

Prepare a Winning Resume

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“ I do an initial read through of all resumes to make sure they are clear and concise. If a resume is poorly written or has obvious typos, I will not read it a second time. A sloppy resume is not considered because it shows lack of effort and attention to detail. The second time I read a well-written resume, I look for specific skills and related experience that is pertinent to the position I am hiring for.”

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In this chapter you will:

- ◆ Identify the elements of a winning resume.
- ◆ Identify critical differences among traditional, scannable, and electronic resumes.
- ◆ Write a clear, appropriate job objective.
- ◆ Outline the content for your paper resume.
- ◆ Prepare and evaluate your paper resume draft; make corrections; and produce a final resume.
- ◆ List appropriate keywords to use in a cyber-resume.



Create a cyber-resume.
Use WebGuide or the Internet to access and research a resume-posting Web site.

Most employers select candidates to interview largely on the basis of their resumes. The selection is based on a quick visual screening or a quick computerized search of resumes submitted by applicants. Employers look for a match between their needs and applicants' qualifications. Because this initial resume screening takes only a few seconds, you must learn how to write resumes that will be chosen by both types of screening processes (visual or computerized). This chapter explains how to do that.

WHAT IS A RESUME?

A resume is a short document detailing your qualifications for a particular job or job target.

The traditional resume has been an attractively and sometimes elaborately formatted hard copy document. Because a growing number of employers are electronically scanning resumes into resume-tracking and search software, the trend is moving toward a simple but attractively formatted document. Heavily formatted resumes do not scan well.

Scannable Paper Resume

A scannable paper resume is a dual-purpose, hard copy resume designed to be visually appealing; to be delivered by regular mail, by hand, or by fax; and to be scannable by computer software.

Most paper resumes must now be specially formatted so they can be scanned correctly into computers and processed by resume-tracking programs. A scannable resume contains less complex formatting than was used previously in traditional resumes.



Figure • 9-1: Your resume may be circulated to managers within a company by e-mail or fax.

Cyber-Resume

A cyber-resume (also called an electronic resume) is designed to be delivered via e-mail or via an Internet resume service. We use the term *cyber-resume* in referring to an electronic resume. This resume must be completely stripped of word processing codes and is, therefore, a plain-looking document. Cyber-resumes must be specially formatted (explained later in this chapter) so they can be transmitted electronically to employers, be easily read on screen through an e-mail program, and be transmitted directly to a resume-tracking program for processing.

Find out from employers what term they use for cyber-resumes (e.g., electronic resumes); use that term in all your correspondence with them. Because cyber-resumes save employers the scanning step, many employers highly prefer this format.

WHAT MAKES A WINNING RESUME?

A winning resume is a resume that gets you a job interview. Before you can write a winning resume, you need to understand what happens to a resume after it is received. Following is a typical scenario.

ABC Company receives your resume (along with many others) in response to an advertisement in the newspaper or on the Internet. ABC Company is one of a growing number of companies that electronically scan all resumes so the contents may be stored in an electronic database for easy distribution and retrieval.

Since hiring managers don't have time to interview everyone who submits a resume, all the resumes are reviewed to select the candidates who appear most qualified. This review and selection may be done by a per-

son or by software that searches resumes for *keywords*—words the company has instructed the software to search for. Resumes with the largest number of keywords are selected for the next review step.

The selected resumes are reviewed again, and the resumes of potential candidates may be circulated (in hard copy format or online) to the hiring authorities. These people choose candidates who appear to meet job needs and who may work well with existing employees.

From that scenario, you can infer that a winning resume is one that achieves four objectives:

1. Quickly shows that the candidate has the qualifications necessary for the job.
2. Demonstrates that the candidate can meet the employer's needs.
3. Suggests that the candidate is someone who is likeable and works well with others.
4. Appeals to both human and electronic reviewers.

The table on the next page gives you some quick guidelines for achieving these four key objectives in your resume. The balance of this chapter walks you through all stages of writing winning traditional, scannable, or electronic resumes. Following the instructions for development of resume content are guidelines for formatting resumes for electronic processing.

SUCCESS TIP

Begin by taking inventory of your qualifications.

PREPARE TO WRITE YOUR RESUME

Before you begin writing your resume, you should have done the following:

- ◆ Completed a thorough inventory of your education and skills (see Chapters 2 and 3).
- ◆ Considered the kind of work environment you will thrive in.
- ◆ Set a career target (see Chapter 3).
- ◆ Completed research to identify specific companies or job titles that interest you.

If you have not already done so, complete Chapters 2 and 3 of this book before beginning to write your resume.

FIVE STEPS TO PREPARING YOUR RESUME

Writing a resume that gets you an interview does not happen on the first try. It requires completing these five carefully planned steps:

1. Decide on Your Job Objective
2. Choose the Most Appropriate Resume Format
3. Organize Carefully and Write Forcefully
4. Fine-Tune Each Section of Your Resume
5. Finalize and Produce Your Resume

Don't rush the process. If you skip or skimp on any of these steps, you will greatly diminish your chance of achieving the purpose of your resume: getting the interview and, ultimately, the job.

FOUR KEYS TO WRITING A WINNING RESUME

KEY	WHY	HOW
<p>Quickly show you have the qualifications for the job.</p>	<p>The first cut on a resume takes only seconds.</p> <p>Your qualifications for a job must be quickly apparent to a reviewer.</p>	<p>Include a clear job objective.</p> <p>Include a keyword section and/or a capabilities section at the top of your resume.</p> <p>List most pertinent data first.</p>
<p>Demonstrate you can meet the employer's needs.</p>	<p>Once past the initial qualifications review, employers want to know whether you can apply your skills to solving their problems.</p>	<p>Reflect your knowledge of the job and the employer in your resume content.</p> <p>Include examples of work-relevant accomplishments—for example, reduced errors, saved money, increased sales and productivity.</p>
<p>Suggest that you are likeable.</p>	<p>Employers want to work with people who have positive personal and performance traits.</p>	<p>Emphasize your enthusiasm, cooperation, and dependability.</p> <p>Stress activities, teamwork, and leadership.</p> <p>Effective words include accurate, cooperative, creative, flexible, organized, and self-directed.</p>
<p>Pass both human and electronic reviews.</p>	<p>More and more employers are scanning resumes for electronic processing reviews.</p>	<p>Include a keyword section, and use keywords throughout your resume to pass electronic reviews.</p> <p>Use action words to demonstrate accomplishments and to appeal to human readers.</p> <p>Format your resume for clear scannability.</p>