



Your resume

Your resume is a key component in landing a job interview. This is the first document which sells you to potential employers and makes you stand out from other applicants. It's important to concisely summarize your relevant education, work experiences, qualifications, skills and accomplishments to potential employers in order to get yourself in the door for an interview.

It is recommended that most resumes be only one (1) page. However, based on your relevant prior experiences, this may go into two pages. A resume should never be more than two (2) pages in length.

In general, the first time an employer is looking through resumes, less than one (1) minute is spent on reviewing each resume received. Make sure your resume is concise, to the point, error-free and professionally appealing to the eye.

Remember the employer does not know you yet. In the eye of the employer, an obvious error may be a reflection of carelessness, and a lengthy resume may be unappealing to an employer who is expecting a summary.

Getting Started

An effective resume will require you to take a serious look at your education, work experience, qualifications, skills and accomplishments. Don't sell yourself short. Be prepared to spend some time reflecting on your past so you do not forget important details!

What competencies do you possess?

Some general competencies include; communication proficiency, decision making, flexibility, leadership, innovation, strategic thinking, time management, customer/client focus, problem solving, data analysis, collaboration skills, adaptability, computer technology, and teamwork orientation.

Practice summarizing in short sentences how you have demonstrated these competencies.

- Excellent verbal and written communication skills at all levels within the organization.
- Worked on a team that successfully implemented cost-saving measures for a call center.
- Develop and maintain a \$400,000 departmental budget.
- Maintained a full-time job while completing my Bachelor's degree in three years.



What are your work experiences?

You will want to include both full-time and part-time jobs, along with non-paid and volunteer experiences that are relevant to the position. It will be important for you to be able to explain any gaps in employment history. Make sure to be accurate and concise when listing your job titles, dates of employment and responsibilities for all your past and current work experiences. These may be verified.

It is extremely important to know what the perspective employer's needs are for the position. Then, it will be up to you to accurately describe your past education, work experiences, qualifications, skills and accomplishments that match these needs.

For each job you held, you will want to summarize your responsibilities and include the important competencies you demonstrated in that job.

What is your educational background?

List the degree, major, minor and institution you attend(ed), along with your graduation date, or anticipated graduation date.

Include any technical school and the certification title which you received.

Make sure to be accurate and concise when listing your education dates and institutions. These may be verified.

What other information can you choose to include on your resume?

The following is not inappropriate to include on your resume, but is not required as part of a professional resume.

- Career Objective

If you chose to include an objective, make sure that it a strong objective relevant to the position you are applying for.

A poor example – To obtain a position in the customer service field.

A stronger example – To obtain a customer service position in a banking or finance organization that will enable me to utilize my work experiences and leadership skills.

- Awards and accomplishments you received.
- Participation in any community service.
- Computer skills.



What information should not be included on your resume?

- Do not use any dates on your resume that may identify your marital status, age, ethnicity, health matters, religion or disabilities. An employer does not need to know these facts during the application and interview process.
- Older data that has no relevance to the position. Such items may include your high school or odd jobs held in previous years.
- References should not be included on the resume. If you want to share a list of references to the employer, provide this information on a separate sheet of paper.

What resume style should you use?

What resume style you chose will depend on what you want the focus to be on when presenting your resume. This may depend on your employment history, specific qualifications, which may or may not have been learned through formal education or prior work experiences, and your own personal style of selling yourself on paper.

The **chronological** and **functional** resume styles will be shown as examples in this guide. However, as you are preparing your resume, it's recommended that you explore other samples available on the internet by searching "resume samples".

A **chronological resume** style is the most commonly used. It is easy to read and to follow. As the name suggests, this style lists work experience in a chronological order. Your current job is listed first and then past jobs listed in reverse chronological order.

A **functional resume** style puts the focus and highlights on your qualifications and accomplishments first rather than chronological work experience. This is a good format to use if there are gaps in employment dates, or if you have accomplishments that are not specific to prior work, but relevant to the job position. This is also a good format for an applicant who may be transitioning into a new career or has been out of the workforce for a while.



What are some other resume tips?

Be sure to proofread and spell-check your resume. A resume is also proof of your written communication skills.

