

JobStart Part 4: Preparing Your Résumé¹

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Introduction

JobStart is a series of publications that contain information about the skills and attitudes needed to find and maintain employment. This is the first publication in the eight-part series outlining the steps required to achieve these goals. The series includes the following:

JobStart Part 1: Getting to Know Yourself (FY345)

JobStart Part 2: The Right Job Just for You (FY346)

JobStart Part 3: Marketing Yourself (FY347)

JobStart Part 4: Preparing Your Résumé (FY348)

JobStart Part 5: Writing the Cover Letter (FY349)

JobStart Part 6: Planning the Interview (FY350)

JobStart Part 7: Job-Seeking Strategies (FY351)

JobStart Part 8: Staying on the Job Once You Are Hired (FY352)

Introduction to Résumés

Résumé is a French word that means "summary," and that is exactly what it is: a short summary of your work, education and experience. A résumé is a written history about you. It is usually one or two pages in length. Your résumé will reflect you as a unique person, unlike any others. In this publication you will learn to prepare a résumé. Every day, hundreds of people get new jobs without the help of a résumé. So why should you spend some of your precious time and energy just to create something that won't guarantee you a job? Why should you invest time and energy into something that may not need to get a job? The answer, of course, is because a résumé is the best method to sell yourself on paper when you can't be there in person.

There are many good reasons for writing a résumé but first let's look at two of the most frequently used reasons for not writing one.

1. *Résumés are ineffective.* While it's correct to say that good résumés won't get you a job, it should be

mentioned that the purpose of a résumé is not to get you a job, or even an interview for that matter. Many people send out dozens of résumés every week in the hopes of getting a job. While some years ago this was an accepted method for searching for work, it is no longer a good way to find a job. The résumé is just one step of a multi-step plan for finding work.

2. *I don't need a résumé in my line of work.* This statement is true of most unskilled jobs or entry-level jobs. You wouldn't expect the person applying for the entry-level job at a Wendy's restaurant to produce a résumé with his or her application. However, if you are seeking a job where you want to rise above the competition, skilled or unskilled, a résumé is a good way to set yourself apart from the others.

Now let's look at some of the reasons why having a résumé is beneficial to your job search.

1. A good, well-written résumé will indicate to the employer that you are serious about your job search.
2. A good résumé represents you to the employer when you are not present. It serves as an easy tool the employer can use to scan over your education experience and skills.
3. Employers often ask for résumé. If an employer is hiring and asks you for a résumé, it would be a good idea to have one.
4. Résumés increase your chances of getting hired. This is the bottom line. When you are searching for work it is a good idea to do everything that will increase your chances of winning the job that you want.

In this publication we are going to show you how you can create a résumé that is simple and effective. We will give you some information on what to include and how to present it. You will be able to create your own résumé that will increase your chances of winning the job you want.

There are as many different types of résumés as there are different types of people. Each one is created for a specific type of person looking for a specific type of job. However, all quality résumés include information that can be grouped into five categories. Those categories are as follows:

1. Who you are.

2. Your job objective.
3. Your education.
4. Your work history.
5. Other relevant information.

It is important that your résumé include at a minimum the five categories listed above in order to make sure that you don't leave a piece of vital information out of your résumé.

There are several different ways to organize the five categories listed above. There is the chronological résumé, which organizes your work history by starting with the most recent job and works backward. There is the functional résumé, which lists particular experiences first to highlight them for a particular job. There is also the creative résumé, which might list skills before going into work history. While all these have their place, we will focus on the chronological résumé here because it is the most widely accepted and is the easiest for employers to use.

The chronological résumé usually prioritizes the five categories in the same order as listed above, sometimes switching categories three and four. In the format that follows we will use the listed order.

Category 1. Who you are.

This information is regularly placed at the top of every résumé. It includes your name, address, e-mail address, phone number, and work number, if you choose to include it. It is very important that this category be correct and complete. People involved in the hiring process are usually very busy and don't have time to look up phone numbers or find a correct address if it is omitted or wrong. Having a wrong phone number or address on your résumé could cost you a job.

Category 2. Your job objective.

This is the part of the résumé where you state what type of job you are seeking. It is important because if you send a résumé to a company, you want it to be filed in accordance with the position you want. If you do not state what type of position you are seeking, then it is likely your résumé will be filed in a general file, never to be seen by the right persons. You should use position titles whenever possible in this category. It is better to say that you are seeking a secretarial position than to say that you are looking for a job doing office work.

Category 3. Your education.

In this section you will include all formal schools that you have completed: high schools, trade schools, vocational colleges, business courses, correspondence courses, universities, or any other type of training that you feel is relevant to the position you seek. You do not have to include your grades, but you should note what type of degree or certificate you received. You should also include any extra-curricular activities that you were involved with

during your enrollment, such as student government, professional groups, or clubs that are vocationally related.

Category 4. Your work history

This will be the largest section of your résumé. It is the section that employers are most likely to scan first. They want to know what you have done for other companies so they can better determine what you can do for them. Most résumés will start with the most recent job and work backward from there. This is the order many employers are used to and changing it would probably confuse them by shifting their focus from what you want them to know.

