



Resume Basics

Career Services
Admin. Bldg. 130
660-562-1250
career@nwmissouri.edu

The purpose of a resume is to grab the employers' interest so that they will ask you for an interview. Like it or not, most resumes will only get a quick 30-second scan by a potential employer before they are sorted into "yes" or "maybe" stacks for later consideration. During that first quick scan, employers will look for reasons to quickly screen out candidates. Applicants who best communicate how their experience, education, and skills are related to the available position are more likely to get an interview. Resumes with errors, typos, and unclear or ineffective descriptions will subject their owners to the "no thanks" category.

To prepare an effective resume, job seekers must thoroughly analyze their background and experiences, and communicate information in an articulate and concise manner. Begin by listing information related to your education, work and internship experiences, campus activities, volunteerism, leadership experience, and special interests. List your duties, accomplishments or tasks for each experience and consider the following questions to begin shaping the written detail:

- What did you learn at that job that you could do for the next employer?
- What did you accomplish?
- Can you quantify the results of your work? (i.e. number of customers served, percentage increase in sales, etc.)
- Did you utilize or develop any technical skills?
- Did you make specific decisions or recommendations?
- Did you operate any equipment?
- Did you communicate with customers, co-workers, etc.? If so, how -- in writing, telephone, by e-mail and so on?
- Were you part of a team to complete certain tasks?
- Did you supervise or train other workers?

Three Basic Types of Resumes

For most new college graduates, a chronological resume style is recommended. This is the easiest resume to develop and is organized in reverse chronological order with the most recent experience first.

Another type of resume is the functional resume centered on a listing of skills related to desired experience. This type of resume is usually used by

non-traditional candidates and can be unpopular with employers because employment dates are inconspicuous or omitted.

The combination resume allows use of the reverse chronological structure of the chronological resume with detailed functional descriptions and is widely used in today's job market.

Resume Heading Information

Personal Data: Your name should be the largest text on the page. Be sure to include accurate contact information including address, phone number and e-mail address. You may include both a current college address and permanent address with respective phone numbers.

Objective: This statement should be as specific as possible and customized to each employer that you contact. If you are looking for summer employment or an internship, include that information in your statement.

Examples:

Objective: An accounting internship with XYZ Company for Summer 20XX

Objective: Software Engineer position with ComCo, Incorporated

Objective: Elementary Education Teaching Position

Education: Begin with the most recent degree including your major, followed by the name of the institution and its city and state. The month and year of graduation should also be listed. If your major or overall GPA is 3.0 or above (on a 4.0 scale), you may wish to include this information. GPA information is usually only shown for the first job search after college and is generally dropped from the resume after that.

You may wish to include relevant coursework, senior research projects, independent studies, study abroad, publications or honors in the education section. Additionally you may include some reference to your contribution to college expenses through part time or summer employment and scholarships.

Employment/Work Experience/Experience:

Listing your most recent experience first, you may include both paid and non-paid significant experiences. Include the job title, employer, location and dates of employment followed by a powerful description of your accomplishments and responsibilities. Keep your format consistent with

each individual experience throughout the section. Use strong effective action verbs to describe your skills and accomplishments (see the Action Verbs list in this guide) and numbers or percentages when possible, for things such as size of budget, number of people supervised, etc.

Internships

Internship experience can be a powerful addition to your resume. It may appear in the Experience section, the Education section, or in a separate "Internship Experience" section. Just as with other work experience, descriptions should use effective action verbs and focus on your skills and accomplishments. Internship experience related to one's current career objective should be shown near the top of the page.

Computer Skills and other Special Skills

We recommend that all current students and recent Northwest grads indicate their experience with computers on their resume. Typically, this may be just a listing of the various software programs to which you are accustomed. Don't forget special programs related to your major, and e-mail and Internet browsers. Candidates from some areas such as computer science and journalism will generally develop this section further detailing their knowledge of software, hardware, operating systems, computer languages, and related peripherals.