- Use Arial or Times New Roman fonts (10-12 pt. is the best).
- Do not use pictures or designs on your resume.
- Avoid jargon, slang or abbreviations.
- Use your full name, no nicknames.
- Use bullet points to organize listed items.
- Use high quality resume paper in either a white or cream-colored shade when mailing a resume, cover letter and reference page.

Many companies now require applicants to complete on an online application and submit the cover letter and resume as attachments. Make sure to double check your format after you have uploaded the attachments. Oftentimes, formatting is compromised during the upload. A way to prevent this is to save your document in a Rich Text Format (.rtf). When using .rtf your original formats should remain intact.



Your cover letter

It is recommended to always include a cover letter which is targeted to the job you are applying for. If a cover letter is generic and not specific to the job, this will lead an employer to perceive you are sending out several cover letters and resumes all at once and forfeiting the time to individually customize the cover letters to each specific employer.

A cover letter is the preface to your resume and conveys to the employer why you are interested in the position and how your past education and experiences compare to the qualifications in which the company is seeking.

Begin the cover letter with the current date.

Always use the full address of the company on the cover letter. Oftentimes, the address will not be included in the job advertisement, but spend the time to research and find the complete mailing address.

It is recommended to address it to the appropriate contact. If the contact is unknown, it's appropriate to address it "To Whom It May Concern".

The first paragraph tells why you are contacting the company and where you learned about the job opportunity. If you know something about the company and why you want to work there, it is appropriate to summarize this in the opening paragraph.

The second paragraph tells more about yourself and how your past education and experiences make you an ideal match for the position. Elaborate about your relevant background and qualifications specific to the job.

The last paragraph thanks the person for his or her time. Be sure to include that you look forward to hearing from him or her regarding the position. Make sure to provide your telephone and email contact information.

Sincerely,

Your Signature (This is only necessary if you are able to sign the document)

Your name typed out

The sample cover letter will show an appropriate format.



Sample

To help you visually see the flow of creating a cover letter and resume for a posted job position, following is a sample of a job posting and a cover letter and resume which would be suitable to use when applying for the position.

Employment Opportunity:

The Town Bank is seeking an Accounting Assistant. Responsibilities will include processing receivables and payables, computer entry, customer relations, analyzing account transactions and providing backup to the collection department. Must possess an Associate's Degree and have at least three years of similar work experience. Send cover letter and resume to hrdept@townbank.com by April 22, 2014.

The top margin should be 1" and paragraphs left justified. This is the recommended format for a cover letter.

April 4, 2014

The Town Bank
111 S. Main Street
Somewhere, MI 49014

Make sure to take to the time to find the full address of the company. Most often, the complete address will not be shown in the job advertisement.

To the Human Resources Department:

From the advertisement, you can see that the department accepted the electronic resume is Human Resources.

I am submitting my resume in reference to the Accounting Assistant position. I learned about this job position while visiting your website. The chance to work with the largest bank in southern Michigan is a very exciting career opportunity.

I feel confident that my current and past work experiences closely match your requirements for the position. As you can see from my resume, I am currently employed with the XOXO Credit Union as an Accounting Clerk II. I am responsible for entering all payable and receivable transactions into our automated accounting system. On average, I process about 1,300 transactions per month. I personally contact vendors on any uncollectible payments that are past due, and I have experiences in several accounting and collection software systems, along with being well-versed in many computer applications. I pride myself in my excellent customer service skills and was honored as a past recipient of XOXO Credit Union's Annual Customer Service Excellence Award.

I look forward to speaking with you about the Accounting Assistant position you have available. I can be reached at 123-456-7890 or by email at akatz@myemail.com.

Sincerely,

Abbie Katz

Abbie Katz

12345 Northwest Hwy, Somewhere, MI 49012

123-456-7890, akatz@myemail.com

This is a **chronological resume sample** which, as the title states, lists work experience in a chronological order. This is the most popular format. It is easy to read and to follow. Your current job is listed first and then past jobs listed in reverse

A professional objective is no longer required, but if chose to use one, be specific. Avoid being vague and too generalized.

PROFESSIONAL OBJECTIVE:

To obtain an accounting position with a reputable company that will enable me to utilize my working experience, educational background and customer service expertise.

