

IDENTIFY MARKETABLE ASSETS

Identify your accomplishments and marketable assets; apply the following questions to your paid jobs, volunteer work or involvement in organizations, and classroom and other experiences. Add items not listed. In your resume, describe accomplishments by using measurable terms.



1. How have I increased my skills and/or knowledge?
2. How have I solved problems or made decisions or recommendations? Were the results effective? Explain in measurable terms (use numbers, percentages, etc.).
3. Have I organized or planned tasks, activities, and projects? Explain.
4. Did I work well under pressure and meet critical deadlines? Explain.
5. Have I cut costs (by reducing processing time, reducing errors or waste, etc.)? Explain.
6. What equipment have I operated, and what software can I use?
7. Did I work with a team? What did I contribute? Did I lead others? Explain.
8. What reports and documents have I written?
9. Have I helped train or develop others? Explain.
10. Did I manage money for any group? Explain.
11. How can I measure the results of my work (numbers of customers served, percentage increase in production, percentage decrease in costs or errors, etc.)?
12. What personal qualities or traits increase my ability to perform and achieve results?

Use Keywords Strategically. Keywords name attributes that qualified candidates must have. Specific words or short phrases that describe employer-valued qualifications are good keywords. Examples are capabilities (skills, knowledge, specialties), licenses or certifications, experiences, awards, education, and degrees.

Using keywords is essential for resumes that are likely to be processed by resume-tracking

software. Include keywords throughout your resume. Repeat critical keywords; the more keywords the search software identifies, the more likely it is that your resume will be selected and you will be called for interviews.

Also use synonyms for keywords; employers may use different terms as search criteria. For example, *budget* may be a synonym for *forecast*, *BA* for *Bachelor of Arts*, and *supervisor* for *manager*.



Figure • 9-3: Study job ads and descriptions carefully to identify the keywords, targeted vocabulary, and industry terminology you should use in your resume.

Tailor Your Basic Resume to Specific Openings. Employers expect resumes to be tailored for specific positions. With word processing software, you can easily tailor your resumes to specific job titles, job advertisements, and employers. The targeted approach is 100 percent more effective than the one-fits-all resume. Here are some ways you can tailor your resume:

- ◆ Use capabilities and keywords in your job objective and within your resume that match those in the job ad.
- ◆ Identify the name of the company or industry.
- ◆ Use appropriate industry terminology.

SUCCESS TIP

Tailor your resume to meet the needs of the employer. Match your resume to the job description: Use specific terms and industry terminology.

Include Keywords, Targeted Vocabulary, and Industry Terminology from an Employer's Job Descriptions. What better words for you to use in describing how you are qualified for the job than the words employers use in job descriptions and advertisements! For example, if you are applying for a computer programming position and the job description calls for the ability to “debug software,” include this term when describing your qualifications.

Limit Your Resume to One or Two Pages. Keep your traditional and scannable hard copy resume to one page unless you have extensive working experience; then two pages are acceptable. Employers prefer paper resumes to be brief. Make every word count, and put the emphasis on how you meet employers' needs. Electronic resumes will probably be longer for reasons discussed later in this chapter. The content, however, should be as concise as possible.

Step Four: Fine-Tune Each Section of Your Resume

As you write your resume, apply the writing guidelines to your work. Remember: You may not want to include all the sections described in this segment, or you may present them in a different order.

Contact Information. Be sure to provide your name, mailing address, telephone number (including message phone), fax number, and e-mail address, if appropriate. Place all the contact details at the top of the resume.

Job Objective. Place your job objective directly after your contact information. The job objective should reflect your employer research by specifying a job title or type of work. Highlighting the required skills can also be appropriate. For example:

Job Objective: Waiter in an exclusive restaurant where my knowledge of international cuisine will be an added service to customers.

Tailor your objective as specifically as possible. The general objective above could be tailored to an advertisement for a waiter in a French restaurant:

Job Objective: Waiter in a four-star French restaurant where my knowledge of the French language and cuisine will be an added service to customers.

Capabilities Section. Review the Career Actions you completed in Chapters 2 and 3 to extract qualifications and skills that best match your job target. List those in order of importance as they relate to your position objective.

Because this section is a focal point for employers, stress your qualifications and accomplishments. Include examples such as (a) numbers of years of experience in a specialized field or use of a specialized skill and (b) accomplishments achieved on the job and during volunteer work or other community or school activities.

If you don't have strong work experience related to your job objective, use the functional resume format and the capabilities summary to place strong emphasis on your accomplishments and skills in areas other than paid work experience.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT WORDS



Use a thesaurus to find the best words to describe your capabilities and accomplishments.

Keyword Section. Always place your keyword section at the top of your resume (as illustrated in our examples). Some employers quickly review electronically submitted resumes in their e-mail programs. If they don't see what they're looking for in the first or second screen of information, they may not consider the resume further.

