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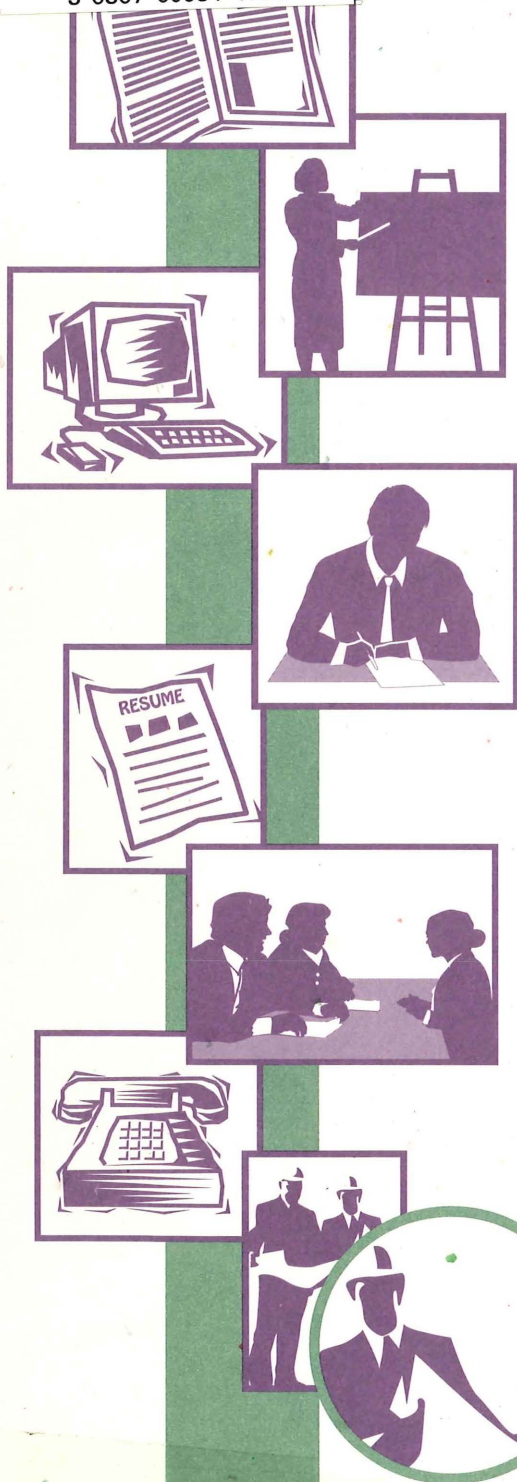
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# Creative Job Search

## Resumes and Employment Letters



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# Creative Job Search

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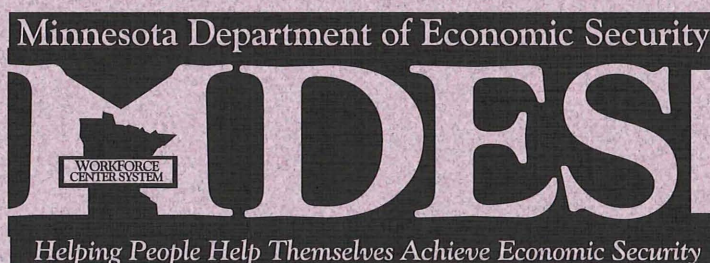
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# Employment Letters

1999 Edition



**Minnesota Department of Economic Security**

**[www.des.state.mn.us](http://www.des.state.mn.us)**

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# INTRODUCTION



A resume is a critical tool in an effective job search. Increasingly, employers in all career fields are requiring a resume. Resumes remain the standard for professional, managerial and technical occupations and are becoming the standard for most occupations.

**“The resume is an important tool for anyone looking for work.”**

The resume today is no longer reserved for select occupations. It is an important tool for *anyone* looking for work. Even if a resume is not required, it is a powerful tool in capturing an employer's attention. The person with little experience or education can benefit from a well-written resume. In fact, the person with little experience or education needs a resume as much or more than one with extensive credentials—they have to work that much harder to set themselves apart from the competition.

Just as a job search is a sales campaign, your resume is your product brochure. Today the resume is more than just a summary of your skills, experience and education; it is an advertisement of your best. Sales materials are designed to quickly capture the reader's attention, generally within 3-5 seconds. The resume is no different. An employer may receive hundreds of resumes for a single job opening. The truth is that they simply are not going to read them all. They are going to quickly reduce them to a manageable number—100 resumes becomes 10 resumes. The employer will take the time to look more closely at the 10 resumes to decide who will be called for an interview.

The use of technology by employers to manage the overwhelming numbers of resumes is rapidly increasing. Today many companies and employment agencies are using scanners to enter resumes into a computer that reads, summarizes and stores the resume for future consideration. These resume scanning systems use various degrees of artificial intelligence to screen the resume for desired skills. Based on this screening, the resumes from the best candidates are sent to the hiring authority for further consideration and interview selection. As we move into the information age and as technology becomes available, the use of scanners and artificial intelligence in the hiring process will increase. Therefore, it is critical to consider scannability when drafting an effective resume.



A good resume can greatly enhance your chances of getting an interview, while a poor or mediocre resume can limit your chances. Your resume is an opportunity to make a good impression. In fact, it is often the first impression. The goal in resume writing is not to tell your life story but to pique an employer's interest in your qualifications. Your resume should be so good that it consistently gets you screened “in” for interviews, not screened “out.” The final test of a good resume is whether or not you are offered interviews.

You may have excellent job-specific skills (skills used to perform the duties of your occupation). But unless you develop the skills needed to market your qualifications you will not be the one who is hired. Mastering these marketing skills will pay off in job search success and will give you greater control



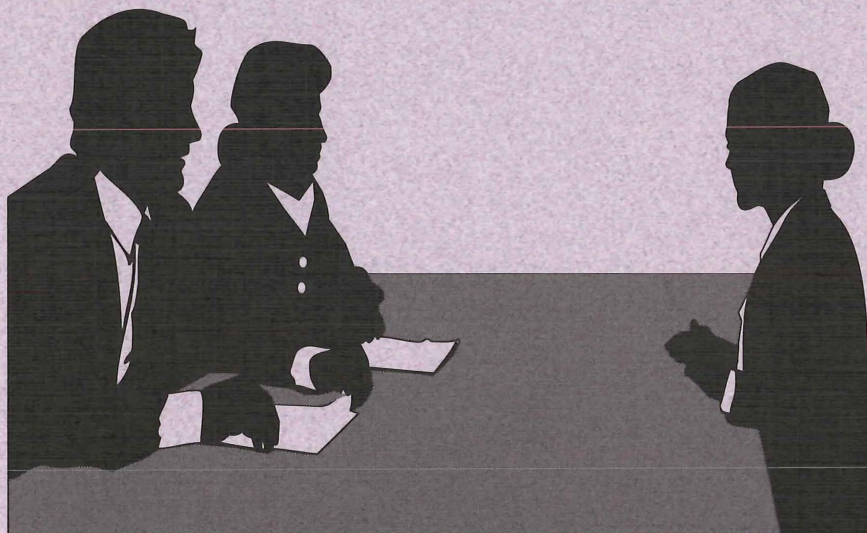
over your economic future. The resume is one of your marketing tools. Plan to spend many hours preparing, writing, editing and updating your resume.

People today can expect to change jobs many times in their lifetime. No longer is job search a single or rare event. This has resulted in a closer relationship between job-search skills and a person's economic future. Job security, the assurance of employment with any single employer, is diminishing in today's economy. Today security comes from being the best at your occupation, dedication to life-long learning, a passion and commitment to excellence, and the mastery of job-search skills.

Under these conditions, your resume becomes a living document. It grows as you grow and accompanies you throughout your working life. Therefore, be prepared to continuously update your resume. Wise people keep their resume current even if they are not looking for work—you never know what tomorrow holds or what opportunities will come your way.

The first rule of resume writing is that there are no rules. However, there are generally accepted guidelines. Each resume should be unique. If there were an ideal resume format, then all resumes would look alike. This is contrary to the goal of being set apart from other job seekers. Be prepared to hear conflicting opinions among the "experts" about resume writing. It is not that one is wrong or right, but that there is room for a wide range of views. You will have to become the expert for yourself.

The resume is one of many tools necessary for a successful job search. But it is only a tool. Employers do not hire a resume, they hire a person. The resume is not designed to win the job but to win an interview. It is at the interview that the job is won or lost. The primary emphasis here is resume writing. Further study will be required to master the use of your resume in your job search.





# SKILLS IDENTIFICATION

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# SKILLS IDENTIFICATION

Skills are the foundation of an effective job search. Employers do not just want to know where you have been and what your job titles were. They want to know what you can do. If you were planning to purchase a product that would cost thousands of dollars annually, you would want to know what it can do.

The average person has between 500 and 800 skills! You need to identify those skills that are the most attractive to potential employers. Many people have a hard time identifying their skills. Do not think of a skill as something that requires years of formal education and experience to develop. A skill is *anything* you can do right now!

## A Lesson From Sales

Looking for work is selling a product. A successful job search is a sales and marketing campaign. To successfully sell a product, a salesperson must know as much as possible about that product. The same is true for your job search.

Consider a major purchase you made or are planning to make: a car, appliances, a computer or stereo equipment. If you are a smart consumer, you will shop around. You ask questions. You want to know what sets a product apart from the competition. It is the salesperson's job to convince the buyer that their product is the best. This is why salespeople spend many hours learning their products. This is also why you need to invest time in identifying your skills.

## SKILLS AND TASKS

Skills are those activities that you can do right now. They include very specific activities such as sewing, record keeping, cooking, cleaning, computer programming, and welding. We call these skills **job specific skills**. Skills also include less specific activities such as being on time, dependable, independent, flexible, and ambitious. We call these skills **self-management skills**.

A combination of skills are used together to accomplish a task. We accomplish many tasks each day. A combination of tasks make up an activity. Activities may be part of a job, volunteer work, hobbies, recreation, or daily life. Think of an activity as describing a major area of responsibility that requires a set of tasks. Some tasks are related to employment. A secretary writes a letter. A computer programmer proofreads computer codes. A cook prepares vegetables. Other tasks are accomplished in the course of our daily lives. Balancing a checking account, shopping, driving, and mowing the lawn are all examples of tasks. Tasks are part of our recreation, hobbies, and volunteer work.

There is not one right way to apply these concepts. Each situation will be unique. Many times skill and task seem interchangeable. That's because they are describing the same thing—the elements of an activity. They simply look at the activity from different levels. It's up to you to apply these principles to your own experiences.

***Skills are the performance  
specifications of your  
product—you.***



## Job Skills

Job skills are those skills specific to a job or occupation. A secretary is skilled in typing, word processing, answering telephones and company correspondence, and filing. An accountant would list accounts receivable, performing accounts payable, payroll, figuring taxes, using a 10-key adding machine, and computer accounting programs. A salesperson would include customer service, record keeping, order processing, inventory management, billing, and product displays.

Behind most skills lies a body of knowledge. The person performing computer programming has learned a computer language such as Visual Basic. A cook knows about cooking techniques such as basting or baking. These bodies of knowledge are also skills.

Job skills are important to employers for obvious reasons. They are the specific skills employers look for in a candidate. Job skills do not always come from employment. They may be developed through education, hobbies, community activities, and life experiences. Common activities such as shopping, managing finances, balancing a bank account, hosting a party, and teaching a child all contain potential job skills.

