

## PREPARING DIFFERENT TYPES OF RÉSUMÉ

### Getting Started

Every person's career history is different. You want to design your résumé so that it puts your career history in the most marketable and attractive light. Your particular job search and career goals are also unique. All these factors play a part in deciding which type of résumé has the highest probability of getting you the interview that will lead to your perfect job.

You should keep the following questions in mind as you decide which type of résumé to prepare:

- Are you planning on staying in the same field or are you changing careers?
- Have you had a fairly standard pattern of career development, or has your career been less traditional?
- Is this your first job?
- Are you targeting a specific job in a specific company?

### FAQs

*Doesn't everyone just do a chronological résumé?*

Twenty years ago, that may have been true. But these days the average person has seven different major careers (not just jobs) in his or her life. And with all the restructuring and other changes going on in organizations, it has become almost impossible to have a traditional career that starts out in one field and steadily progresses through the ranks.

*Would I ever do more than one kind of résumé?*

Typically no. The only exception to this is when you have created one of the standard formats (either a chronological or a functional résumé), and a unique opportunity comes up for which one of the customized résumés (either a targeted or a capabilities résumé) is better for that situation.

### Making It Happen

*Understand When to Use Each Kind of Résumé*

A chronological résumé is good when you are staying in the same field and are not making a major career change. This type of résumé also works well when you have steadily progressed up a standard career ladder. For example, beginning your career as a junior engineer, then

progressing through senior engineer, manager of engineering before taking up your present position of vice president of engineering. You would also use this kind of résumé when you have worked for a well-known, highly respected company for most of your career, even though you may have had several different kinds of job within that company.

A functional résumé is the preferred choice when you are seeking your first professional job. It is also recommended when you are making a fairly major career change. If you have changed employers frequently, have followed a less traditional career path, or have some reason to think that your work history is not that impressive, then you will be better off with a functional résumé that focuses on your skills and accomplishments.

A targeted résumé works well when you are very clear about your job direction and when you need to make an impressive case for a specific job. It takes a lot of extra effort to write this kind of customized résumé, especially if you are targeting several jobs, but it can make your résumé stand out from the pack.

A capabilities résumé is used when you are targeting a specific job or assignment within your current organization. Again, you must be willing to take the time to customize your résumé for the situation.

### *Create Your Résumé to Fit the Situation*

Here are basic guidelines for preparing each of the four types of résumé:

#### *Chronological Résumé*

- List your name and contact information at the top.
- State your job search "Objective."
- Start with your present or most recent position, and work backward.
- Only write about your last four or five positions, covering the last ten years or so.
- For each position listed, describe your major duties and accomplishments. Keep it short and sweet.
- Keep your career goals in mind as you write, and as you describe your duties and accomplishments, emphasize those which are most related to your desired job.
- Education is listed at the bottom of your résumé, in a separate section. Degrees are listed in reverse chronological order.

#### *Functional Résumé*

- List your name and contact information at the top.
- State your job search "Objective."
- Use from three to five separate paragraphs, each one emphasizing a particular skill or accomplishment.
- List the functional paragraphs in order of importance, with the one most related to your career goal at the top. Provide a heading for each paragraph.
- Within each functional area, emphasize your most directly related accomplishments or results produced.
- You can include information about your skills and accomplishments without identifying which employer or situation it was connected to.
- Put a brief synopsis of your actual work experience under the last functional area, giving dates (years), employer, and job titles only.

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### *Targeted Résumé*

- To develop the material for a targeted résumé, brainstorm a list of key points. For example, you could think about what you have done that is relevant to your job target and the results you have achieved. Are you proud of what you have achieved? Have you achieved anything in another field that is relevant to your job target? Think about what you do that demonstrates your ability to work with people.
- List your name and contact information at the top.
- State your job search “Objective.”
- From the brainstormed list above, select 5–8 capabilities and accomplishments that are the most relevant to your job target. Make sure that the statements focus on action and results.
- Put a brief synopsis of your actual work experience under the capabilities/accomplishment area, giving dates (years), employer, and job titles only.
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### *Capabilities Résumé*

- To develop the material for the capabilities résumé, learn all you can about the internal job that you are applying for and make a list of 5–8 capabilities and accomplishments that you have achieved in your current position that are relevant to this job opening.
- List your name and contact information at the top.
- State your job search objective using words that come directly from the job posting. Use your cover letter to tell the hiring manager about your interest in this specific position.
- Place the list of 5–8 capabilities and accomplishments next, focusing on action taken and results achieved with this company, relevant to the position.
- Put a brief synopsis of your relevant work experience at this company next. If you have been at this company for just a short while, then you will want to provide a complete synopsis of your work experience as described above in the targeted résumé.
- Education is listed at the bottom of your résumé, in a separate section. Degrees are listed in reverse chronological order.

## **Common Mistakes**

### *You Try to Include Every Skill, Capability, and Accomplishment You Have*

It is common to want to tell the potential employer everything you have ever done so that they will be impressed. But regardless of the type of résumé you create, you must remember to keep it simple and focused on those things that are most likely to get your foot in the door.

### *You Don't Use Any Particular Format*

If you have not had much experience with résumés, you may create a résumé that is a mixture of job listings, skills, and accomplishments. This will confuse your reader. Go to the library or bookstore and get a book that provides sample résumés. When you have decided which type of résumé fits your situation, based on the steps in this Action List, then use the samples in the book to help you with the final organization of your material.

### *You Are Still Unsure What Type of Résumé to Use For Your Situation*

If you still don't know which type of résumé to use, then you should consider hiring a professional career coach.

### *You Don't Follow Up*

This is the most common and most serious mistake. In your cover letter you make a statement about when you will call to set up an interview. Put that date on your calendar and make sure that you follow up. If you do not keep your commitments, it does not look professional, and there will be less interest in you. It's hard to make the call because of fear of rejection, but you will never get the job if you don't. Sales people have learned that you have to take a certain number of rejections before you get a "Yes." Finding a job is the same thing. If you receive a "No" after making a phone call for an appointment, tell yourself, "Well, that is one less 'No' that I have to hear before I hear a 'Yes.'"

### **For More Information**

#### *Books:*

Jackson, Tom, and Ellen Jackson. "The New Perfect Résumé." New York: Doubleday, 1996.

Jackson, A.L. "How to Prepare your Curriculum Vitae". Lincolnwood, Illinois: National Textbook Company, 1997.