benefits: "Wrote three successful grant applications to private foundations, resulting in funding to serve an additional 100 clients."

Write Down Your Accomplishments

Before you start writing your résumé, draw up a list of accomplishments. You won't use the same ones in every résumé, so you'll have some in reserve for different types of positions. Don't forget that your volunteer work and education can also be counted as accomplishments—as long as they are related to the job you want.

To jog your memory about your accomplishments, ask yourself these questions, and think about how your accomplishments had impact. Have I:

- » Accomplished more with the same or fewer resources?
- » Received awards or special recognition?
- » Increased efficiency?
- » Accomplished something for the first time?
- » Prepared original papers, reports or articles?
- » Managed a work group or department?
- » Managed a budget?

- » Identified problems others didn't see?
- » Developed a new system or procedure?
- » Been promoted or upgraded?

Summarize Your Accomplishments

Try the **Challenge-Action-Results** approach. For each accomplishment, write down the answers to the following questions:

The CHALLENGE: What was the problem, need or situation?

The ACTION(s): What did you do about it? Be

specific. You can also include any obstacles you overcame, and the skills you demonstrated.					
The RESULTS: What results did you produce? Quantify the results (use numbers!).					
After answering the questions above, summarize your answers in an accomplishment statement to include in your résumé.					

How to Measure Your Accomplishments

- » Use numbers whenever you can—money saved, decreased costs, achieving more with less. The best numbers are in dollars.
- » If it's not possible to give a dollar amount, use other measures. Examples: number of people

- affected, amount of time saved, percentage of increase in subscriptions or traffic, percentage of reduction in customer complaints or similar measures.
- » If you can't quantify, use words like "significantly" or "substantially"—as long as this is true, of course.

Examples of Accomplishments

For a job in customer relations:

» Developed communication strategy to respond to customers regarding a new 150-item product list, resulting in a 20 percent decrease in returned orders

For a job managing computer operations:

» Initiated and implemented a strategy for consolidating computer operations from three centers to two, saving \$200,000 without interrupting processing

For an outreach job with your local senior center:

» Initiated a neighborhood watch program covering a seven-block area. Recruited over 50 volunteers, scheduled shifts, and publicized the effort. Crime dropped over 20 percent in the first six months

For a job as a professional storyteller:

» Presented 10 storytelling workshops for grade levels K-6 at county schools and public libraries. Trained over 100 after-school group leaders on how to start a storytelling program, resulting in self-sustaining programs at five locations.

What Is Not an Accomplishment

Accomplishments are specific; they state concrete actions and results. The following kinds of information are not accomplishments, and it's best to avoid them:

» Your job description. Eliminate the phrase "duties included" from your résumé. Instead, translate your job duties into specific accomplishments.

- » The number of years you worked, or good attendance. Instead of how long you worked, focus on what you accomplished. It's your list of achievements that will demonstrate your future value to the employer.
- » Soft skills, such as "team player," "good communicator" and "detail-oriented." As good as it is to have these traits, leave them out of your résumé. Instead, cite accomplishments that show you have these qualities.
- » Vague statements about your career objective. Omit fuzzy language such as, "Seeking to use my broad range of skills in a challenging position."

Accomplishments = Results

Knowing your accomplishments has many advantages. You'll be able to:

- » Seek out the jobs that fit you best.
- » Highlight "transferable skills" that apply to different kinds of jobs.
- » Tailor your résumé to the specific job.
- » Improve your networking pitch.
- » Write a more focused résumé.

WRITE A COVER LETTER THAT GETS READ!

So much has changed in the job application process over the years. Take the tried-and-true cover letter. It was once such an important part of expressing your interest in a job. Today, a cover letter isn't even accepted by many large employers. To read up on other changes in today's job market, head to AARP's Life Reimagined for Work website, at www.lifereimagined.org/work.

Many large companies today forego the cover letter and instead send résumés through automated systems to screen for key words that connect to their job descriptions. That said, many employers still want cover letters to help them better understand a candidate's unique qualifications.

Check the details of job postings to see if you can include a cover letter. If there are no guidelines, then take the opportunity to include one. This is your chance to sell yourself!