Activity	Task	Potential Skills
Shopping	Shopping List	Planning and organizational skills, budgeting, time management, product evaluation, determining nutrition value, etc.
Yard Work	Lawn Care	Physical endurance and coordination, equipment maintenance, safety operations, chemical applications, etc.

## Self-Management Skills

These are skills you use day-to-day to get along with others to survive. They are the skills that make you unique. Sincerity, reliability, tactfulness, patience, flexibility, timeliness, and tolerance are all examples of self-management skills. Motivational attributes and attitudes are also self-management skills. Persistence, drive and cooperation are examples. Do not underestimate self-management skills, especially those that show motivation and a good work attitude. Employers look for these skills to determine how a candidate will fit into the organization. How a person will “fit in” is an important consideration for employers. These skills are especially important for people who are seeking their first job or returning to employment after an absence.

## Transferable Skills

Many skills can be applied to a variety of activities. They can transfer from one activity to another. Self-management skills are highly transferable. They apply to most situations. However, a number of job specific skills are also transferable. If you can operate a drill press, then you have skills to operate other types of machinery. If you can balance a personal bank account, then you have math aptitude skills to balance a business account. If you coordinate events, lead meetings, participate on teams for community activities or personal interests, you have skills that transfer to employment.

Transferable skills are important for many reasons. Many job seekers are unlikely to find a job identical to their previous employment. Therefore, it is critical for them to carefully evaluate how their skills transfer into other opportunities. People seeking their first job, making a major career change, or returning to employment after a long absence will mostly use transferable skills in their job search.



## Skill Identification Methods

There are many methods for identifying skills. **Method**  
Whatever method you use, consider the following:

- ◆ Don't get hung up over definitions or the process of how you identify your skills. The goal is to generate a list of skills. Definitions and process are simply tools to help you achieve that goal.
- ◆ Don't limit yourself. Give yourself the benefit of the doubt. List everything that remotely looks like a skill.
- ◆ You do not have to be an expert to claim a skill. Include skills you may be just learning.

Have fun! Make a game out of it. Work through your skill identification with a friend.

Step 1: Write the title of an employment-related activity. Focus on those activities that potentially demonstrate skill and experience relative to employment. You may get these titles from skills you may have gained while working for community organizations, volunteer activities, and employment.

Step 2: List the tasks involved in performing this activity. Tasks are the basic functions of an activity.

Step 3: List the skills involved in accomplishing each task. Be sure to include job, self-management, and transferable skills.

*... most of what we know and what we've become  
we've learned from others ...  
we are all students ...*

Title of Employment-Related Activity	Task	Skills (job, self-management, transferable)
Administrative Assistant	Answering company correspondence	Typing, word processing, tactfulness, timeliness, responsible, creative, dependable, detail-oriented, sincere, tactful, meeting deadlines, communicating, helping others, problem solving, checking for accuracy, researching, writing clearly and concisely
	Answering Telephone	Getting along well with others, listening and mediating, communicating, respectful, helpful, resolving conflict, developing rapport, assertiveness, dependable, outgoing, pleasant, sensitive, tolerant, detail-oriented, enthusiastic, friendly, intelligent, kind, mature, patient, sincere, tactful, understanding



## Method

Look for skill words that you recognize in books, magazines, publications, and on the Internet. Skill words can be found in: *The Occupational Outlook Handbook* (may be found at your local library or Minnesota Workforce Center), how-to books, hobby books, technical manuals, newspapers, magazines, and classified advertisements.

## Method

Network with friends, associates, and family. Ask them what skills they see that you have.

*The main reason some people  
have trouble finding a job is:*

*Failure*

*to Describe*

*Skills or Abilities*

*Clearly*

# GOAL SETTING

## Career Planning

During the average lifetime, an adult will have many jobs, several different careers, and will spend half their waking hours working. Yet that same person will spend more time watching television in one week than they will spend in their lifetime planning for employment!

Employment is more than a job. It shapes a big part of your life and deserves consideration. With the frequency that people change careers, it also deserves reconsideration throughout your work life. Career planning is a vast topic which will not be covered. If you have not planned your career, you are encouraged to do so now. Career counselors are available through Minnesota Workforce Centers, schools, employment service providers and private organizations. There are many books on career planning available through the library or local bookstores.

## Job Search Objective

You must have a job goal to conduct an effective job search campaign. You cannot set out on a quest for employment looking for just anything. If you do, you will waste a lot of effort. Employers will quickly recognize that you do not know what you want. This is comparable to a salesperson trying to sell a product without knowing its features. Salespeople know what their product can do and they know the market for their product. In the same manner, you need to target your job search campaign to those employers who need your skills and can offer you the opportunities you are seeking.



Simply saying that you are looking for a good job that pays well is not enough. Identifying the specific types of jobs for which you are qualified will focus your effort to those employers who match your employment objective. Furthermore, when you approach an employer, describe your skills which will tell them what it is you can do. Tell them the kind of work you are looking for. Do not expect them to analyze your qualifications and tell you where you might fit into their organization. Skills sell the product—you!

Take the time to think about what you want from that next job. Conditions of employment, wages, location, hours, and benefits are important considerations. You may also be looking for job security or advancement potential.

**J**udy lived in a small town in Minnesota. She went to college and became a certified art therapist. Full of hope, she pursued her dream. However, she never worked as an art therapist. There simply are not many such jobs in small communities. Her job goal was not achievable because of her location requirement.

Look for ways to expand your opportunities. This means you may have to make some choices. Goals should be realistic and achievable. Keep this in mind when considering your expectations. A good strategy is to write down all the conditions that you would like in a job, then categorize them as “required,” “desired,” and “optional.” If you find that you are not getting interviews, or that you are not finding jobs that meet your expectations, reevaluate your criteria for employment.

**J**im was an experienced tool and die maker who was laid off due to a plant closing. He was considered one of the best in his trade and was at the upper end of the pay scale. After investing six months in an exhaustive job search with no success, Jim was forced to reconsider his goals. His question was whether he should lower his expectations or expand the commutable distance he was willing to travel. His decision was to expand the distance, and within a short time he secured employment that met his standards.

## **Transferable Skills and Your Job Search Goal**

Transferable skills are another way to expand your job search. Once you have identified your skills, look for ways they might transfer to other jobs. The transferability of self-management skills is obvious. All employers are looking for motivation and dependability. But many job skills are also transferable, and transferable job skills open doors to new opportunities.

**B**ob had extensive experience making ceramic figures. He mixed materials and extruded them into molds. Once the piece was set, it was then sanded and inspected. Since most ceramic companies are small, Bob was challenged to find opportunities that used his skills. Bob discovered the same basic extruding and finishing operations are used to work with plastics, light metals, and even heavy foundry work.



Look for ways that your skills transfer to other employment opportunities. If you decide to pursue these opportunities, then your next challenge is to find effective ways to present these skills to a potential employer.

**A**fter a long absence to raise her three children, Sue entered employment. She had no recent employment experience, and her education is outdated. However, Sue has mastered many skills through managing a household on a limited budget and through volunteer work with the YWCA. Through a careful skill assessment and some creativity, Sue was able to identify many skills important to potential employers.

Goal setting is an important part of a successful job search. It is critical that you take the time to establish clear job search goals. This takes research and an honest self-assessment. Consider talking to a professional career counselor and taking career tests (aptitude, interest, values, and personality inventory).

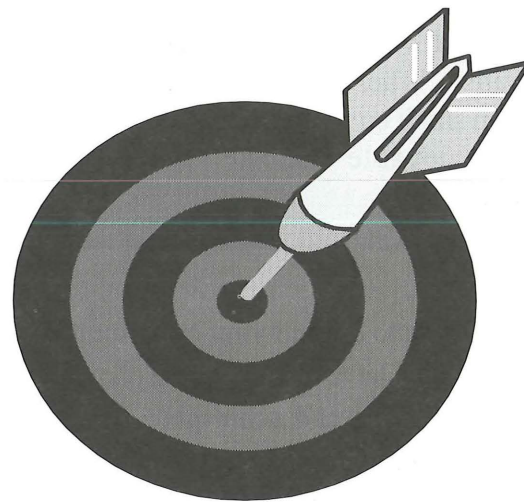
Focus on the job that you plan to pursue right now. Your immediate need for employment should be a step in your long-term career plans.

As you explore your job search goal, you will be considering criteria for the ultimate job. **You will be reaching for the best.** Throughout the process, a healthy dose of reality is important. Remember that your goals must be attainable. If you find your dream job is not immediately achievable, reevaluate and plan the steps to achieve your goal. Secondary job goals are often among these steps. A secondary goal may include part-time, temporary, evening, or contract employment. It

may be an opportunity for advancement or self-employment. It may be short-term employment while you pursue other opportunities. Whatever the case, consider secondary goals early in your job search.

The Goal Identification Worksheet and Values Checklist exercises at the end of this chapter will help you explore your values and establish your employment goals. Another useful activity is to return to the list of your skills and mark those that you would—and those you would not like to use in future employment.

***You can only hit a target  
if you aim for it.***





# THE EMPLOYER PERSPECTIVE

Generally, employers are not in the business of career development. Although many employers are interested in the career goals of their employees, the needs of the organization are their first priority. For a successful job search, match your skills and goals to the needs of the employer.

You do not have to match all of the skills needed for an occupation to pursue that occupation. The best candidates for a job rarely match all of the requirements of an employer. Many factors go into the hiring process—including personality and motivation. The most successful job seekers may not be the most qualified. Those who demonstrate

the desired qualities sought by employers are the ones who will ultimately succeed.

Strategies for identifying the skills employers desire are similar to those for identifying your own skills. The goal is to learn as much as possible about the industry, occupation, and employer. Position descriptions, industry and company literature, employment advertisements, and Internet web sites are all sources of information. You may also draw on the knowledge of your contacts, conduct informational interviews, or participate in Internet discussion groups.

**R**ita is considering retail sales as an immediate job goal. Her research shows that retail employers require good customer service skills. Customer service is not a skill that she identified. Her past employment as an inventory clerk in a warehouse required little customer contact. Yet, in that job she coordinated the distribution of inventory to several departments and worked very closely with staff. This work experience, along with her volunteer experience as a school fund raiser, demonstrates excellent customer service skills.

*The important thing is not where you are,  
but where you are going.*

## Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the need to identify your skills, set job search goals, and match it to the needs of potential employers. Once you accomplish this, you will be ready to begin your job search. These efforts are important to job search success. They will help you organize your job search, write resumes, complete applications, interview, and negotiate the best job offer.



## Accomplishment Worksheet

An effective salesperson will describe the specifications of a product as well as promote its performance and note examples of success and customer satisfaction. Your accomplishments are a record of success. Employers want to know how, where, and when you used those skills. They want to hear how you excelled in your performance. Your accomplishments set you apart from the competition.

List your accomplishments on the blanks below. Include any success in your life. There are no wrong answers. Include some accomplishments from past employment or an employment-related activity. Include ways you improved, met a specific challenge, or saved time and money. These may have been from your own effort or as part of a team. When stating an accomplishment, use measures whenever possible. Examples:

“Successfully managed \$500,000 accounts receivables and reduced delinquent accounts by 15 percent.”

“Participated on a fund-raising team for the YWCA which raised \$15,000 for youth programs.”

“Successfully managed a household of four on a \$900 a month budget.”

“Restored a 1936 Ford to original condition.”