EDUCATION:

Somewhere University – Somewhere, MI 48880

Bachelors of Science in Business Administration, Overall GPA 3.50
Major: Finance, Minor: Accounting – Graduated May 2009

A GPA is not necessary to list. However, if you feel it will benefit you, it is acceptable to list. Many employers will request official transcripts from the school(s).

WORK EXPERIENCE:

XOXO Credit Union – Somewhere, MI (2010-present)

Accounting Clerk II (August 2011-present)

- Process collection notices to vendors.
- Prepare accounts payable and accounts receivable transactions. Reconcile monthly bank statements.

Teller / Customer Service Representative (January 2010-August 2011)

- Assisted customers with banking transactions, sold bank products to customers, analyzed the service needs of customer accounts based on transactions, completed bank statement reconciliations for customers and managed petty cash account within department.

Be prepared to explain any gaps in employment during the interview or on an application. You may choose to include the months as part of employment dates. but these are not necessary.

ABC Trucking Company – South Place, MI (August 2009 – December 2009)

Accounts Payable / Receivable Coordinator

- Prepared weekly checks to vendors from incoming bills that were approved by department supervisors.
- Monitored incoming cash and checks.
- Prepared daily bank deposits and reconciled monthly bank statements.

Administrative Intern (January 2008 – August 2009)

- Opened and closed shop three days a week.
- Answered main phone line.
- Helped customers schedule appointments for service deliveries.
- Drove daily bank deposit to local bank.
- Assisted accountant input data into the new finance system which was previously maintained in Microsoft Excel.

AFFILIATIONS:

- Volunteer assistant treasurer at my church (2013 – present)
- Student member in American Society for Women Accountants (2010 – present)
- Volunteer at local animal shelter while in high school and college (2005-2008)

COMPUTER SKILLS:

- Microsoft Office including Excel, Word, PowerPoint (advanced skills)

This is a **functional resume sample** which highlights a person's qualifications and accomplishments first rather than work experience. This is a good format to use if there are gaps in employment dates or if the applicant wants to emphasize his/her accomplishments. This is a good format for an applicant who may be transitioning into a new career or has been out of the workforce for a while.

Abbie Katz

12345 Northwest Hwy, Somewhere, MI 49012
123-456-7890, akatz@myemail.com

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

Results-oriented, customer-driven and highly dependable professional with a financial background. Experienced in automated accounting and collections software used for monitoring transactions, processing payments, recording receipts and reconciling bank statements.

Major strengths include excellent communication skills, recognized customer service skills, attention to details, strong organizational skills, and a proven team player. Advanced skills in Microsoft Office products, Collection One Software, SuperSonic Accounting and Quality Assurant General Ledger systems.

This focuses on the specific software used in the past. It is a good way to attract to your knowledge, especially if a specific product is listed in the job advertisement.

PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Processed over 1,000 accounts payable transactions monthly.
- Successfully collected uncollectible debt from customers and vendors within 60 days of original due date.
- Managed a complex phone system with five incoming main lines.
- Effectively integrated data from Microsoft Excel into SuperSonic Accounting software with a 100% accuracy record.
- Trained and mentored entry level accounting clerks.
- Successfully set up automated tracking system of weekly contributions from parishioners.
- Prepared and monitored a \$120,000 annual church budget and presents a quarterly report to the Finance Committee.
- Current Board member for the Southern region of the American Society of Women Accountants (ASWA)

EDUCATION

Somewhere University – Somewhere, MI 48880
Bachelors of Science in Business Administration, Graduated: May 2009
Major: Finance, Minor: Accounting

WORK EXPERIENCE

XOXO Credit Union (2010-present)

Accounting Clerk II (August 2011-present)

- Process collection notices to vendors.
- Post Accounts Payable and Accounts Receivable transactions.
- Reconcile monthly bank statements.

Somewhere, MI

Teller / Customer Service Representative (January 2010-August 2011)

- Assisted customers with banking transactions, sold bank products to customers, analyzed the service needs of customer accounts based on transactions, completed bank statement reconciliations for customers, handled petty cash accounts within our department.