A cover letter is particularly important if you want to elaborate on your work history. For example, maybe you took some time out of the paid workforce to provide family care. Or perhaps you've chosen to apply for a position with considerably less responsibility than in your previous jobs.

Your cover letter should address why you are uniquely qualified for the position. Take time to think about your "personal brand"— the unique skills and strengths that make you attractive to an employer. Then follow these tips for what to include and what to avoid:

What to Include

In your cover letter, be sure to:

- » Address it to a specific person, not just a title or department.
- » Refer to the exact job you are applying for, including a reference code if there is one.
- » Employ the active voice. For example, say, "I won an award," not "I was awarded."
- » Describe why you're uniquely qualified. Cite relevant skills, experience and accomplishments, but don't simply repeat your résumé. This is a chance to sell yourself!
- » Tell the employer something about yourself that might not be clear from your résumé.
- » Use keywords from the job posting in your cover letter (as you should do in your résumé).
- » Proofread your cover letter several times for correct spelling and grammar. Also, consider sharing it with someone who can proofread and give you his or her honest opinion. Does your letter make the reader want to know more about you? If not, revise it, highlighting the things that make you the best candidate for the job.

What to Avoid

Here's what not to include in your cover letter:

- » Too much information! Several paragraphs are plenty.
- » Generic language. Tailor your letter to the specific position.
- » Unnecessary words, such as, "I am writing to..." or "Let me introduce myself...." Get right to your point.
- » Clear references to your age. Rather than talk about your 30 or 40 years of experience, use words like "extensive" or "significant" to describe your experience.

» Salary requirements; save this discussion for the interview.

For those occasions where you can use the tried-and-true cover letter, take advantage and include one. Use our tips to help your application stand out!

Resources

For more help from AARP on resumes, personal branding and more, visit **www.aarp.org/ WorkResources**.

ACTION VERBS FOR RÉSUMÉS

Use some of these action verbs in your job résumé and cover letter to describe your skills and experiences.

Accelerated	Created	Guided	Operated	Sold
Accomplished	Defined	Handled	Ordered	Solved
Adapted	Delegated	Hired	Organized	Sparked
Adjusted	Demonstrated	Identified	Packed	Specified
Administered	Deposited	Illustrated	Persuaded	Staffed
Advertised	Designed	Implemented	Pioneered	Stimulated
Advised	Developed	Improved	Planned	Streamlined
Analyzed	Devised	Improvised	Prepared	Strengthened
Announced	Directed	Indexed	Presented	Stretched
Arranged	Distributed	Influenced	Presided	Structured
Assembled	Drafted	Informed	Processed	Succeeded
Assisted	Edited	Initiated	Produced	Summarized
Attained	Educated	Innovated	Programmed	Surveyed
Balanced	Eliminated	Inspected	Promoted	Synthesized
Built	Encouraged	Installed	Proposed	Tested
Calculated	Entertained	Instituted	Publicized	Tracked
Catalogued	Established	Instructed	Recommended	Traded
Chaired	Estimated	Integrated	Recorded	Trained
Changed	Evaluated	Interviewed	Recruited	Transformed
Collaborated	Examined	Kept record	Redesigned	Transmitted
Communicated	Executed	Launched	Reduced	Tripled
Compared	Expanded	Led	Referred	Typed
Complied	Explained	Made	Related	Uncovered
Completed	Fabricated	Maintained	Repaired	Unified
Computed	Facilitated	Managed	Reported	Unraveled
Conceptualized	Familiarized	Marketed	Researched	Upgraded
Conducted	Figured	Moderated	Restocked	Used
Consolidated	Filed	Modified	Revised	Verified
Constructed	Formulated	Monitored	Served	Wrote
Consulted	Founded	Motivated	Set up	
Contracted	Generated	Negotiated	Shaped	
Converted	Grouped	Obtained	Simplified	

SAMPLE CHRONOLOGICAL RÉSUMÉ

Linda Jones 1234 East 5th Street Oriole, OK 73876 480-987-5432 lljones@web.com

Career Objective: Executive level management position in the restaurant or hospitality industry.