### Accomplishments

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## How Others See Me

Ask someone who is close to you—spouse, sibling, roommate or friend—to circle 10 to 15 traits that describe you. Their impressions may surprise you and possibly point you in some new direction. Look for ways to maximize your strengths and overcome your weaknesses.

able	frank	maternal	radical
accepting	friendly	mature	rational
adaptable	frugal	modest	reactionary
ambitious	gentle	mystical	realistic
anxious	giving	naive	reasonable
assertive	gruff	negative	reassuring
bitter	gullible	neurotic	reflective
bold	hard	noisy	relaxed
calm	helpful	observant	reliable
careless	helpless	obsessive	religious
caring	honorable	organized	remote
certain	idealistic	original	resentful
cheerful	imaginative	overconfident	reserved
clever	inconsiderate	overemotional	resolute
cold	independent	overprotective	respectful
confident	innovative	passive	responsible
conforming	insensitive	paternal	responsive
controlled	insincere	patient	rigid
courageous	intelligent	perceptive	sarcastic
critical	introverted	perfectionist	satisfied
cynical	intuitive	persuasive	scientific
demanding	irresponsible	petty	searching
dependable	irritable	playful	self-accepting
dependent	jealous	pleasant	self-assertive
determined	jovial	pompous	self-aware
dignified	juvenile	powerful	self-conscious
disciplined	kind	precise	self-indulgent
domineering	knowledgeable	pretentious	self-righteous
dutiful	lazy	principled	unpredictable
efficient	liberal	progressive	unreasonable
elusive	lively	protective	unstructured
extroverted	logical	proud	useful
fair	loving	quarrelsome	vain
fearful	manipulative	questioning	visionary
foolish	materialistic	quiet	vulnerable
			warm
			wise
			withdrawn
			witty
			worried
			youthful

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## Occupational Titles

Use the following list of job titles as a brainstorming tool when considering job goals.

Accountant	Architect	Assembler	Cabinet Maker
Carpenter	Cashier	Chef	Clerk
Cook	Counselor	Dentist	Doctor
Drafter	Editor	Engineer	Financial Analyst
Graphic designer	Inspector	Lab Technician	Librarian
Machine operator	Machinist	Manager	Mason
Nurse	Painter	Programmer	Scientist
Secretary	Teacher	Welder	

## Employment-Related Titles

Community involvement and volunteer experience may be a valuable resource for your job search. The following are common titles. Just attach the name of the activity or community organization. Example: YMCA *Volunteer* or School *Fund Raiser*.

Campaigner	Consultant	Coordinator	Director
Fund Raiser	Leader	Member	Organizer
Promoter	Secretary	Solicitor	Sponsor
Teacher	Treasurer	Volunteer	Worker

## Job Skills

The following is a short list of job skills. (There are literally thousands of job specific skills.) You will have to research the job skills specific to your occupation.

Accounting	Auditing	Brake alignments	Building maintenance
C++ Programming	Carpet laying	Cleaning	CNC Machine Operation
Composite Engineering	Cooking	Counseling	Customer service
Desktop publishing	Detailing	Drill press operation	Driving
Editing	Electronic repair	Filing	Hammering
Interviewing	LAN administration	Management	Mechanical drafting
Metal fabrication	Payroll accounting	Public speaking	Scheduling
Soldering	Teaching	Technical writing	Telemarketing
Typing	Welding		

<b>Computer Software:</b>	Auto CAD	Excel	Lotus
Microsoft Word	PageMaker	WordPerfect	



## Self-Management Skills

You use self-management skills every day to survive and get along. Self-management skills are important because employers hire people who will “fit in” with the work group. Circle the self-management skills you possess right now.

### Critical Skills:

Follow instructions  
Get things done  
Punctual

Get along well with others  
Honest  
Responsible

### Adaptive Skills:

Assertive  
Competitive  
Creative  
Dependable  
Diplomatic  
Flexible  
Highly motivated  
Integrity  
Inventive  
Learn quickly  
Outgoing  
Persistent  
Pleasant  
Results-oriented  
Sense of direction (purpose)  
Sensitive  
Sociable  
Tolerant  
Trusting  
Willing to learn new things

Assume Responsibility  
Complete assignments  
Decisive  
Detail-oriented  
Enthusiastic  
Friendly  
Ingenuous  
Intelligent  
Kind  
Mature  
Patient  
Physically strong  
Proud of doing a good job  
Self-motivated  
Sense of humor  
Sincere  
Tactful  
Tough  
Understanding



## **Transferable Skills**

Transferable skills can be transferred from one job, or even one career to another.

Critical Transferable Skills may get you higher levels of responsibility and pay. Emphasize them in an interview as well as on your resume.

### **Critical Transferable Skills:**

Accept responsibility  
Efficiency  
Project planning  
Sales

Budgeting  
Meet deadlines  
Public speaking  
Supervise others

### **“Thing” Skills:**

Assembling  
Drawing, painting  
Endurance  
Gathering  
Hammering  
Keyboarding, typing  
Manual dexterity  
Observing/inspecting  
Physical agility, strength  
Restoring  
Sense of touch  
Sewing  
Weaving

Balancing, juggling  
Driving  
Finishing/refinishing  
Grinding  
Hand crafts  
Keypunching, drilling  
Modeling, remodeling  
Operating machines  
Precise tolerance, standards  
Sandblasting  
Separating  
Sorting

### **“People” Skills:**

Caring  
Communicating  
Conflict resolution  
Consulting  
Diplomacy  
Empathy  
Group facilitating  
Inspiring trust  
Instructing  
Listening  
Mentoring  
Negotiating  
Problem solving  
Responsive  
Sympathy

Comforting  
Conflict management  
Counseling  
Developing rapport  
Diversity  
Encouraging  
Helping others  
Inquiry  
Interviewing  
Mediating  
Motivating  
Outgoing  
Respect  
Sensitive  
Tolerance

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## **Dealing with data:**

Analyzing  
Calculating/computing  
Comparing  
Counting  
Examining  
Financial records  
Organizing  
Research  
Taking inventory

Auditing  
Checking for accuracy  
Compiling  
Detail-oriented  
Financial or fiscal analysis  
Following instructions  
Problem solving  
Surveying

Budgeting  
Classifying  
Cost analysis  
Evaluating  
Financial management  
Investigating  
Recording facts  
Synthesizing

## **Using words, ideas:**

Advertising  
Correspondence  
Imaginative  
Promotional writing  
Quick thinking  
Telephone skills

Articulate  
Design  
Inventive  
Public speaking  
Sign Language  
Write clearly, concisely

Brainstorming  
Edit  
Logical  
Publicity  
Speech writing  
Verbal communication

## **Leadership:**

Competitive  
Decisive  
Evaluation  
Initiate new tasks  
Manage, direct others  
Multi-tasking  
Planning  
Run meetings  
Self-motivated  
Strategic planning

Coordinating  
Delegate  
Goal setting  
Integrity  
Mediate problems  
Negotiate agreements  
Results-oriented  
Self-confident  
Sets an example, sets pace  
Supervision

Decision-making  
Direct others  
Influence others  
Judgment  
Motivate people  
Organization  
Risk taker  
Self-directed  
Solve problems  
Work schedules

## **Creative, Artistic:**

Artistic  
Drawing, painting  
Illustrating, sketching  
Perform  
Poetic images  
Visualize shapes

Dance, body movement  
Expressive  
Mechanical drawing  
Photography  
Present artistic ideas  
Visualizing

Designing  
Handicrafts  
Model-making  
Playing a musical instrument  
Singing

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## Values Checklist

Work-related values are a part of setting job search goals. Decide what working conditions are important to you.

### Instructions

1. Check the box next to those conditions that you would like in a job. Add additional values on the blanks.
2. Draw a line through those conditions that you would not like in a job.

---

<input type="checkbox"/> Authority	<input type="checkbox"/> Other benefits	<input type="checkbox"/> Status
<input type="checkbox"/> Career enhancement	<input type="checkbox"/> Pace, fast or slow	<input type="checkbox"/> Travel
<input type="checkbox"/> Casual environment	<input type="checkbox"/> Position	<input type="checkbox"/> Variety
<input type="checkbox"/> Challenge	<input type="checkbox"/> Power	<input type="checkbox"/> Wage
<input type="checkbox"/> Close supervision	<input type="checkbox"/> Public transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Work indoors/outdoors
<input type="checkbox"/> Commuting distance	<input type="checkbox"/> Public contact	<input type="checkbox"/> Work on a team
<input type="checkbox"/> Competence	<input type="checkbox"/> Quality environment	<input type="checkbox"/> Work alone
<input type="checkbox"/> Creativity	<input type="checkbox"/> Recognition	<input type="checkbox"/> Work under pressure
<input type="checkbox"/> Decision-making	<input type="checkbox"/> Regular work week	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Diversity	<input type="checkbox"/> Relocation	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Excitement	<input type="checkbox"/> Respect	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Flexible schedule	<input type="checkbox"/> Retirement benefits	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Formal environment	<input type="checkbox"/> Security	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Health benefits	<input type="checkbox"/> Shift work	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Independence	<input type="checkbox"/> Size of company (large, small)	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Learning opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/> Skill Building (training)	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Organizational structure		

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## Goal Worksheet

### Instructions

1. Write the occupational title of your immediate job goal representing the kind of jobs you plan to pursue right now. If you have more than one distinct job goal, complete this exercise for each one. See page 10 for a list of occupational titles. Review the values that you identified as important to your job goal on the "Values Checklist." Which conditions do you *require* in a new opportunity? Which conditions do you *desire*?
2. Write your *required* values and *desired* values from the Values Checklist in the appropriate space below.
3. Evaluate whether or not your expectations are reasonable and attainable. To accomplish this, conduct labor market research.

---

1. Job goal \_\_\_\_\_

2. Required values

---

---

---

---

3. Desired values

---

---

---

---

4. Reality check: Are these expectations reasonable and attainable? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If you answered "no" or are unsure, reevaluate your values.

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## This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



# RESUMES

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# RESUME WRITING

Much preparation goes into an excellent resume. You do not simply begin by writing. First establish clear goals for your job search. Then identify your skills that match your goals.

You need to gather supporting materials and summarize your past employment-related experiences. Finally, you will write, rewrite, and edit until the resume is perfect. Always have someone proofread your resume. You want someone to also repeat back to you what your resume says. You will want to continuously work at keeping your perfect resume up-to-date. As you grow, your resume should grow with you; its development should mirror your personal and professional development.

Do not overwhelm employers by providing more information than necessary. Do not try to be everything to everyone. The greatest challenge will not be what to include in your resume, but what to leave out. An attention-getting resume must be targeted, to the point, and must clearly identify your qualifications. Focus on skills and accomplishments with specific attention to actual results. Hobbies, crafts, and clubs can also give you accomplishments and skills.

You are not ready to approach prospective employers until you have taken these steps. Since it has to be done anyway, there is no better time than the present. If you are already engaged in these activities, you are that much closer to a finished product.

***Your resume should be an  
honest  
presentation of your best.***



## Skill Identification

Employers want to know what you can do, not just where you have worked. If you cannot clearly state at least 20 skills directly associated with your job goal, you are not ready to begin your job search or write your resume.

Take the time to work on developing a list of your skills. As you develop your list, identify examples of places where you have used your skills. Employment-related skills do not always come from employment. They may originate from education, volunteer work, personal interests, and life experiences. Be very specific when describing your skills. Also, be sure to state your skills in a positive light. Avoid any language that may reduce their value. Always be honest and positive.

When drafting your resume, clearly identify your skills. There are several formats that can be used, but your skills should stand out. Whenever possible, state your skills as expert skills, to avoid being perceived as a generalist. As an example, if you have word processing skills, state which software packages you have used. All resumes today need to be skill-based resumes. Whatever style or format you use, your resume must clearly communicate the skills you bring to the job.