When listing your present or past employers, you should include the dates of your employment, the name and address of the company, the title of your position, a brief description of your duties, and anything that you accomplished while you were there.

If you have done any volunteer work, include that in this section. Cite the duties that relate to actual work activities.

Military service should never be overlooked as a relevant part of your work history. Treat this in the same way you would other work experience, with the dates of service, branch, rank achieved, and discharge date.

Category 5. Other relevant information.

This is the catch-all category. It is your chance to put down any information that does not fit into the above categories but is useful information to an employer. If you have any skills that will make you more beneficial to an employer, like computer skills or fluency in another language, put them in this category. Also, any professional associations or organizations to which you belong should be mentioned in this category.

In the next section we will use this format, along with other suggestions, to help you begin creating a working résumé. As you begin to create your resume, you will realize you have already compiled much of this information in your personal inventory. Refer to that publication and use the appropriate information in the preparation of your résumé.

The following suggestions will be helpful to you when you prepare your résumé.

Helpful Hints

1. Keep your résumé brief. Employers would rather have the vital information crisply presented than read cumbersome and lengthy documents.
2. Use clear and precise language, using positive, action words and never using slang words.
3. Be consistent. Keep everything the same. If you use dates or addresses for one job, then you should use

them for all your jobs. If you describe your duties for one job, then describe them for the others.

4. Always mention volunteer work or awards or accomplishments. Employers need to know if you have been recognized for your hard work.
5. Leave out personal information like your age, weight, height, etc.
6. Organize your résumé on the page so that it is neat and orderly. Try to balance the information on the page.
7. It must be perfect. Your résumé should be free from spelling and other errors.
8. Tailor a résumé to the job you are applying for. You may want to have more than one résumé on hand if you are looking for different jobs in a variety of fields.
9. Include a cover letter with your résumé.

A sample of a very simple résumé is included for your information. Notice that it is one page in length, lists the work objective, and shows the chronological order of the education and the work history.

Preparing Your Résumé

The following section is a description of a person named Ronald Sampson. First read the description and then look at the résumé example to decide if it is appropriate for him.

Ronald lives in Oakville, Florida, at 1947 Magnolia Lane. His telephone number is 813-233-2000. He is 30 years old.

Ronald has been working since he was fifteen years old. He began working at Smiley's Grocery Store as a bag boy while he was in high school. While at Smiley's, he was promoted to Stock Person and later to Frozen Foods Assistant. Two years after finishing high school, Ronald was fired from Smiley's for eating cookies in the stock room without paying for them.

Ronald enrolled in the local community college for a couple of semesters, but never quite fit in with the college crowd. He worked part-time as a short-order cook at Pete's Hamburger Palace during these two semesters and decided that he would like to be a food service employee. He enrolled at Careers Are Us, a vocational school, and began taking classes to become a full menu cook. While going to vocational school, Ronald worked at the Lunchbucket, a local cafeteria, where his main responsibility was salad preparation. He also performed volunteer work at the Oakville Community Kitchen, where he helped prepare meals for the homeless. Ronald also assisted the volunteer manager with various duties.

After Ronald completed his vocational training, he began working as a full menu cook at Oakville General Hospital. There he excelled, increasing the efficiency of the hospital's cafeteria and adding several items to their menu. The other cooks at the hospital, as well as the kitchen helpers,

responded to Ronald's leadership and encouraged him to seek a position as lead cook in a restaurant or as a food service manager.

Ronald is still employed as a cook at the hospital and is currently seeking a position as a food service manager.

Posting Your Résumé Online

Now more than ever employers require online résumé submissions. Many times, you will be asked to either attach your résumé to an online application or use a résumé builder provided by the company. Attaching your résumé as a Word or PDF document is quick and easy to do but filling in a résumé building form can be time consuming. However, you can easily use the information on your résumé document to fill in the online form. Make sure you have a copy of your résumé handy so you can easily fill in the blanks!

You may also want to post your résumé on career resource websites like Monster.com. As with everything on the internet, there is a fast-growing number of job search websites. You can easily apply for jobs posted on these websites if you have already uploaded your résumé document to your profile. These websites also offer résumé builders, but they are often just an optional tool.

Sample Résumé

Ronald B. Sampson 1947 Magnolia Lane Oakville, Florida 32007 (813) 233-2000	
Objective:	To use my leadership, training, and experience to obtain a position as a food service manager.
Education:	09/8 06/85 Oakville High School 900 S. College Rd. Oakville, Florida 32009
	08/91-05/92 Careers Are Us Vocational Institute 1300 Right Track Court Oakville, Florida 32002 Course of Study: Full Menu Cook
Work History:	06/92- Present Oakville General Hospital 3 Health Care Circle Oakville, Florida 32091
	Working as Full Menu Cook for evening and late night shift, filling in for Lead Cook on many occasions, making sure the cafeteria is operational.
	07/91-06/92 The Lunchbucket Restaurant 290 W. Gourmet Avenue Oakville, Florida 32003
	Prepared the salad bar daily for buffet dinners and maintained it during business hours, sometimes assisting cooks in meal preparation.
	07/90-06/91 Pete's Hamburger Palace 490 Mill Road Oakville, Florida 32008
	Excelled as short-order cook preparing hamburgers and french fries in a high volume fast food restaurant.
Other:	Served as a volunteer cook for the Oakville Community Kitchen for the past five years, preparing meals for the homeless; assisted manager with various duties.
References:	Available upon request.