If you have other special knowledge such as American Sign Language, Spanish, French, or other language skills, be sure to include that information on your resume. Some candidates may have a special section for "Certifications" that might include such things as CPR, Teaching Licenses, Computer Software Certificates, Certified Nurses Aide, and many others.

Co-Curricular Activities

A listing of your activities during your college years shows an employer that you are a well-rounded person who is active in the community. If you held an elected or appointed position you should include the title, description of responsibilities, accomplishments and dates. If the activity or experience is significant and relevant to your career goals, you may wish to list it under "Experience" or "Related Experience".

What about "References"?

References should be listed on a separate page from your resume. Include your name and contact information at the top of the page to duplicate the heading on your resume. Three to five references are generally sufficient. An example "Reference" page is included in this packet.

Additional Sample Resume Headings

Resume Headings should be customized to best convey the information about you, your background, and goals. The following list will provide additional options that may meet your needs.

Career Objective (optional):

Objective	Professional Objective
Career Objective	Job Objective

Education:

Education	Areas of Knowledge
Competency Areas	Educational Background
Relevant Coursework	Competencies and Skills
Formal Training	Professional Preparation
Technical Knowledge	Laboratory Skills
Research Experience	Special Skills

Work and Internship Experience:

Work History	Related Work Experience
Experience	Employment Contributions
Teaching Experience	Employment Experience
Practicum/Internships	Volunteer Experience

Achievements or Accomplishments:

Accomplishments	Selected Accomplishments
Academic Awards	Professional Contributions
Honors	Honors and Awards
Honors and Activities	Achievements Highlights

Participation in Campus Activities:

Activities	College Activities
Campus Involvement	Campus Activities
Leadership	Memberships
Athletics	Extra-Curricular Activities
University and Community Activities	

Other Section Headings Might Include:

Military Training	Military Experience
Volunteer Work Experience	Computer Skills
Professional Memberships	Affiliations
Foreign Languages	Foreign Travel
Interests and Hobbies	

Layout and Printing

As you prepare the final draft of your resume, keep in mind that most new college graduate resumes do not extend beyond one page. Considerable full-time work experience or advanced degrees may warrant an additional page. If you are unsure about what and what not to include on your resume, see Career Services staff for advice.

Boldface type, underlining, and capitals can bring attention to important headings and information on your resume. However, be sure these features enhance your resume information without overwhelming the reader's eyes. Mixing too many typestyles, lines, and bullets can result in a cluttered appearance.

Choose a high-quality paper for your resume. White, off-white, or light gray are appropriate in all cases. Additional colors and small tasteful graphic designs may be acceptable in such creative fields as advertising, art, and public relations. Use the same paper and heading for cover letters and matching envelopes for a totally professional package.

Resume Cautions

This section has been designed to help you avoid the most common resume errors.

Placement gives authority to your education. The most recent degree is listed, followed by previously earned degrees (Associate of Arts). List the full name of the degree before the institution name. The location of the school (city and state) should follow the name.

Bachelor of
Northwest Missouri State University

If a candidate is pursuing **multiple majors**, we recommend one of the following:

Examples:
Bachelor of Science, Double Major: Marketing and Management
Northwest Missouri State University, Maryville, MO
Or

Bachelor of Science, Triple Major in Corporate Finance, Public Accounting and Private Accounting
Northwest Missouri State University, Maryville, MO

Vertically aligned bullets give equal weight/value to all items. In the example below, the degree name and institution name are more *important than the other items*.

Bachelor of Science in
Northwest Missouri State University
 Major GPA
 Relevant Coursework

Choose and use one format consistently for representation of states, dates and other repeated information. When there are changes in these items throughout a resume, it may appear as an error.

- MO, Mo., Missouri
- 08/07 – 09/09
- August 2007 – September 2009

Graphics, shadowed boxes and lines can add uniqueness and individuality to your resume, but they should never look more predominant than the text. Give consideration to how well these items will photocopy within the potential employers company and how well they will communicate electronically to the reader's computer and software.

Right alignment will give a nice finished look to the right margin of the resume as opposed to the often seen ragged edge. Dates can be placed so that they end at the right margin.