## Goal Setting

An important element in resume preparation is establishing clear goals or objectives. You should not approach your job search, or write a resume, with the goal of just "anything." It is critical that you target your resume to a specific occupational goal. The content of your resume should point to that goal. Without this focus, your resume will be mediocre at best. If you have already established specific goals, then you are prepared to write your resume. If not, you are encouraged to first spend some time establishing your goals.



As you write your resume, keep your goal in view. This will help you decide what to include, what to leave out, and will help target your resume. Great resumes are ones in which every piece of information points to a clear occupational objective. One strategy is to write your goal on a separate piece of paper and weigh each item in your resume against your goal. If it is not clear how the item relates to your goal, then strongly consider eliminating it. (See the Skills Identification chapter on page 4 for information on goals.)

***Resumes must be skill-based  
and clearly target your  
objectives and the needs of  
employers.***

## **The Language of Resumes**

Resumes must be skill-based and clearly target your objectives and the needs of employers. Beyond this, there are many ways to present these skills. You may use narrative, bullets, lists of key words, highlights or other presentation styles. The resume must have impact and flair. What you say is important, but how you say it is just as important. An excellent method is to use action verbs to highlight your qualifications. It is one thing to say that you have a particular skill; it is another to proclaim that you have excelled in its performance. "Mastered three word processing programs: WordPerfect, Microsoft Word, and AmiPro." "Successfully increased regional sales by 1.2 million." "Organized a neighborhood block party of 50 homes, which helped to reduce crime by 15 percent." "Achieved 100 percent attendance during training." Notice the use of measures to

strengthen the statement. Look for similar measures to complement your resume. There are sample action verbs on page 22.

Resumes are not literary; they are promotional. The rules of grammar are modified from formal writing. Complete sentences are not necessary. Avoid the use of "I," as the subject of the resume is assumed to be the person named in the heading of the resume. Avoid long narratives and use lots of bullets and key phrases. Someone looking at the resume should be able to figure out the content without reading the details. The resume should draw the reader's attention and create a desire to know more. The goal is to win an interview. It is at the interview that the job is won. The resume is like a preview of coming attractions; you want to save the best for the presentation. Therefore, it is best if the resume creates questions in the mind of the reader. These questions should not cast doubt on your qualifications or integrity, but create a desire to know more about you. "Profitably managed up to \$500,000 accounts receivable, reducing delinquent accounts from 22.7 percent to 10.4 percent" is just such a statement. You can also use life experience, "Organized a group of 50 community members that raised over \$75,000 for playground equipment." "Managed and led a scout troop of 25 that completed 15 community service projects." Those statements should prompt an employer to find out more about you.

## **RESUME FORMATS**

There are three common resume formats: chronological, functional, and combination. By using the chart on page 23, you can determine which format and variation will best display your strengths. Your career objectives will also influence your choice. Another way to select the best format is to complete the resume worksheets on pages 37-39.



**Chronological**—see samples on pages 31-32

The emphasis for this format is on a chronological listing of employment and employment-related experiences. The format highlights the recent employment, while de-emphasizing experiences further back in time. The chronological resume is for those with a consistent employment history, no gaps in employment, and whose past employment experiences are directly related to their current employment goals. A steady work record with increasing responsibilities can be effectively showcased using this format. You would begin by listing your most recent employment experiences and working backward. Include dates, names, and contact information such as address and phone numbers. This may NOT be the best format for individuals with job gaps, new graduates, or a person changing careers.

When listing your experience, chronicle five to ten years of employment history. Experiences over ten years ago begin to lose impact and open the potential for age discrimination. If you have valuable experience beyond ten years, there are ways to present it other than chronologically (see Functional and Combination resume formats).

**Functional**—see samples on pages 33-35

The functional resume highlights skills, experience, and accomplishments without identifying specific dates, names, and places. In this format, information is organized by functions or skills, advertising the specific qualifications needed for the occupation. This format works very well for people changing careers, including military personnel moving into civilian employment. It is also effective for first-time job seekers, those reentering the workforce after a gap in employment, and people who want to emphasize experience that may be viewed as outdated. In a true functional resume there is no chronological listing of employment. Consequently, many employers do not like this format; it creates suspicion that the person may be trying to hide something. The employer may suspect a job hopper, an older applicant trying to disguise age, a

lack of career progression, underemployment, employment gaps, or too little relevant experience.

**Combination**—see sample on page 36

The combination resume brings the best of both the chronological and functional resumes. It features a functional section that highlights skills, accomplishments, and experience. It also includes a chronological listing of employment, education, and employment-related experiences. The combination resume is a very effective format for many job seekers. The best chronological resume can be enhanced with a section highlighting skills, accomplishments, and experience. The functional resume can be strengthened with a chronological listing of employment experiences.

## RESUME VARIATIONS

### Keyword

The keyword resume is a variation that adds a listing of skills to the beginning of any standard resume format. Critical occupational skills placed at the beginning add impact to the resume and help capture the reader's attention. This variation is effective for all career fields and skill levels. It is a very effective strategy for creating scannable resumes. The format for a keyword resume would look something like this:

<b>Name</b>
<b>Address</b>
<b>Phone</b>
<b>Employment Objective</b>
<b>Summary of Skills (Key Word List)</b>
<b>Skill Skill Skill</b>
<b>Skill Skill Skill</b>
<b>Skill Skill Skill</b>
<b>Resume Body</b>
<b>(Chronological, Functional, or Combination)</b>



## Targeted

More of a method than a style, the targeted resume directs skills and experience to the specific needs of one employer. All resumes should target the needs of a specific occupation. In addition, this approach targets the specific needs of an employer and a specific job. It requires careful research of the employer's needs. Sources for information include position descriptions, employer profiles, industry publications, networking, and informational interviews. When drafting a targeted resume, direct your skills and experience to the specific needs of the employer by typing in some of their key words into your resume. This is a very powerful resume strategy that can set you apart from the competition and capture an employer's interest. For executive positions and specialized technical jobs this strategy is almost a necessity.

Convenient access to a computer and word processing skills will help to make this method work. Using the combination format, set up a resume template with header information and the chronological summary of your employment. Then customize the functional section of the resume, the summary of skills, accomplishments, and qualifications to meet the needs of a specific employer. Be sure to name your objective with the exact job title.





## Samples of Occupational Keywords

**Occupational keywords include skills, titles, degrees and occupational buzz words**

Account Management	Ecology	Personal Computer
Accounts Receivable	Electronics	Process Metallurgy
Acquisitions	Employee Assistance	Proposal Writing
Bachelor's Degree	Engineer	Psychology
Bank Card	Equipment Vendor	Public Relations
Bank Reconciliation	Facilitator	Purchasing
Batch Processing	Financial Planning	Radio
Benchmarking	Food Preparation	Raw Materials
Blueprint Reading	Gas Pipeline	Receptionist
Brochures	Goal Setting	Reporter
Budget	Graphic Design	Research
Bulletins	Guest Services	Sales
CAD	Harnessing	Secretarial
Calibrator	Hiring/Firing	Software Modeling
Carpentry	Hotel	Spanish
Cash Flow	ISO 9000	Spreadsheets
Cell Culture Media	Journalism	Statistical Process Control
Cement	Journeyman	Stick Welding
Child Care	Layout Design	Strategic Planning
Claims Adjudication	Logic Analyzer	Student Personnel
Commercial Leasing	Magnetic Theory	Supervisor
Copy Editing	Manager	Taxonomy
Counselor	Mapping	Teacher
Crisis Management	Marketing	Technical Writing
Cross-cultural Training	Master's Degree	Time Management
Debugging	Microprocessor	Transportation
Decision Making	Microsoft Word	Travel
Demographics	Nursing	Wave Solder
Dental Management	Oscillator	WordPerfect
Die Casting	Pelletizing	Workflow
Dietitian	Patient Advocate	Writer
Drywall	Payroll	



## Sample List of Action Verbs

How you say it is just as important as what you say. Use action words to stress performance, motivation, and a passion for excellence. Use a dictionary, thesaurus, or job descriptions for more words.

Achieved	Created	Formulated	Recruited
Administered	Decided	Founded	Rectified
Affected	Defined	Generated	Researched
Analyzed	Delegated	Governed	Reviewed
Applied	Designed	Grouped	Revised
Appraised	Detailed	Guided	Scheduled
Approved	Developed	Handled	Searched
Arranged	Directed	Illustrated	Secured
Assessed	Distributed	Implemented	Selected
Attained	Earned	Improved	Simplified
Awarded	Effected	Increased	Sold
Built	Encouraged	Influenced	Solved
Calculated	Enforced	Initiated	Stimulated
Catalogued	Enlarged	Inspired	Structured
Clarified	Equipped	Installed	Succeeded
Coached	Established	Instituted	Summarized
Compared	Estimated	Integrated	Supported
Composed	Evaluated	Interviewed	Tailored
Conceived	Examined	Introduced	Taught
Conducted	Excelled	Invented	Transformed
Constructed	Executed	Investigated	Translated
Contracted	Expanded	Launched	United
Controlled	Experimented	Maintained	Validated
Convinced	Facilitated	Mastered	Verified
Correlated	Formed	Recorded	



## Resume Format Comparison

FORMAT	Characteristic	Advantage	Disadvantage	Use	Don't Use If
<b>Chronological</b>	Presents info in reverse order; most recent experience listed first  Offers concise picture of you as a potential employee	Easy to write  Emphasizes steady employment record  Format is familiar	Calls attention to employment gaps  Skills are difficult to spot unless they are listed in the most recent job	To emphasize past career growth and development  When continuing in the same career  When name of former employer may be significant to prospective employer	There are gaps in your work history  Calling attention to your age could be a problem  You have changed jobs often  Entering job market for first time or after a long absence
<b>Functional</b>	Focuses on specific strengths and skills important to employers	Brief and well structured  Focuses on skills, not history  De-emphasizes a spotty work history	No detailed work history  Content may appear to lack depth	When entering the job market or when reentering after a long absence  When work experience has been varied or unrelated  When changing careers  When primarily consulting or doing freelance work	Want to emphasize growth or development  Responsibilities and functions in recent jobs were limited
<b>Combination</b>	All the flexibility and strength of the functional and chronological combined	Shows off a strong employment record with upward mobility  Showcases relevant skills and abilities and supportive employment record  Emphasizes transferable skills	Work history is often on the second page and employer may not read that far	When shorter functional format would be too sketchy  To offer a complete picture of abilities and work history	Experience is limited  There are wide gaps in work history

VARIATION	Characteristic	Advantage	Disadvantage	Use	Don't Use If
<b>Keyword</b>	Allows for focused resumes that target skills	Skills are listed briefly and at the beginning of the resume  Easy for employer to scan and find skills	May be redundant information to include keywords at the top of your resume  Still an unfamiliar format to many employers	For all scannable systems of job screening  For all new graduates, those reentering the workplace or changing careers	There is rarely a time you cannot use this variation. It can be used in combination with any or all of the other formats
<b>Targeted</b>	Highly focused document aimed at a particular job  A "capsule" of work experience	Brief and direct  Easy to read	May focus too tightly on one particular job  Content may appear sparse	When job target is specific  When you need separate resumes for different career paths	You are not prepared to put the effort into writing an excellent resume



# BASIC PRINCIPLES OF RESUME WRITING

## **Keep it brief!**

Your resume is an overview of your qualifications—not your life story. It is a “preview of coming attractions” which creates the desire to see the rest of the show. One to two pages is the standard for a resume read by the human eye, and up to three pages for a scannable resume. If your resume is more than one page, the first page must capture the reader’s attention. If it fails to do so, the remaining pages will not be read.