SKILLS SUMMARY

- Management: Skilled manager with wide experience in all areas of food service including daily operations, marketing and development, staff training and workplace health and safety.
- Financial: Excellent track record of maintaining low overhead, increasing sales and generating high-dollar profits.
- Customer relations: Proven skills in developing innovative ways to improve service and build customer loyalty.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

General Manager, Pine Tree Café, Oriole, OK (2004-Present)

Directed start-up of successful health-oriented restaurant. Manage, train and schedule 24 employees for 100-seat restaurant, including cook and wait staff. Manage menu development, purchasing, marketing and customer relations.

- Maintain low overtime and turnover; staff retention rate is 40 percent above industry standard.
- Developed marketing campaign to promote new lunch menu, resulting in a doubling of midday traffic within two months.
- Initiated customer opinion cards and implemented "coffee with the manager" to solicit feedback and build customer loyalty.
- Broke-even after second year of café's operation; exceeded previous year's profits by 28 percent.

Store Manager, The Cake Factory, Oklahoma City, OK (2000-2004)

Successfully completed company's management training program and trained 35 cooks, dish area employees and wait staff. Supervised daily operations at two high-volume stores, each generating over \$1 million in profits annually.

- Accomplished 5 percent reduction in labor costs through better selection and training of staff.
- Enhanced and implemented employee safety procedures, lowering on-the-job injuries by 26 percent.
- Prepared annual budget for the location, a site consistently among the five most profitable restaurants in the company.

Sales/Service Representative, Good Cuppa Joe Inc., Boulder, CO (1993-2000)

Cultivated South Denver and mountain community markets selling espresso equipment, supplies and coffee to wide variety of hospitality outlets, including restaurants, coffee houses, hospitals and hotels. Trained restaurant sales staff in operating, marketing and merchandising coffee products.

- Led company in sales of leased equipment and supplies; exceeded gross margin profits by 34 percent.
- Developed and controlled 50 percent of market share in two key regions.
- Implemented a new "30-day trial program" resulting in 30 percent more placements.

RELATED EXPERIENCE

Volunteer Community Liaison, Regional Food Pantry, Oriole, OK (2005-Present)
Coordinate pickups of surplus food from local merchants; develop sample recipes for recipients; advise food pantry volunteers on food safety and handling.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- Bachelor of Science, Marketing and Management, Pitcairn University, Denver
- Trained in Restaurant Industry Systems and Remancon Systems
- Restaurant Management Training, The Cake Factory, Oklahoma City
- Completed courses in Microsoft Office Excel, Word, PowerPoint

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- National Restaurant Association
- McAlester Area Chamber of Commerce
- Oklahoma Restaurant Association

SAMPLE FUNCTIONAL RÉSUMÉ

Linda Jones 1234 East 5th Street Oriole, OK 73876 480-987-5432 lljones@web.com

Career Objective: Executive level management position in the restaurant or hospitality industry.

SKILLS SUMMARY

- Skilled manager with wide experience in all areas of food service including daily operations, marketing and development, staff training, and workplace health and safety.
- Excellent track record of maintaining low overhead, increasing sales and generating high-dollar profits.
- Proven skills in developing innovative ways to improve service and build customer loyalty.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Food Service Management

Pine Tree Café, Oriole, OK

- Directed start-up of successful, health-oriented restaurant. Manage staffing, purchasing, marketing, menu development and customer relations.
- Broke-even after second year of café's operation; exceeded previous year's profits by 28 percent.

The Cake Factory, Oklahoma City, OK

- Supervised daily operations at two high-volume stores, each generating over \$1 million in profits annually.
- Prepared annual budget for the location, a site consistently among the five most profitable restaurants in the company.

Staff Training and Supervision

Pine Tree Café, Oriole, OK

- Manage, train and schedule 24 employees for 100-seat restaurant, including cook and wait staff.
- Maintain low overtime and turnover; retention rate 40 percent above industry standards.

The Cake Factory, Oklahoma City, OK

- Trained 35 cooks, dish area employees and wait staff. Accomplished a 5 percent reduction in labor costs through better selection and training of staff.
- Enhanced and implemented employee safety procedures, which lowered on-the-job injuries by 26 percent.

