

Preparing to Write Your Resume

A Worksheet to Maximize the Gain



This worksheet is intended for a broad audience. Pieces and parts of it may not be relevant to you depending on your profession and career objective. Please use this as a guide and don't worry if you are unable to complete it in full. It's not a test and there are no right answers or wrong answers.



Getting Started

Preparing to write a resume is always challenging, especially if you've never had to write one before or if you haven't written one in a long time. A lot has changed over the years. The purpose of a strong resume is to get the interview and lay the foundation for the actual meeting that follows. The best resumes are always the result of thorough advance preparation.

Prior to our first meeting, you will need to collect information in order to develop the content of your resume. Following this step-by-step approach will greatly expedite the process, save money and ensure the best quality finished product. The better prepared you are, the better prepared we are.

1. Gather your materials.

Come prepared and have the following materials with you for our first meeting. Please note: Any materials you can send ahead in Microsoft® Word will save time and enable us to study-up in advance of your arrival.

- ◆ A copy of your most recent **old resume**, if you have one, in hard copy and digital formats.
- ◆ A copy of your **current job description** and your **prior job description**, if available.
- ◆ Your last two **performance reviews**, if you have them.
- ◆ Any **self-assessment** or **skills-assesment materials** you may have.
- ◆ Your **LinkedIn username and password**, if you already have an account.

2. Determine your career objective.

Knowing what you want your next career move to be can be challenging. Having at least a basic idea of the **types of jobs** (i.e., sales support, accounting management, mechanical engineering, marketing communications, etc.) you're seeking is an important step in positioning you strategically on paper.

Answer this question:

The job I am seeking falls into one or more of the following lines of business or disciplines:

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

3. Determine where you'd like to work.

In writing your resume, it's important to know in what sector, market or industry you would like to work (i.e., business, academia, not-for-profit, health care, manufacturing, pharmaceutical, government, etc.).

NOTE: It is perfectly acceptable to make a career change outside the bounds of the position you presently hold or held. People do it all the time!

Answer this question:

The job I would most like to secure would be found in this sector, market or industry.

4. Do a little research.

It is important to understand the types of jobs that you are looking for and where you believe your skill set falls. Visit one or more of the following websites and search for at least **three job postings** that you believe best suit you and your skills. These need not be positions for which you plan to apply; just examples of jobs that match your skill set, interests or career aspirations. Please print these postings and bring them with you to our first meeting.

- ◆ monster.com
- ◆ theladders.com
- ◆ indeed.com
- ◆ glassdoor.com
- ◆ linkedin.com

5. Document your job history.

Be sure to come prepared with your employment history for the last fifteen years. Include the following:

- ◆ Names of all **former employers**.
- ◆ **Titles and dates** of all positions held.
- ◆ How you got each job (i.e., promoted to position, recruited for position, etc.).
- ◆ Why you left the job (i.e., left to accept promotional opportunity, relocated closer to family, accepted opportunity abroad, returned to school, etc.).

6. Identify your core qualifications.

Think of these as your “big picture skills” or those particular skills sets, competencies or unique abilities that you bring to the job market that would be valuable regardless of where you work. On your resume, these qualities will likely be captured under a heading called “Knowledge Base,” “Summary of Qualifications” and/or “Professional Profile.”

An example:

Your list of core qualifications might look something like this if you were an accounting professional:

- ◆ **Quantitative analysis:** Microsoft Excel (macros, VBA, pivot tables, filtering and look-up formulas); Microsoft Access (developing financial databases); SQL
- ◆ **Financial planning:** Revenue and expense forecasting; Budget preparation and management; Cash flow planning
- ◆ **Financial reporting:** Qualitative analysis; Trends analysis, anomalies and variances
- ◆ **Financial modeling:** Cost/benefit analysis; Pricing analysis and support

Answer this question:

The six strongest core skills I bring to the job market are:

Remember these are not personal qualities. Rather these are practical business skills that may be key words used in an online search. A good example would be “financial planning and analysis.” A bad example would be “strong interpersonal skills.” No employer is searching on those words.

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

D. _____

E. _____

F. _____

REMEMBER: The best core skills are the ones an organization is likely to be willing to pay money to acquire. So, lead with your best foot forward!

7. Note your professional accomplishments.

Including the everyday tasks and duties associated with your job is nowhere near as important as focusing on the accomplishments you’ve had in your jobs. Therefore, it is essential that you spend some time developing a list of your **best achievements** in your jobs. It’s not as hard as you might think. Be sure to bring your list to our one-on-one meeting.

Try this exercise:

Follow this simple three-step approach to developing your list of accomplishments. Please be prepared with 3-6 examples for each position you’ve held in the last ten to fifteen years. Don’t worry if you are having trouble. Just having rough ideas down on paper is a good start!

◆ **Activity:** Think of an initiative, project or program where **you** achieved really great results (i.e., “Managed the XYZ product launch”).

◆ **Outcome:** Think of the results from that effort (i.e., “Delivery of the product to market on plan, on budget and on time”).

◆ **Measure:** Think about how those results were measured or what the quantitative or qualitative benefits were (i.e., “Saving the company \$100,000 in costs”).

A few examples:

Try writing a couple of AOM statements yourself. Begin with an “action” verb that describes what you did:

◆ **Secured** a \$30,000 concession from a vendor enabling the company to expedite production and reduce time to market by 10%.

◆ **Managed** a \$5 million program manufacturing widgets for a pharmaceutical giant, taking the project from inception and manufacturing, through production, cost reduction and quality improvement, reducing costs annually by 3%.

◆ **Developed** and **executed** a key division strategy directing the implementation of an enterprise-wide “intelligent front office” solution—a highly successful launch that reduced man hours and saved thousands in consulting fees.

◆ **Coordinated** the integration of the company’s computer system with global headquarters, thereby enabling the office to have direct access to critical customer information and reducing downtime measurably.

◆ **Established** procedures to gain control of the company’s inventory of manufactured products—a major undertaking that maximized cash flow, controlled expenses and saved hundreds of thousands of dollars in interest charges.

Most professional accomplishments fall into one of two categories: “**Critical Contributions**” or “**Career Highpoints**” depending on the magnitude of the achievement. Working together, we will figure out into which bucket your accomplishments fall.

8. Your education and training.

Come prepared with your entire educational history, from college and graduate degrees to professional development and training. Include the following:

◆ Exact name of **all undergraduate and graduate degrees** earned.

◆ Any **professional certifications**, including the certifying organization and dates of certification.

◆ The names and dates of any **professional development** undertaken.

9. Your professional activities and affiliations.

Be sure to list all professional memberships, affiliations or other outside activities that relate to business or the community. Include any positions held (i.e., treasurer, team leader, etc.). Skip outside activities that are recreational in nature (i.e. your bowling league, bake sales, etc.).

NOTE: It is best to leave out political or religious activities or affiliations. Also, your list should only reference those activities or affiliations that are relatively current. In other words, no one wants to hear about ancient history and your involvements from twenty years ago.

A few examples:

◆ Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), *treasurer*.

◆ International Association of Widget Inventors, *founder and former president*.

◆ Boy Scouts of America, *Assistant Scout Master*.

◆ Fairport Rotary, *membership committee member*.

◆ Rochester Women’s Network, *member*.