## **Focus**

Don’t try to be everything to everyone. Target your job search and your resume to your specific occupational goals.

## **Multiple Resumes**

Generally, you should concentrate first on one well-written resume that targets your immediate job search. Make sure this resume represents you well to a wide range of employers, and is suitable for scanning. If you have more than one objective, additional resumes may be required. For example, if you are planning to pursue two distinct occupations such as realtor and bookkeeper, you would need two resumes. If you only use the targeted resume approach, you would also write a unique resume to each employer.

## **Visual Impact**

A piece of sales literature has only about two seconds to attract the reader’s attention. Similarly, the resume must attract the employer even before it is read. Many advertising techniques apply, including the use of white space, bullets, indentation and varied type style. Professional printing produces high quality, but can be expensive. Laser quality printing is an excellent alternative. Never handwrite your resume! Make

sure there are no typographical, grammatical, or spelling errors. Ask someone to proofread your resume to help eliminate errors.

## **Insure Integrity**

Your resume is specifically designed to paint the best picture possible of you. Place the emphasis on the positive, not the negative. It should be an honest statement of your best qualities. Your resume should hold up under scrutiny. Facts and numbers must be believable. The content of the resume should be in harmony. Dates should be consistent while experience and related activities should support your qualifications.

## **Scannable Resumes**

Many employers and employment agencies are using electronic resume scanning systems to screen resumes, a trend that will increase in the future. When writing any resume, consider its scannability. Generally, there is little difference between a good scannable resume and one that is effective for the human eye. Ultimately, all resumes will be looked at by a person, so your resume must work for both.

## **Overqualified**

If you consistently hear that you are overqualified or are concerned that you will be perceived as such, then you have not effectively targeted your resume. When writing your resume, target it to the level of employment and to the occupation or employer. If you are pursuing more than one distinct level of employment, then consider a separate resume for each. Present the information that you believe is important. You don’t have to tell everything. If you have an advanced degree in a field unrelated to your goal, leave it off.



## Resume Content

### Name Block

Use your full first name. Avoid using nicknames or “pet names.” If you have a preference to be called by a shortened version of your full name, then it is acceptable to put this name in parentheses or quotes (Elizabeth—prefer to be called “Betty”). Your address should not contain abbreviations. Your phone number should include the area code. Provide a phone number where you can be reached at all times, either by an answering machine or an alternate message number. Do not put your name and address on one line for a scannable resume as the computer may be confused by this format. Type your name in bold and/or all capitals to make it stand out.

#### **ELIZABETH “BETTY” APPLICANT**

1443 Hire Me Lane

Employability, Minnesota 55555

(555) 555-5555

### Employment or Career Objective

Include an objective when you are pursuing a specific job goal, or when you know the exact title of the position you are applying for. The objective targets your resume, but also limits its use to those jobs that match your goal. Objectives may be considered optional on your resume. You can also use a short summary of your skills and qualifications. If your objective is not included in your resume, state it in your cover letter.

### Summary Statements

The summary or qualification statement documents your work experience, achievement, and skills. This statement is a summary of the experience and qualifications that are the *most pertinent to the job* for which you are applying. This is recommended for all job seekers as a way to get the employer’s attention. The summary should be three or four lines or a series of phrases that may be used in place of the employment objective or just following it.

To be effective, the summary or qualification statement must indicate that you are qualified for the position you are seeking. It is often read first, and if it catches the reader’s attention, chances are the rest of the resume will be read. Summary example: Resourceful Planner/Coordinator with extensive knowledge of inventory control and on-line inventory systems. Recognized by management for innovation and initiative in implementing JIT techniques, as well as interdepartmental communications and supervisory skills.

### Employment History

List your most recent employment first. A general standard is to list the last three jobs, or the last ten years, whichever comes first. Focus on recent jobs and those that are most appropriate to your goals. If you have large gaps in employment or have changed jobs frequently, consider using a functional resume. How you use your resume and the make-up of your experience will determine the amount of information to include. Many job seekers and employers use the resume as a substitute application (this is very useful if the application works against your qualifications). As a substitute application, the resume should include employer contact information. Many resumes list employer name, city and state. Contact information is provided through an employment application or reference sheet. One advantage in limiting this information is to keep the resume focused on your qualifications. Also, some people may not want a prospective employer to be able to easily reach a previous employer. The choice is yours. There is no one standard that fits all situations.

### Organizations

List organizational memberships related to your job goal. Avoid using non-employer related or controversial organizations. Avoid mentioning specific religious or political affiliations, or other potentially controversial groups unless they directly relate to the job you want.



## Education

If your skill and experience come from employment, list employment first and education last. List education first if the emphasis is on education (a recent graduate). If you are a college graduate, state the name of the institution, location (city and state), degree earned, and field of study.



- ◆ If you have conducted a thorough independent study into a job-related topic, then you may summarize it as part of your education.
- ◆ If you are currently taking classes or pursuing a degree related to your job goal, include that information. List the skills acquired, academic accomplishments, and the projected date of completion.

## Additional Points to Consider Regarding Education

- ◆ Carefully consider listing the dates you graduated from school. List recent education dates because it increases its value. Older educational experiences may not be valued by the reader and may be used in age discrimination.
- ◆ Do not list high school graduation if you have completed a college degree. If you have taken post-high school classes but did not achieve a degree, then list your high school.
- ◆ When listing recent education, target specific skills and academic accomplishments.
- ◆ A GED can be listed as a high school graduate. If the GED was achieved through a local school, then list the name of that school. Otherwise, leave off the name of the school. You may choose to list the last school attended or the school district name.
- ◆ Do not include an education section if you dropped out of high school and had no formal training either in school or from an employer.
- ◆ Include relevant employer-sponsored training. Be sure that the training is targeted to your job goal. Summarize extensive employer training by type and only include training that is relevant to a new job.

## Military

Include military experience that fills gaps in employment or supports your job goal as part of your work history. “Civilianize” your military language so your skills and experience match the employer’s needs. For example, change a truck vehicle mechanic to light diesel mechanic; logistics to warehouse or material inventory control; war college to advanced training; chief petty officer to supervisor or lead worker; or NCOIC to supervisor.

## Hobbies/Personal Interests

Include hobbies/personal interests if they are employment-related, not controversial, and they show skill and experience.

## References

Do not include references on the resume. Do not use “References available upon request.” It is assumed by employers that you will provide this information. Once an employer requests references, be prepared to give them three to five references who can speak about your work habits and professional employment qualifications. Always seek permission before using someone as a reference.

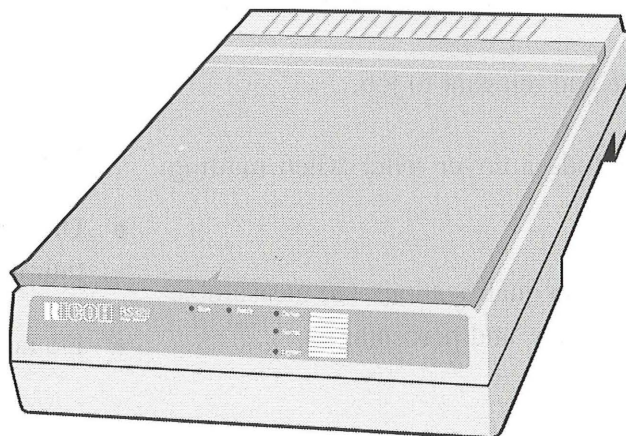
## Awards or Recognition

Let the employer know of any awards or recognition you have received (employee of the month, etc.), if it is timely and appropriate.



## Tips for Scannable and Readable Resumes

- ◆ Give priority to the skills on your resume. Employers want to know what you can do, not just where you have been. This is why scannable resume systems are set up to read skills. Place the important skills at the beginning of the resume where employers can see them first. Also, scannable database systems store a fixed number of skills so that those that come later may not be included in the database. Insure that your skills and occupation-specific keywords match your objective.
- ◆ Place your name, address, and phone number with area code in a block format below the top margin. This key information helps interested employers reach you and is the preferred format for scannable systems. Put your name on each page.
- ◆ Use generous margins and plenty of white space. One-inch margins enhance the readability of your resume. Balance the body of the resume so that the content is not compressed. For multiple pages, make sure information is balanced on the pages. The final resume should be a high-contrast image—dark ink on white or light-colored paper.
- ◆ Use vertical and horizontal lines sparingly and include a quarter inch of space around them. (Scanning systems can confuse lines and characters.)
- ◆ Avoid graphics and shading. Shading reduces the contrast making text hard to read. Graphics may catch the human eye but do not make sense to scanning systems.
- ◆ Use a font size between 10 and 14 points. Don't use script, *italic* or underlining. Highlight information using **bold** or CAPITAL letters.
- ◆ Stapling or folding diminishes the visual appearance of the resume and affects scannability. Avoid fasteners and consider sending your resume flat in a large white envelope.
- ◆ Be sure your resume is high quality and professional. Laser print your final copy. Remember, this is your advertisement to employers.
- ◆ Choose a typeface (font) that is easily readable rather than decorative. Times New Roman, System, Arial, Courier New, or Century Schoolbook are readable.





## General Resume Guidelines

### DO'S



- ◆ Lead with your strongest statements that are related to the job or goal.
- ◆ Emphasize your skills.
- ◆ Keep it brief (1-2 pages).
- ◆ Use 8 1/2" x 11" paper.
- ◆ Correct all typographical, grammatical, and spelling errors.
- ◆ Include your employment-related accomplishments.
- ◆ Target your qualifications.
- ◆ Clearly communicate your purpose and value to employers.
- ◆ Maintain eye-appealing visual appearance.
- ◆ Use the best format to showcase your skills.
- ◆ Appear neat, well organized, and professional.
- ◆ Be creative and relevant to job.
- ◆ Always include a cover letter when mailing your resume.
- ◆ To enhance your qualifications, use measurable outcomes, values, and percentages.

### DON'TS



- ◆ Do not use abbreviations (exceptions include middle initial and directions such as N for North).
- ◆ Do not use "I" to refer to yourself.
- ◆ Avoid any mention of salary expectations or wage history.
- ◆ Do not print on a dot matrix printer.
- ◆ Do not use fancy typeset, binders, or exotic paper.
- ◆ Do not send a photograph of yourself.
- ◆ Avoid statements that you cannot prove.
- ◆ Do not include personal information (age, height, weight, family status, picture, or religious or political affiliation unless you are applying for a job with one of these organizations).
- ◆ Do not change the tense of verbs or use the passive voice.
- ◆ It is not necessary to use the title "resume."
- ◆ Do not include references on the resume. Make a separate reference sheet.
- ◆ Do not include hobbies or social interests unless they contribute to your objective.
- ◆ Do not staple or fold your resume.



## **Resume Presentation**

### **Quality Paper**

Now that you have invested time in writing the perfect resume, what remains is to produce a high-quality final product. Quality paper is a final touch that will leave a favorable impression with a prospective employer. It is appealing to the eye and prints better, maintaining a clear, sharp image. As for color, white is still considered the first choice. Off-white, cream, or gray is acceptable; avoid using colored paper. Paper size should be the standard letter size, 8-1/2" x 11." Here are other guidelines:

### **Paper Weight**

Quality paper should be between 16 and 25 lbs. 100 percent cotton fiber (rag content) is the best.

### **Producing**

When creating your original or master, it should be produced using a common word processing or desktop publishing program. Typing your resume on a standard typewriter should be avoided since its print is usually not high quality. Editing and modifying will also be difficult. If all you have is a standard typewriter, consider taking your final draft to someone for word processing.