Good Cuppa Joe Inc., Boulder, CO

• Trained restaurant sales staff in operating, marketing and merchandising coffee products.

Customer Care

Pine Tree Café, Oriole, OK

- Initiated customer opinion cards and implemented "coffee with the manager" to solicit feedback and build customer loyalty.
- Developed marketing campaign to promote new lunch menu, resulting in a doubling of mid-day traffic within two months.

Sales and Marketing

Good Cuppa Joe, Inc., Boulder, CO

- Developed and controlled 50 percent of the market share in two key regions selling espresso equipment, supplies and coffee to restaurants, coffee houses, hospitals and hotels.
- Led company in sales of leased equipment and supplies; exceeded gross margin profits by 34 percent.
- Implemented a new "30-day trial program" that resulted in 30 percent more placements.

WORK HISTORY

- General Manager, Pine Tree Café, Oriole, OK, 2004-Present
- Store Manager, The Cake Factory, Oklahoma City, 2000-2004
- Sales/Service Representative, Good Cuppa Joe, Inc., Boulder, 1993-2000

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- Bachelor of Science, Marketing and Management, Pitcairn University, Denver
- Trained in Restaurant Industry Systems and Remancon Systems
- Restaurant Management Training, The Cake Factory, Oklahoma City
- Completed courses in Microsoft Office Excel, Word, PowerPoint

RELATED EXPERIENCE

• Volunteer Community Liaison, Regional Food Pantry, Oriole, OK (2005-Present) Coordinate pickups of surplus food from local merchants; develop sample recipes for recipients; advise food pantry volunteers on food safety and handling.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- National Restaurant Association
- McAlester Area Chamber of Commerce
- Oklahoma Restaurant Association

SAMPLE COMBINATION RÉSUMÉ

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SKILLS SUMMARY

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- Financial: Excellent track record of maintaining low overhead, increasing sales, and generating high-dollar profits.
- Customer relations: Proven skills in developing innovative ways to improve service and build customer loyalty.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

General Manager, Pine Tree Café, Oriole, OK (November 2004-Present) Food Service Management

- Directed start-up of successful, health-oriented restaurant. Manage staffing, purchasing, marketing, menu development and customer relations.
- Broke-even after second year of café's operation; exceeded previous year's profits by 28 percent.

Staff Training and Supervision

- Manage, train and schedule 24 employees for 100-seat restaurant, including cook and wait staff.
- Maintain low overtime and turnover; retention rate 40 percent above industry standards.

Customer Care

- Initiated customer opinion cards and implemented "coffee with the manager" to solicit feedback and build customer loyalty.
- Developed marketing campaign to promote new lunch menu, resulting in a doubling of midday traffic within two months.

Store Manager, The Cake Factory, Oklahoma City, OK (June 2000-October 2004) Food Service Management

- Supervised daily operations at two high-volume stores, each generating over \$1 million in profits annually.
- Prepared annual budget for the location, a site consistently among the five most profitable restaurants in the company.

Staff Training and Supervision

- Trained 35 cooks, dish area employees and wait staff. Accomplished a 5 percent reduction in labor costs through better selection and training of staff.
- Enhanced and implemented employee safety procedures, which lowered on-the-job injuries by 26 percent.

Sales/Service Representative, Good Cuppa Joe Inc., Boulder, CO (1993-2000) USales and Marketing

- Developed and controlled 50 percent of the market share in two key regions selling espresso equipment, supplies and coffee to restaurants, coffee houses, hospitals and hotels.
- Led company in sales of leased equipment and supplies; exceeded gross margin profits by 34 percent.
- Implemented a new "30-day trial program" that resulted in 30 percent more placements.

Staff Training and Supervision

- Trained restaurant sales staff in operating, marketing and merchandising coffee products.
- Accomplished 5 percent reduction in labor costs through better selection and training of staff.
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- Prepared annual budget for the location, a site consistently among the five most profitable restaurants in the company.

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• Volunteer Community Liaison, Regional Food Pantry, Oriole, OK (2005-Present) Coordinate pickups of surplus food from local merchants; develop sample recipes for recipients; advise food pantry volunteers on food safety and handling.

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