Present Tense and Past Tense Verbs – This is probably one of the most common errors in resume writing. When describing jobs, internships, or other activities that you are involved in at the present time, use present tense verbs (coordinate, install, assist). As you describe experiences from your past, use past tense verbs (coordinated, installed, assisted).

Powerful descriptions of experience are crucial!!!!!! The heart of any resume is the text that describes background, abilities, skills, and experiences. Use complex phrases to relate the *quality* and *quantity* of experience in a meaningful way. Take a look at the following list of **action verbs** that can add impact to your message and insert key words that are associated with your profession or job function. **Key words** are generally nouns, acronyms, or short phrases that are the “buzz” words for an industry or job. They communicate a message with just a few words. Consult a thesaurus or dictionary; some of the resume books in Career Services’ resource room, and the list below for additional “power” words.

Key Words

Customer loyalty... Project management...
Webcasting... Crisis communications... Cost reduction... Client communications... Community outreach... Leadership training... Media relations...
Special events management... Public relations...
Consumer credit... Customer satisfaction... Order processing... Cash management... Accounts payable... Organizational development... Total quality management... Long-term care... Quality of care... Wellness programs... Banquet operations...
Guest satisfaction... Menu planning, ADA – Americans with Disabilities Act... College recruitment employee relations... Safety training...
Behavior management... Behavior modification...
Case work... Client advocacy... Human services...
Outpatient services... Program development...
Client/server architecture... Database administration... Database design... End user support... Firewall... Help desk... Technology needs assessment... Global expansion...
Automated manufacturing... Continuous improvement... Cross-functional teams... Inventory control... Just-in-Time... Physical inventory...
Shipping and receiving operation... Broadcast media... Creative services... Event management...
Procurement... Purchasing... Warehousing...
Grounds maintenance... Preventive maintenance...
In-store promotions... Retail sales... Direct sales...
Sales presentation... Classroom management...
Curriculum development... Course design...
Residential life... Student services...

Action Verbs

Analyzed:
Assessed... Clarified... Compared... Critiqued...
Determined... Evaluated... Examined...
Identified... Interviewed... Investigated...
Maintained... Monitored... Observed...
Reviewed...

Assisted:
Advised... Collaborated... Contributed...
Consulted... Cooperated... Facilitated...
Participated...

Created/Developed:
Acted... Adapted... Authored... Built... Clarified...
Composed... Conceived... Corrected...
Designed... Devised... Established... Expanded...
Formulated... Generated... Improved... Initiated...
Integrated... Introduced... Modified... Originated...
Performed... Planned... Prioritized... Promoted...
Proposed... Reduced...

Improved/Increased:
Achieved... Acquired... Advanced... Assured...
Bolstered... Encouraged... Expanded...
Motivated... Overcame... Provided...
Strengthened... Upgraded...

Counseling/Instructed/Learned:
Advised... Advocated... Aided... Applied...
Assessed... Charged... Coached...
Communicated... Consulted... Coordinated...
Demonstrated... Educated... Enabled...
Encouraged... Established... Explained...
Fostered... Guided...
Organized:
Arranged... Assembled... Budgeted... Built...
Clarified... Compiled... Coordinated...
Developed... Located... Maintained... Obtained...
Planned... Prepared... Prioritized...
Reorganized... Reviewed... Scheduled... Updated

Supervised/Managed:
Administered... Allocated... Assigned...
Authorized... Coached... Consulted... Controlled...
Coordinated... Delegated... Directed...
Distributed... Enforced... Evaluated... Expedited...
Facilitated... Implemented... Led... Managed...
Monitored... Motivated...

The Electronic Resume

For many of today's jobs, at least some part of the job search will be completed through the Internet. As a result, it is important to prepare several versions of your resume.

The **Print Version** of your resume is typically handed to someone at a career event or mailed through the postal service. Job search experts recommend that you replicate this well-written, well-prepared resume into *three* other versions or formats and critique it for **keywords**. Employers use electronic databases to categorize and sort resumes according to these keywords.

