

Step One: Decide on Your Job Objective

The first step in writing a successful resume is to specify a concise, written objective. Your entire resume will be organized around this objective. Therefore, if you have more than one job objective, write separate resumes for each job objective.

SUCCESS TIP

Write a clear, appropriate job objective to focus your entire resume.

Complete Career Action 9-1

CAREER ACTION 9-1

Write Your Job Objective

DIRECTIONS: Write a job objective for the job you have targeted. You may want to use one of the job descriptions you collected earlier as a reference for this assignment. Write an objective to mirror the needs stated in the job description you are referencing.

Step Two: Choose the Most Appropriate Resume Format

The most common resume formats are chronological, functional, and combination. Review the following descriptions of these resume formats, and consider which one best meets your needs:

◆ **Chronological:** Use this format to show skill development, work experience, and a logical career progression that relates directly to the job target. Choose this format to emphasize steady, related work experience that does not contain major employment gaps or numerous job changes. Place at the top of the resume the information category that best supports your job objective. List employment history with the most recent experience first, and stress the

major accomplishments and responsibilities of each position. Avoid repeating details common to several positions. (See Figure 9-5 on page 137.)

◆ **Functional:** Use the functional format if you lack work experience directly related to your job target. This format is also appropriate if you have gaps in employment; it emphasizes your capabilities related to the job target. Clearly identify your skills that relate to the job objective, and substantiate these with measurable accomplishments. Use separate paragraphs to emphasize each skill category. Arrange the paragraphs in order of importance to the objective, listing the most important skill first. (See Figure 9-6 on page 138.)



Figure • 9-2: A clear job objective, such as medical technician, will help you determine the best way to organize your resume, select appropriate keywords, and present your experience.

- ◆ **Combination:** Capture employers' attention by immediately emphasizing the match between your skills and the position requirements. Consider this format if you want to emphasize your skills or if you have limited experience. List your skills just below the position objective. Then incorporate accomplishments in a chronological list of job experiences. Add credibility by linking your achievements with specific employers and time periods. Place your education summary where it best supports your objective. (See Figure 9-7 on page 139.)

Figures 9-5 through 9-16 provide excellent models to help you prepare your own winning resume. Examine carefully the content and format of each one, and read each of the explanatory summaries provided. Use a colored pen to mark the examples and explanations that are most relevant to you.

SUCCESS TIP

Choose the resume format that best supports your job objective.

Step Three: Organize Carefully and Write Forcefully

Use the following general guidelines as you write and edit your resume.

Write Concisely and Clearly. Convey your qualifications as clearly and concisely as possible, but don't omit pertinent information that could cost you the interview.

You can write more concisely if you avoid using dated expressions and overly complex terms. Some common examples and alternatives are shown below:

DATED/EXPRESSIONS . . . **CONCISE**

at this point in time	now
left no stone unturned	used every possible method

COMPLEX/WORDY . . . **CONCISE**

utilized	used
manifested	showed

Use Numbers and Specific Examples. Your resume will be clearer and more powerful if you use specific terms and examples to indicate accomplishments. Notice the impact these specific examples have:

GENERAL/VAGUE . . . **SPECIFIC**

reduced costs significantly	reduced costs by 20 percent
the leading producer	top producer of 60 employees

The most persuasive resumes highlight applicants' accomplishments with numbers to emphasize how the accomplishments could meet the employer's needs. Use numbers whenever possible to show the magnitude and credibility of your achievements.

Notice how the numbers in the second example below strengthen the accomplishment:

Processed more orders than any other member of the work team.

Processed **40 percent** more orders than any other member of the work team.

TIP: Try adding the word *that* to an accomplishment statement: "Developed a new filing system that reduced filing time by 25 percent." If necessary, use an estimated measurement (approximately or averaged).



Use numbers and action verbs to describe your accomplishments.

Use Action Verbs and Omit I and My. To satisfy resume search software, you need to include keywords, which are usually nouns that reflect employer needs. Ultimately, however, you want a person to view your resume, so you also need to include action terms, which are persuasive to human readers.

When writing action statements, complete sentences are unnecessary. Employers want to find the important information quickly. Omit *I*, *me*, and *my* to increase conciseness and to avoid sounding like a braggart (employers assume that the resume is about you). Use action verbs and phrases to show

that you take initiative and actively participate in problem-solving and decision-making processes (*wrote proposal, improved process, increased sales*).

Notice how the specific action verbs in the second example convey a stronger image.

My duties included reviewing marketing trends, analyzing statistical data, and preparing annual sales reports.

Conducted extensive market research; **analyzed, diagramed, and reported** results of sales data; and **wrote** annual sales reports.

Use a thesaurus to find just the right words to convey your qualifications accurately and clearly. Notice how the use of more specific action verbs in the second example (*designed and implemented*) increases the clarity of the description and the scope of the responsibility. Specific verbs also convey a greater sense of accomplishment.

Started up the inventory-tracking system.

Designed and implemented the inventory-tracking system.

Review the following accomplishment statements to get a feel for writing them:

Organized and trained volunteers who solicited contributions and **raised \$55,000** for citywide "elder-help" campaign.

Coordinated school student-body elections and **reduced** final ballot processing time by **25 percent**.