Figure 1. Sample Résumé

Credit: UF/IFAS

Questions to Ask Yourself

- In Ronald's résumé, is his objective clearly stated?
- Did Ronald leave anything out of his résumé that might have helped him?

- Did Ronald include anything in his résumé that might have hurt him?
- Should Ronald have included his experience with Smiley's Grocery? Why?
- Does this style of résumé work well for Ronald?
- Should Ronald have left the dates out of his résumé?
- Did Ronald include any personal information on his résumé?
- Should Ronald have listed any skills in the Other Information section of his résumé?
- Does listing jobs in reverse order make the résumé easier to read?
- Should Ronald have listed his work history before his education? Why?
- Do you think Ronald's résumé will help or hurt his chances of getting a job?
- What would you change in Ronald's résumé?
- Could you use the format that Ronald used to create a résumé for yourself?

Positive Action Words to Use in A Résumé

Résumé Worksheet

Resume Worksheet

This sample resume worksheet is to be used as a guideline, keeping in mind that all the information will not be needed on every resume.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State Zip _____ Phone _____

Education

High School _____
Name of School _____

Dates Attended _____
City, State, Zip _____
Major _____

Continuing Education _____
Name of School _____

Dates Attended _____
City, State, Zip _____
Major _____

Other Education _____
Name of School _____

Dates Attended _____
City, State, Zip _____
Major _____

Figure 2. Sample Resume Worksheet Part 1: Basic Information and Education.
Credit: UF/IFAS

Work Experience

Job Title _____ Name of Company _____

Dates Employed _____ City, State, Zip _____

Duties _____

Job Title _____ Name of Company _____

Dates Employed _____ City, State, Zip _____

Duties _____

Job Title _____ Name of Company _____

Dates Employed _____ City, State, Zip _____

Duties _____

Figure 3. Sample Resume Worksheet Part 2: Work Experience.
Credit: UF/IFAS

Skills

Objective

Other

Figure 4. Sample Resume Worksheet Part 3: Miscellaneous Information
Credit: UF/IFAS

After you finish your résumé, check it against the following points:

Résumé Checklist

Does your résumé meet all of the following criteria?

- The content supports the objective.
- It emphasizes achievements.
- The information on education and work history are complete.
- The reasons for leaving employment are not given.

- There are no huge gaps in employment history.
- All relevant or useful skills are mentioned.
- Clear and precise language is used.
- The past tense is used for previous activities.
- The present tense is used for current activities.
- A consistent format is used.
- The paper is spotless and free of wrinkles.
- The paper is of a high quality.
- The appearance is neat and clean.

A Word about References

While it is commonly assumed that references aren't required on your résumé, it is still important that we give you some guidelines for using references. First, you should only give an employer a list of references when the employer asks for it. Most employers don't spend time checking references until they have narrowed the list of candidates for a job down to a small number, usually three to five. They don't have time to call references on a large number of candidates. Second, you should choose a reference in a position to tell the employer what kind of worker you are. Employers don't need to know that you are a nice person who takes groceries to your grandmother twice a week or always gives to charities when they come asking for money. Employers need to know how they can expect you to perform on the job.

Here are some general rules for choosing a good reference.

- Managers, supervisors, or fellow workers make the best references.
- Professors, teachers, and coaches make good references.
- It is better to use a person that is employed as a reference.
- People with whom you have served on committees or leadership councils make good references.
- Do not use doctors, dentists, or pastors because they know more about your personal life than your work habits.
- Do not use family members.
- Use people who are good at communicating and will come across as knowledgeable.
- You should always get permission from a person if you are going to use them as a reference.

You should make and maintain a list of references. Update their addresses and phone numbers as needed and keep in touch with them. If your reference feels good about you, it is likely to be translated to a potential employer. Always give your references notice when you think an employer might be calling them so that they can refresh their memory about you and your work habits. However, don't try to put words into their mouth as this can backfire, causing a conversation that might sound rehearsed to a potential employer.

Finally, you should have a list of references that includes a minimum of three people. Most employers will ask for at least three references, and some will ask for more. The more references you can supply, the better off you will be. If you have a list of ten references and an employer asks for five, then you can pick from your ten the ones that will be better suited to give you a reference for the type of position for which you have applied.

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Table 1. Positive Action Words to Use in a Résumé

achieved	consulted	generated	organized
adapted	controlled	guided	planned
advised	coordinated	improved	produced
aided	created	increased	published
altered	delivered	initiated	reduced
arranged	designed	instructed	removed
assisted	devised	invented	repaired
assumed	directed	located	replaced
attained	documented	maintained	selected
authorized	edited	managed	solved
built	eliminated	merged	suggested
coached	estimated	modified	supervised
combined	evaluated	motivated	tested
compared	executed	obtained	trained
completed	expanded	operated	updated

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