A **Plain Text Version** can be posted online in resume databases or copied and pasted into an online form on an employer's website. This version should be an ASCII copy of the original.

An **E-mail version**, also an ASCII copy or plain text type, is specifically formatted for the length of line restrictions of today's e-mail.

Why bother with these – why not just type information into the boxes on their website or send a Word attachment? Consider this advice:

1. Most online database or proprietary systems do not let you spell-check. Preparing your resume in advance using your own word processing program lets you double check all spelling and revise your resume as needed.
2. These online systems force you to use their format, which could be to your disadvantage.
3. Some don't allow you to save your work and use the same text over again which means that you have to repeat the entire process for every company that you investigate during your job search.

Preparing these other types of resumes at the beginning of your job search will save you a great deal of time later.

What about PDF resumes?

PDF resumes are actually a digital image or photograph of your resume. It can be posted on the Web, e-mailed, viewed, or searched. The viewing software is free and widely distributed. It does require the reader to take an additional step to open and view the resume.

For more details and step-by-step procedures on electronic resumes, refer to the following websites:

How to Post Your Resume Online:
<http://susanireland.com/resume/online/>

What EMPLOYERS Want

What do employers want in their new employees?

The job description will provide you with a list of required qualifications – a particular major or group of majors, a specific skill set, a minimum GPA, and so forth – but employers have a substantial list of abilities, qualities, and “soft” skills that they also seek in their new hires.

The “perfect candidate” has the required knowledge and ability to perform the duties of the job, but has other qualities that will help him or her excel in the workplace.



Source: Job Outlook 2010,
National Association of Colleges and Employers

Job Choices: Diversity Edition 2011

Learn by Example

Take a look at the examples provided by Northwest Career Services to get more ideas for the organization and format of your resume.

Once you have typed a rough draft, the Career Services staff is available to provide feedback and further assistance through our free resume critique service.

Highlighting Education on your Resume

Explanation: Begin with the most recent degree including your major, followed by the full name of the institution and its city and state. The month and year of graduation should also be listed.

- You may use an acronym for your institution in parentheses after the first display of the name. With this addition, you may substitute the acronym instead of the full title later in the resume. This is particularly helpful in displaying campus jobs, graduate assistantships, and some co-curricular activities.
- If your major or overall GPA is 3.0 or above (on a 4.0 scale), you may wish to include this information. GPA information is usually only shown for the first job search after college and is generally dropped from the resume after that.
- You may wish to include relevant coursework, senior research projects, independent studies, study abroad, publications or honors in the education section. Additionally you may include some reference to your contribution to college expenses through part time or summer employment and scholarships.

1. Double Majors

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science Double Major: Marketing and Business Management December 2009
Northwest Missouri State University (Northwest), Maryville, MO

- ◆ Cumulative GPA 3.8/4.0
- ◆ Education self-funded through scholarships and part-time employment

2. Master and Bachelor degrees from different institutions

Education

Master in Science in Education Teaching: Middle School May 20XX
Northwest Missouri State University, Maryville, MO GPA 3.3/4.0

Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education May 20XX
Missouri Southern College, Joplin, MO

3. Master and Bachelor degrees from same institution

EDUCATION

Northwest Missouri State University (Northwest), Maryville, Missouri

Master in Business Administration (GPA: 4.0/4.0) December 20XX

Bachelor of Science in Industrial Psychology (Major GPA: 3.18/4.0) May 20XX
Minor in Business Management

4. Two Bachelor degrees from same institution

Education

Bachelor of Science in Interactive Digital Media: Visual Imaging Concentration July 20XX
Bachelor of Science in Computer Science Maryville, MO
Northwest Missouri State University (Northwest)

- *Interactive Digital Media is an interdisciplinary program with an integrated curriculum from the departments of Computer Science, Mass Communication, and Art.*

(Note: The program description is helpful to employers that may not be familiar with the program.)

5. Transfer students with Associates degree

Education

Bachelor of Science in Political Science July 20XX
Northwest Missouri State University, Maryville, MO

Associate in General Studies May 20XX
North Central Missouri College, Trenton, MO