### **Paper Texture**

Personal preference should be your guide. Examples include: linen, pebble finish and vellum. Avoid glossy or high shine finishes.

### **Reproducing**

When making copies for distribution, laser printing is preferred. Due to the poor quality, never print your resume on a dot matrix printer. You may also choose to have a print shop print your resume. If you reproduce your resume on a photocopier, be sure that the copies are clear, clean, and sharp.

### **Computer Resources**

Computers have become an important job search tool for most job seekers. There are many places where use of a computer costs very little or is free. For example:

Minnesota Workforce Centers  
Social organizations  
Religious organizations

Friends and family  
Community agencies  
Private placement agencies

Schools  
Print shops  
Libraries



# SAMPLES AND WORKSHEETS

The following resume samples model the basic formats and principles of resume writing. Consider how each job seeker presented his/her skills and experience. Along with the content, look at how the resume is presented. Draw the best from each to help decide how to style your resume. Your resume will be unique to you and will not look exactly like any of these presented. For more resume samples, look in the job search section of your local bookstore or library, or contact your Minnesota WorkForce Center or local employment service.

Your resume should focus on your skills. Employers want to know what you can do, not just where you have been. That is why resume scanning systems look for skills. Various scanning systems will identify different skills. This is because resume scanning systems use a Lexicon or dictionary when looking for words, and will identify only those words that are on file.

The resume worksheets are tools for crafting your resume. They are not intended as a fill-in-the-blank form. Use them as a model. Sections may vary and the layout you choose will ultimately be a variation on one or all of the formats.

*Your resume is a marketing tool.*

*Make sure it presents you*

*in a positive way.*



## Chronological Resume Sample

### ELIZABETH B. JOBSEEKER

5555 Lakewood Road  
Somewhere, Minnesota 55555  
(555) 555-5555

**OBJECTIVE:** Mechanical Engineer

### ENGINEERING EXPERIENCE

#### Industrial Engineer

July 199- to Present

**Tool Incorporated**, Minnetonka, MN

- ♦ Designed a plant layout for the shipping department
- ♦ Developed a multi-step shipping process improvement plan

#### Design Engineer

May 199- to July 199-

**Mechanical Systems**, St. Paul, MN

- ♦ Developed a complete safety package for a robot loader
- ♦ Designed hydraulic double stack lift
- ♦ Redesigned dairy open style conveyor
- ♦ Trained 10 engineers on Autocad Rev. 12
- ♦ Evaluated and purchased machine components

#### HVAC Engineer Assistant

May 199- to May 199-

**Engineering Consultants**, St. Paul, MN

- ♦ Prepared building and equipment bid specifications
- ♦ Evaluated HVAC equipment options
- ♦ Incorporated EPA and OSHA regulations into safety procedures
- ♦ Created working drawing on Autocad Rev. 1

### MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE

#### Supervisor

Sept 198- to March 199-

**College Police Department**, Minneapolis, MN

- ♦ Supervised over 50 student security personnel
- ♦ Maintained security accounts and budgets
- ♦ Interviewed, hired, field trained, and conducted performance appraisals
- ♦ Prepared 25-page monthly report

#### Manager

June 198- to Sept 198-

**Building Management Co.**, Northwoods, MN

- ♦ Maintained and performed building improvements

### EDUCATION

**University of Minnesota**, Minneapolis, MN

Bachelor of Science in MECHANICAL ENGINEERING, 199-

Minor: Engineering Management

- ♦ Course Work: Thermodynamics, Heat Transfer, HVAC, Machine Design, Fluid Power, IBM Compatible, Autocad 12, FORTRAN, Lotus, and Quattro Pro

## Chronological Resume Sample: School-to-work job seeker

### DEBRA JOBSEEKER

5555 Lakewood Road  
Somewhere, Minnesota 55555  
(555) 555-5555

**EMPLOYMENT OBJECTIVE:** Licensed Practical Nurse

**SUMMARY:** Highly motivated, dependable team player able to be self-initiating and follow instructions to carryout tasks in an efficient manner. Proficient skills in patient care, medical management, coordination, and emergency room technique.

### EDUCATION

12/97 Graduate, Licensed Practical Nurse Program, GPA 3.85/4.0  
Normandale Community College, Bloomtown, Minnesota

6/97-12/97 Internship, Regions Hospital, St. Paul, Minnesota

◆ Infection Control	◆ Critical Care	◆ Injections
◆ Catheter Care	◆ Vital Signs	◆ Triage
◆ Blood Draw	◆ Charting	◆ Intake
◆ IV Therapy	◆ CPR	◆ Acute Care

6/90 High school graduate, Richfield Senior High, Richfield, Minnesota

### RELATED VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

1993-1995 American Red Cross Minneapolis, Minnesota  
Provided emergency services to persons in crisis. Assisted in providing information and services regarding food, shelter, clothing, and medical provisions.

1991-1993 Courage Center Golden Valley, Minnesota  
Assisted disabled patients in activities of daily living by writing letters, reading correspondence, feeding, pushing wheelchairs, and shopping.

1990-1991 Neighborhood Involvement Program St. Paul, Minnesota  
Organized a block safety program for 26 households which reduced crime in the area by 15 percent.

### MEMBERSHIPS

1991 Parent Teachers Association, Secretary



## Functional Resume Sample

### JERRY J. JOB

5555 Lakewood Road  
Somewhere, Minnesota 55555  
(555) 555-5555

### OBJECTIVE

Welding or Building Maintenance

### SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

**Welding** — Extensive experience in a wide variety of welding styles and in all positions.

MIG \* TIG \* ARC \* Heliarc \* Oxyacetylene  
Air ARC Cutting & Gouging \* Automatic Seam Welder  
Plasma cutting \* Water Cooled Spot Welding \* Underwater Welding

**Fabrication** — Skilled in layout and design of sheet metal and pipe. Extensive knowledge of sheet rollers and brakes. Follow manufacturers' operating processes (MOP) to detail.

**Equipment Operator** — Experienced forklift operator on various sizes and styles of forklifts. Skilled in the use of a variety of power tools and metal fabrication equipment including: drills, drill press, edge planer, end mill, benders, power saws, sanders and grinders.

**Equipment Maintenance** — Performed general maintenance on welding equipment and production machinery. Maintained high production levels through on site machine repairs and preventive maintenance.

**Building Maintenance** — Experience in general construction including basic electrical repairs, carpentry, concrete, glass, spray and roller painting, plumbing, patching and sheetrock.

**Personal Attributes** — Dependable, goal oriented, enthusiastic and dedicated to excellence.

### SUMMARY OF EXPERIENCE

#### Lead Welder

- ◆ Maintained strict performance, quality, and production standards.
- ◆ Trained new employees and monitored their performance during probationary period.

### EDUCATION

Welding and Blueprint Reading  
Somewhere Technical College  
Graduate - Somewhere Senior High School

## **Functional Resume Sample: New entrant with no paid work experience**

### **JOE DOER**

5555 Lakewood Road  
Somewhere, Minnesota 55555  
(555) 555-5555

### **EMPLOYMENT OBJECTIVE**

Assembly, janitorial, maintenance, or construction work

### **SUMMARY OF SKILLS**

- ◆ Industrious, reliable, highly motivated and thorough
- ◆ Ability to safely operate power machines, tools, saws, sanders and drills
- ◆ Operate, repair and maintain mowers, snow blowers, buffers and trucks
- ◆ Experience with household repairs, painting, siding and construction

### **RELATED VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE**

#### **ASSEMBLY**

Received, sorted, bundled and placed recycling articles in correct containers  
Assembled, cleaned and packaged toys for children on holidays  
Repaired bicycles, motor bikes and garage doors  
Assisted nursing home residents with making crafts and decorating rooms

#### **JANITORIAL**

Repair and maintain all aspects of home and assist neighbors and friends with lawn care, mowing, raking, shoveling, painting, buffing, sanding and cleaning walls and floors, remodeling. Helped people repair, remodel and clean homes after flood.

#### **CONSTRUCTION**

Assisted in building or remodeling homes for low-income families. Sanded floors, walls, cupboards, laid sheet rock, painted and stained woodwork, mixed cement and sided outside walls. Constructed emergency Mash Units and troop quarters. Drove and repaired trucks.

### **VOLUNTEER WORK HISTORY**

Goodwill Industries	St. Paul, Minnesota
Minnesota Flood Victims Rescue	East Grand Forks, Minnesota
Habitat for Humanity	St. Paul, Minnesota
Sunshine Nursing Home	Minneapolis, Minnesota

### **EDUCATION**

Johnson High School	St. Paul, Minnesota
United States Army	Honorable discharge, Private E3 Classification



## **Functional Resume Sample: New entrant with no paid work experience**

### **WANDA JOB**

5555 Lakewood Road  
Somewhere, Minnesota 55555  
(555) 555-5555

**EMPLOYMENT GOAL:** Housekeeping or light janitorial work

**SUMMARY:** Highly motivated, industrious, dependable individual has proven skills in housekeeping and janitorial work.

### **HIGHLIGHTS OF SKILLS**

- ◆ Clean the homes and yards for disabled, elderly shut-ins and flood victims.
- ◆ Maintenance and repair for low income residents.
- ◆ Organized a car pool for families needing transportation to day care, training, and shopping.

### **RELATED EXPERIENCE**

Salvation Army

St. Paul, Minnesota

Volunteer—"Be Friends" program. Help elderly, disabled, and shut-ins with home care. Make beds, wash floors and walls, vacuum, dust, rake, shovel, mow lawns, and paint.

Minnesota Rescue Program

St. Paul, Minnesota

Volunteer—Helped paint, repair, and clean houses for low-income people and flood victims.

Neighborhood Involvement Program

St. Paul, Minnesota

Volunteer—Organized a Block Safety program for 26 households which reduced crime, and a neighborhood carpool for families needing transportation.

Girl Scouts of America

St. Paul, Minnesota

Volunteer—Led 20 teenage girls on a four-day wilderness camping trip.

### **EDUCATION**

Completed GED Ramsey Action Program

St. Paul, Minnesota

### **MEMBERSHIPS**

Parent Teachers Association

Neighborhood Block Safety Program

## Combination Resume Sample

**RED E. JOBHUNTER**  
5555 Lakewood Road  
Somewhere, Minnesota 55555  
(555) 555-5555

### **Medical Laboratory Technician**

Extensive experience as a registered Medical Lab Technician with success in pediatrics and a trauma emergency hospital.

### **SUMMARY OF SKILLS & EXPERIENCE**

**Lab Technician** — Highly skilled lab technologist, with experience serving ER, Urgent Care, Pediatric ER, and Stab-Room Trauma Unit. Processed cultures in microbiology, gram stains, urinalysis and various manual tests.

**Phlebotomy** — Inpatient and outpatient, pre-op and post-op, blood draws. Recognized for exceptional skill in serving hard to draw patients and children.

**Instrument Maintenance** — Skilled in trouble shooting and maintenance of technical equipment. Maintained on line performance and peak output.

**Teaching** — Mastered teaching techniques and possess excellent communication skills. Responsible for training staff on equipment operation and procedures.

**Quality Control** — Maintained high quality standards with an emphasis on accuracy within strict guidelines. Maximized lab performance through organization, equipment testing and procedure development.