Your keyword section should be a concise list of nouns or short phrases describing your primary abilities that match the job target. Emphasize the following:

- ◆ **Hard skills** (Examples: financial analysis and project management)
- ◆ **Position titles** (Examples: accountant, sales representative)
- ◆ **Software skills** (Examples: *Excel*, *Quattro Pro*, and *Word*)
- ◆ **Appropriate, well-known abbreviations or acronyms** (Examples: *Unix*, *RN*, and *BA*)

Format this section as a concise paragraph listing of focused terms and phrases. The terms are best formatted by capitalizing the first word of each term and all proper nouns and by placing a period at the end of each term; this helps the computer identify where one term ends and the next begins. See Figure 9-15 on page 154 for an example.

In selecting keywords and acronyms, think *nouns*. The computerized resume-search typically seeks nouns. In searching for AutoCAD drafters, the computer looks for nouns such as *CAD*, *engineer*, *AA degree*, *certified drafter*, *Computer-Aided Drafting*, *AutoCAD Release 13/14*, *wiring diagrams*, and *physics*.

REMEMBER: Keyword choices are critical. A potential employer may never read your resume unless it first passes the computer search by getting several “hits.” Getting a “hit” means the computer matches a word (keyword) in your resume to one it is seeking. Keywords alone, however, won’t get you the interview or job. They will just get you through the first selection process.

In the body of your resume, always provide proof of the qualifications you list in the keyword section. This proof should be in the form of experience, education, or skill summaries. Notice how this is done in the sample electronic resume illustrated in Figure 9-15 on page 154.

Work Experience. List your most recent job first, and end with the earliest job you held. For each job, list the dates of employment, the company’s name, and a brief, results-oriented description of the job. In your description, give specific examples of accomplishments. For example, state how you increased sales, decreased costs, reduced errors, and improved speed of processing. Quantify where possible (by percentage, by a specific dollar figure, by a number of items produced or sold, etc.).

If you have held increasingly more responsible jobs with an employer, show this here. It demonstrates reliability and your ability to

learn and achieve on the job. List only the new responsibilities and accomplishments for each promotion. Don’t restate continuing job duties; these will be assumed by the reader. (See Figures 9-12a and 9-12b for an example.)

If you have little work experience, list part-time and summer work, school-sponsored internships, volunteer work, and community involvement. Emphasize all skills developed or accomplishments achieved in these experiences—even if they don’t relate directly to your job target. For example, if you have just graduated and you worked throughout your schooling, one of your accomplishments might read:

Earned 65 percent of school expenses by working part-time during school year, full-time in summers.

This demonstrates positive working ability and potential for learning. Employers consider these qualities real pluses, particularly in entry-level applicants.

Other Experience. Use this section to bring out other experience pertinent to your job objective. Include activities such as membership or leadership in professional or trade associations; honorary groups; and social, service, and school organizations. All these activities show that you are well rounded and able to work with others. List any offices held or awards earned.

Instead of the heading “Other Experience,” consider options that may be more appropriate for you, such as “Awards and Honors,” “Volunteer Work,” “Community Service,” “Certificates Earned,” and “Professional Associations.”

“Use the right word, not its second cousin.”

—Mark Twain



Figure • 9-4: Include summer jobs on your resume.

Education. List your education in reverse chronological order. List the names of technical schools, colleges, and universities you have attended, the years of attendance, and the degree(s) or certificates earned.

If you are (or will be) a recent graduate with limited work experience, highlight school activities and achievements in the education section. Support your job objective by listing your related major(s), minor(s), and courses. For example, the liberal arts student with courses in business will benefit from listing these courses when applying for a business job.

If you have several years of work experience pertinent to your job objective, emphasize your work experience and condense the education section of your resume.

Research your target employer to find out whether the GPA is a desirable or required listing on the resume. If your accumulated GPA is low but your GPA in your major or minor is high, list the latter only (GPA in accounting: 3.8). If your overall GPA is high and you graduated with honors, put it on your resume—it won't hurt!

Military Service. Include on your resume any military experience relevant to your job objective, emphasizing pertinent training, responsibilities, and accomplishments. Emphasize any rapid progressions, significant promotion(s), and special commendations. Usually, military service is listed in the experience section. If you have an exemplary record, however, you can put it under a separate heading for emphasis. Don't use military jargon; use civilian terms.

Personal Data. Omit personal data from your resume. Fair employment laws prohibit employers from requesting information about height, weight, age, gender, marital status, race, religion, and so on.

References. Research to find out whether your target employer prefers you to submit references with your resume. Employers expect applicants to have references, but employers differ regarding when they want to see an applicant's reference list.

Don't underestimate the importance of having strong references available, however. A reference is a person who can recommend you to prospective employers as a good worker or student or as a person with admirable personal qualities.

Now that you have reviewed the resume-writing guidelines, you are ready to develop your own resume. The Resume Outline form on page 167 will help you create an outline. Gather the following forms to help you with this activity:

- ◆ The documentation of your personal data, education and training, skills, etc. (**Career Actions 2-1, 2-2, 2-3, 2-4, and 2-5**).
- ◆ Your Job Qualifications Profile (**Career Action 7-4**).

Complete Career Action 9-2