### **EMPLOYMENT HISTORY**

**Medical Laboratory Technician, ASCP** May, 198- to September 199-  
HENNEPIN COUNTY MEDICAL CENTER

- ♦ Increased lab efficiency through improved processing procedures, research and development of technical equipment, and lab layout and design.
- ♦ Maintained peak lab performance. Blood samples from Stab-Room Trauma Unit had to be accurately processed in two minutes!
- ♦ Assisted medical staff in the research and development of “Kiss of Life” mask used in respiratory emergency care.

**Phlebotomist** August 198- to March 198-  
MINNEAPOLIS CHILDREN’S MEDICAL CENTER

### **EDUCATION**

**Certified: American Society of Clinical Pathologists**  
**Medical Laboratory Technician (GPA 3.5)** College of St. Catherine 198-  
**Biology / Chemistry (117 credits)** Mankato State University



## Chronological Resume Worksheet

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone (     ) \_\_\_\_\_ Fax (     ) \_\_\_\_\_  
E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

**EMPLOYMENT OBJECTIVE** (Optional) \_\_\_\_\_

**SUMMARY** (Optional—can include on cover letter)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### WORK EXPERIENCE

Company, City, State \_\_\_\_\_  
Job Title \_\_\_\_\_ Dates \_\_\_\_\_  
Responsibilities/Accomplishments/Skills \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Company, City, State \_\_\_\_\_  
Job Title \_\_\_\_\_ Dates \_\_\_\_\_  
Responsibilities/Accomplishments/Skills \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Company, City, State \_\_\_\_\_  
Job Title \_\_\_\_\_ Dates \_\_\_\_\_  
Responsibilities/Accomplishments/Skills \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**EDUCATION** \_\_\_\_\_

**LICENSES AND CERTIFICATIONS** \_\_\_\_\_

**AWARDS** \_\_\_\_\_

**PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS** \_\_\_\_\_

(This is a general format. Actual content and layout will vary. Not all items are required or necessary.)

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Creative Job Search©

## Functional Resume Worksheet

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone (     ) \_\_\_\_\_ Fax (     ) \_\_\_\_\_  
E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

### EMPLOYMENT OBJECTIVE (Optional)

\_\_\_\_\_

### HIGHLIGHTS OF QUALIFICATIONS (Optional)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### WORK EXPERIENCE

Occupational/Functional Category \_\_\_\_\_  
Skills/Accomplishments/Responsibilities  
◆ \_\_\_\_\_  
◆ \_\_\_\_\_  
◆ \_\_\_\_\_

Occupational/Functional Category \_\_\_\_\_  
Skills/Accomplishments/Responsibilities  
◆ \_\_\_\_\_  
◆ \_\_\_\_\_  
◆ \_\_\_\_\_

Occupational/Functional Category \_\_\_\_\_  
Skills/Accomplishments/Responsibilities  
◆ \_\_\_\_\_  
◆ \_\_\_\_\_  
◆ \_\_\_\_\_

### EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

Company _____	Title _____	Dates _____
Company _____	Title _____	Dates _____
Company _____	Title _____	Dates _____

### EDUCATION

### LICENSES AND CERTIFICATIONS

### AWARDS/PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

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## Combination Resume Worksheet

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone (     ) \_\_\_\_\_ Fax (     ) \_\_\_\_\_  
E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Employment Objective: \_\_\_\_\_

### Summary of Skills and/or Experience:

Skill/Experience \_\_\_\_\_  
Description \_\_\_\_\_

Skill/Experience \_\_\_\_\_  
Description \_\_\_\_\_

Skill/Experience \_\_\_\_\_  
Description \_\_\_\_\_

### Accomplishments:

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_

### Employment History:

Name of Company \_\_\_\_\_ Job Title \_\_\_\_\_  
Address/Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Dates of Employment \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Company \_\_\_\_\_ Job Title \_\_\_\_\_  
Address/Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Dates of Employment \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Company \_\_\_\_\_ Job Title \_\_\_\_\_  
Address/Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Dates of Employment \_\_\_\_\_

### Education:

School Name \_\_\_\_\_  
City/State \_\_\_\_\_ Dates of Attendance (if recent) \_\_\_\_\_  
Major(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Degree/Certificate Earned \_\_\_\_\_

Licenses and Certifications: \_\_\_\_\_

Professional Memberships/Organizations: \_\_\_\_\_

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# RESUME STRATEGIES

## How to Use Your Resume Effectively

A good resume is an important job search tool, but like any tool it is only as good as the person using it. Much has been said about selling your employment skills to a prospective employer. What it takes to accomplish this is job search skills. It is not enough to have the employment skills that an employer desires if you do not have the ability to market them.

Now that you have perfected your resume, there are some guidelines for using it effectively. Job search strategies range from the simple and common to the innovative and complex. Following are some of the more common strategies and guidelines. The successful job seeker will master these skills.

### Give your resume to:

- ◆ Minnesota Workforce Centers
- ◆ Employers with advertised job openings
- ◆ Employers with no advertised job openings
- ◆ Private and public employment agencies
- ◆ Vocational and college placement offices
- ◆ Personal and professional networking contacts
- ◆ Your references
- ◆ Executive recruiters
- ◆ Your instructors

## Tips For Using Your Resume

- ◆ Resumes should be sent to a person by name. Avoid sending the resume to a job title such as "Production Manager." It will take extra effort, but do your research and find out the name and title of the appropriate person to whom your resume should be sent.
- ◆ If you are asked to send your resume to personnel or human resources, do so. Then also send a resume to the person in charge of the department in which you want to work. Most of the time personnel does the screening; it is the department manager who is the final hiring authority.
- ◆ When mailing your resume always send it with a cover letter. Never send it by itself.
- ◆ Mass mailing your resume to many employers, hoping that a couple of them will get someone's attention, is not effective. The statistics are that for every 1,000 resumes you send to an employer, you can expect to get two interviews. Additionally, an accepted standard is that for every ten interviews you will receive one job offer.
- ◆ Look for ways to target your resume to the specific needs of the employer. This can be accomplished with a targeted resume or through the cover letter. It requires some research before sending the resume, but it will pay off in an increased number of positive responses.
- ◆ When researching an employer or employment agency, among other important information, find out if they use a resume scanning system. If they do, it will help you prepare your resume for presentation.
- ◆ Send your resume to the employer even if they are not hiring. You never know what the future will bring.



## Tips For Using Your Resume (continued)

- ◆ Always follow-up the sending of your resume with a phone call to the employer. Be courteous, professional, and sell your qualifications. Be sure to ask for an interview.
- ◆ When directly contacting employers, always have a copy of your resume available and take the initiative to offer it to them.
- ◆ When applying for a job with an employment application, you may want to attach your resume. The resume will add impact and should complement the application. If you are asked to fill out an application, never write on it "See resume." Take the time to fill out the application completely.
- ◆ Applying for jobs by resume can be effective in overcoming employment barriers. The resume should paint the best picture of you, while the application may paint the worst.
- ◆ Give a copy of your resume to your references. It provides them with information about you and will help them to talk to an employer about your qualifications.
- ◆ Give a copy of your resume to all networking contacts. It is an excellent ice breaker to use the resume as a center for discussing your qualifications. Ask your contacts to critique your resume.
- ◆ Always bring extra copies of your resume to an interview.
- ◆ Finally, **Follow-up, Follow-up, Follow-up!**
- ◆ It is no use mailing resumes if you do not take the time to follow up on your efforts. If you are not getting responses or interviews from your resume, you may want to reevaluate it. The true test of an effective resume is that you are offered interviews.

## Resume Critique Form

ITEM	Excellent	Average	Poor	*Unknown	Improvements
1. <b>Appearance</b> Does it look good without reading it?					
2. <b>Format</b> Was the best format used to sell your strengths?					
3. <b>Skills</b> Is the resume skill based? List the number of skills _____					
4. <b>Keywords</b> Are keywords and phrases easy to identify?					
5. <b>Focus</b> Does the content point to your employment objective?					
6. <b>Scannability</b> Is it designed to be easily read by a scanning system?					
7. <b>Proofing</b> Is it free from grammar, spelling or typing errors?					
8. <b>Length</b> Is it a reasonable length?					
9. <b>Integrity</b> Is it an honest presentation of your best?					
10. <b>Appropriate</b> Does the content capture an employer's interest?					

\* If you are unsure, then review these topics before finishing your resume.

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## This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

## NOTES

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.



# COVER LETTERS

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# COVER LETTERS

The resume is an impersonal description of your qualifications, much like a product brochure. When presenting the resume to an employer, it needs to be personalized and targeted. The cover letter is your opportunity to personalize your resume and target your skills.

*Any time a resume is sent by mail, it must be accompanied by a cover letter.*

Most letter formats can be used for the cover letter. The only absolute is that it conform to accepted standards for business letters. The reader of a cover letter may be the hiring authority, an agent of the hiring authority, or an interested third party. The hiring authority is the person who has the final say in who is hired for a specific position (ultimately, this is the person you want to read your resume). An agent is usually someone who is working on behalf of the hiring authority, such as: personnel or human resources, an independent agency or a subordinate. Third parties include colleagues and subordinates of the hiring authority who are assisting in the hiring, as well as networking or referral contacts. The way you craft your letter should take the reader into consideration. A cover letter may be sent in response to an advertised job opening, a referral from a networking contact, or direct to an employer.

## COVER LETTER FORMATS

**Invited Letter**—This letter format is used when an employer has solicited the resume for consideration. This is often in response to a want-ad or publicized job listing. This style focuses on matching your qualifications to the advertised requirements of the position.

**Uninvited or Cold-Contact Letter**—Use this format to contact employers who have not advertised or published job openings. The focus is on matching your qualifications to the perceived needs of the employer based on labor market research. This strategy requires that a phone or personal contact with the employer either precede or follow the sending of the resume and cover letter.

**Referral Letter**—Through networking, informational interviews, and contact with employers, the effective job seeker will receive referrals to job opportunities. These referrals may be to a specific job opening (advertised or unadvertised), or to an employer who may or may not be hiring now. In a referral letter, mention the individual who provided the information about the company or job.

## COVER LETTER VARIATION

**Job Match or “T” Letter**—When crafting a cover letter, it is always important to match your qualifications to the job and/or employer. Some sources for information include employment advertisements, position descriptions, phone conversations, and informational interviews. Generally, this is done in the narrative of the letter. The “T” letter format uses bulleted comparisons that target the specific requirements and your corresponding qualifications.



## Cover Letter Points to Consider

- ◆ State the date and your name and address at the top left-hand corner of the letter.
- ◆ Below your name and address, write the name and address of the person to whom you are writing. Always address the letter to a specific person by name and title. Even if responding to a job that states “no phone calls,” consider calling to politely ask the name of the hiring authority. You may not always be able to identify the name of a specific person. In this case, send the letter to the title of the recipient (Production Manager, Maintenance Supervisor, Office Manager, Human Resources, or Search Committee). Do not use “To Whom It May Concern.”
- ◆ State your interest in the job for which you are applying.
- ◆ Mention your skills, education, special training and work experience that qualify you for the job.
- ◆ Provide a phone number and a time you will be available so the employer can reach you.
- ◆ Thank the person for taking the time to read your letter.
- ◆ Use the appropriate closing, such as “Sincerely.”
- ◆ Ask someone to proofread your letter to check content, grammar, and spelling.
- ◆ State a time when you will call the employer to follow-up.
- ◆ Sign the letter in blue ink. It implies the letter is original and may get more attention. The only other ink color to use is black. Never use any other color on the cover letter.
- ◆ Structure the letter to reflect your individuality, but avoid appearing too familiar, overbearing, humorous, or cute. Keep sentences short and to the point.
- ◆ Keep it brief, usually no more than one page with three to five paragraphs.
- ◆ Use the same paper stock for both your cover letter and resume.



## Job Match or "T" Letter Sample

February 24, 199-

Ms. Jane Smith  
Work Incorporated  
555 Pine Street  
St. Paul, MN 55555

Dear Ms. Smith:

I am very interested in the position of Administrative Assistant listed in the *Daily Tribune* on February 24, 199-. The skills and qualifications you mention match my experience in this career field.

### Your Needs

- ◆ Detail-oriented, experienced Administrative Assistant
- ◆ Assist Customer Relations Manager
- ◆ Corporate experience with major clients a must
- ◆ PC knowledge a plus

### My Qualifications

- ◆ Four years Administrative Assistant experience with responsibility for numerous detailed reports
- ◆ Assisted Customer Relations Manager for two years
- ◆ Regularly served purchasing agents at Fortune 500 companies
- ◆ Hands-on experience with Lotus 1-2-3 and WordPerfect on IBM-PC

Enclosed is my resume for your review and consideration. As you can see, I am an excellent candidate for this position. I am looking forward to meeting with you to discuss this opportunity. You can expect to hear from me on \_\_\_\_\_ to arrange a meeting.

Sincerely,

Job Seeker  
Address  
Phone number  
Enclosure



## Cover Letter Samples

Date (Start the date on line 13, or 2 inches from the top of the page)

Individual's Name  
Title  
Name of Organization  
Street Address  
City, State Zip Code

Dear Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_:

**First Paragraph:** State the reason for writing. Name the specific position or type of work for which you are applying. Mention how you learned of the opening.

**Second Paragraph:** Explain why you are interested in working for this employer and specify how you are PERFECT for this position. Do not only repeat the information on your resume. Include something special or unique about yourself that would "benefit" the employer. Remember, the reader will consider this an example of your writing skills.

**Third Paragraph:** Mention your resume is enclosed and indicate your desire to meet with the employer. You may want to suggest alternate dates and times, or simply advise them of your flexibility to the time and place. Include day and evening contact information. Include a statement or question that will encourage the reader to respond. Be sure to communicate your plan to follow-up. You might state that you will be in the area on a certain date and would like to set up a meeting, or you will call on a certain date to set up a meeting. Never leave it up to the employer to get in touch with you. Finally, thank the employer for their time.

Sincerely,

Your Signature in blue or black ink

Your typed name  
Street Address  
City, State Zip Code  
Phone Number with Area Code  
Enclosure

## Cold-Contact Cover Letter Sample

May 20, 199-

Ms. Francisca Favor  
Department Manager  
EFTG Industries, Inc.  
210 Industry Avenue  
Anytown, MN 55555

Dear Ms. Favor:

Perhaps you are seeking an addition to your marketing team. A new person can provide innovative approaches to the challenges of marketing. I am an innovator of new ideas, an excellent communicator with buyers, and have a demonstrated history of marketing success.

Presently, I am marketing computer products for a major supplier using television, radio, and news advertising. I have a reputation for putting forth the effort required to make a project succeed.

Enclosed is my resume for your review and consideration. EFTG Industries has a reputation for excellence. I would like to use my talents to market your quality line of technical products. I will call you on May 28, 199- to further discuss my talents and how I can benefit your company. If you prefer, you may reach me in the evenings at (555) 555-5555.

Thank you, and I look forward to meeting you.

Sincerely,

Karen Kareer  
55 Main Street  
Anytown, MN 55555  
(555) 555-5555  
Enclosure



## Invited Cover Letter Sample

June 26, 199-

Mr. Phillip Morework  
Production Manager  
XYZ Corporation  
21 Industry Lane  
Anytown, MN 55555

Dear Mr. Morework:

With a high-tech background in Fortune 100 companies, I am well qualified to represent your company as a production assistant. I am accustomed to a fast-paced environment where deadlines are a priority, and handling multiple jobs simultaneously is the norm.

I have been responsible for up to 35 personnel, often making decisions quickly and effectively. Constant negotiations with all levels of management and employees have strengthened my interpersonal skills. I am looking forward to discussing my qualifications with you.

Enclosed is my resume for your review and consideration. Please consider my qualifications for the advertised position of Production Assistant. I will call you in a week to talk further and discuss opportunities. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Johnny Network  
113 TV Street  
Anytown, MN 55555  
(555) 555-5555  
Enclosure

## Invited Cover Letter Sample—No paid work experience

January 6, 199-

Ms. Marilyn Payer  
Housekeeping Manager  
Rodetown Inn  
123 Indiana Drive  
Anytown, MN 55555

Dear Ms. Payer:

Your ad for a housekeeper in the *Jobs Now* newspaper on Sunday, January 4, 199- caught my eye. Since I have several years of housekeeping and home maintenance experience, I have the necessary skills for the position. Therefore, I am submitting my resume for this position.

I would like to work for Rodetown Inn because they are a quality employer, and my skills perfectly match the requirements. Having been a homeowner for over five years, I do all of my own maintenance and repair. I also have four years of experience as a home care volunteer for the Salvation Army's "Be Friends" program. This includes helping disabled, elderly persons with household chores such as: bed making, cleaning, vacuuming, dusting, laundry, washing walls, windows, mopping, mowing, raking, and shoveling. I am known to be extremely reliable, efficient, organized, and a good team worker.

Enclosed is my resume for your review and consideration. I would like to meet with you for an interview. I will contact you next week to see if a convenient time can be arranged. I can also be reached at (555) 555-5555. Thank you for your time. I look forward to talking with you soon.

Sincerely,

Wanda Job  
555 Mount Avenue  
Somewhere, Minnesota 55555  
(555) 555-5555  
Enclosure



## Referral Cover Letter Sample

July 31, 199-

Ms. Rhonda Leland  
Corporate Manager  
Do-It Corporation  
42 Industry Circle  
Somewhere, MN 55555

Dear Ms. Leland:

I am a qualified Administrative Assistant with four year's experience serving executive management for a large manufacturing company. My qualifications include extensive PC knowledge, customer service skills, itinerary planning, and report writing.

I was recently discussing these qualifications with Mary Smith, Vice President of Marketing. Mary believes that I am uniquely qualified for a position in your office. Although my resume is actively on file with Human Resources, Mary suggested that I contact you directly for consideration.

Enclosed is my resume for your review and consideration. I will be in the area on August 20, 199- and would like to meet with you to discuss my qualifications in greater detail. You can expect to hear from me next week to arrange a time.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Susan Jones  
6558 Brady Avenue  
Anytown, MN 55555  
(555) 555-5555  
Enclosure

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# THANK-YOU LETTERS AND NOTES

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# THANK-YOU LETTERS AND NOTES

Saying “thank you” in your job search is not only the right thing to do, but is also an effective job search strategy. Every “thank you” is an opportunity to sell your qualifications and leave a positive impression on the reader. In your job search you should express your gratitude. Don’t wait for opportunities—create them. Send a thank-you letter or note to employers, employment contacts and references whenever they have extended themselves. This includes after a job or informational interview, when someone gives you a referral or information, or whenever someone takes time out of their schedule to help you. Every person who assists you in your job search effort deserves an expression or note of thanks. Ask your references to keep you informed of contacts. Keep references informed about those companies/positions you are really interested in.

“Thank you” may be said in person, by phone, in a formal letter or informal note. The best approach will depend upon the circumstances, personal style and preference. The best strategy is to select the approach that best serves the immediate need.

Thank-you letters and notes should be standard tools in your job search. The thank-you letter should follow a standard business letter format, while the note may be a simple, handwritten note or card. The situation and your personal style will determine which you send.

At the minimum, a written thank-you letter or note should be sent after all interviews. This is your opportunity to make one more impression before the decision is made. Send a written thank-you letter even if you are turned down for a job. Let the employer know that you appreciate them considering you, and you would be interested in future opportunities.

***Thank-you is a powerful  
statement.***

***Unfortunately, it is seldom  
heard.***

## Points to Consider

- ◆ Write a thank-you letter or note no later than 24 hours after the interview, even if things didn't go well.
- ◆ Be brief and to the point. Note the job you interviewed for, and also list the date of your interview.
- ◆ Always send a written thank-you letter to a person by name and title. Include your personal calling card if you have one.
- ◆ When thanking a potential employer, restate your interest in the position and the company.
- ◆ The thank-you letter is an opportunity to again sell your qualifications. Briefly include any pertinent information you failed to mention earlier. Be sure to re-emphasize your most important qualifications and skills for the job. Note anything that was mentioned in the interview that you can enhance or you feel may not have been discussed fully.
- ◆ If there are multiple people, such as a panel interview, send a separate thank you to each person, or send a single thank you to a key person for distribution. When sending more than one thank-you letter, it is very effective to vary each letter.
- ◆ Offer to come in for another interview or to provide more information if needed.
- ◆ Always plan your follow-up. Make it a point to tell the person when and how you will be following through.
- ◆ Learn to say "thank you" when you are with the individual. Do not let that be all you do; follow-up with a thank-you letter, note or phone call. You may want to make the effort to meet with the person again for the primary purpose of saying "thank you."
- ◆ Of course, you should always say "thank you" whenever you are on the phone and someone helps you. There may be occasions when you would call someone specifically to thank them.



## Sample Thank-You Letter

September 20, 199- (Start the date on line 13, or 2 inches from the top of the page)

Mr. James Business  
Human Resource Manager  
ABC Company  
111 Employment Way  
Anytown, MN 55555

Dear Mr. Business:

Thank you for the opportunity this morning to discuss the secretarial position. Our conversation gave me a better understanding of ABC Company, and the requirements of the job. The additional information from Max and Katherine was helpful in gaining a better perspective of the position.

My strong office and interpersonal skills will definitely make a contribution to your company. I am proficient in all the computer software packages you use, and I feel I possess the customer service experience you want.

I enjoyed meeting the office staff and touring the facility. This is clearly a quality organization with an emphasis on efficiency and a dedication to teamwork. I would consider it a privilege to join your team. I will contact you next week to inquire about the hiring decision.

Again, thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Amy Applicant  
2233 First Street  
Anytown, MN 55555  
(555) 555-5555

### Basic Parts of a Thank-You Note

1. Statement of appreciation
2. Expressions of interest in the job
3. Brief restatement of qualifications/skills
4. An opportunity to add additional information you failed to mention
5. Final “thank you”
6. Date and time you will follow-up as previously agreed

Thank You

*Thank You*

Thank You

*Thank You*

*Say it often . . . Say it with style!*



## Sample Thank-You Notes

*February 29, 199-*

*Dear Ms. Smith:*

*Thank you for taking the time to discuss the accounting position with me. It was a pleasure meeting you and Mr. Jones. Lord's Industries sounds like the perfect place for me to use my skills, especially since you use the WXY system; the same system I have been supporting the past three years. My proven track record and accomplishments with cost-effective systems can be an asset to your company.*

*Again, thank you for your consideration. I will contact you by Tuesday of next week to learn of your decision. I look forward to the possibility of joining your staff.*

*Sincerely,*

*February 29, 199-*

*Dear Mr. Jones:*

*Thank you for the interview for the accountant position today. I appreciate the information you shared with me, and enjoyed meeting Ms. Smith from the Accounting Department.*

*My interest in working for Lord's Industries is stronger than ever, and based on your description of the position, I know I can do a good job for you.*

*I will contact you by Tuesday of next week to learn of your decision.*

*Sincerely,*

**Thank-you notes, whether handwritten or printed, must be clear, concise and legible.**

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[www.des.state.mn.us](http://www.des.state.mn.us)

