Resume Tips

It is important to understand the function, appropriate format, and necessary content of a resume. It is a critical document as it represents all that you are to people who don't know you. A resume should be professional and exceptional!   It is YOU on paper - make it as special as you are. Please take the resume writing process seriously; a good resume will take a considerable amount of time to develop and will require several critiques and revisions. Resumes also need to be updated on a regular basis – be sure yours is current!

BASIC GUIDELINES

- Use the same font throughout the resume – nothing too fancy.

- For recent college graduates, resumes should not exceed one page (but should fill one page). (Two pages can be acceptable for MBA's and students with a lot of valuable work experience.)

- Keep margins at 1, .75 or .5 inches and don't have more than 3 different margins (indents).

- Resume headings should typically be 14 font and bold.

- Text in resumes should be 12 font. (11 font is also acceptable, but no smaller.)

- Job title and college degree should be CAPS or bold to stand out over company and school.

- Spell out everything on your resume. Do not use acronyms and if you do, be sure to spell out first and then put the acronym in parenthesis. Avoid abbreviations.

- Do NOT use personal pronouns (i.e., I, me, you). Using "my" in the objective is acceptable.

- Don't include personal information on your resume (marital status, age, etc.).

- Copies of your resume should be on nice resume paper.

- Have a professional you trust proofread your resume. Correct spelling is essential.
    - Resume critiques are also available at the Carson Center

- When mailing your resume to a prospective employer, do not fold it. Use a large envelope.

- Often times a cover letter is required to accompany a resume. Cover letters should be professional and informative (See Cover Letter Tips and sample cover letters for specific guidelines and examples – www.business.wsu.edu/carsoncenter)

Don't forget to check the sample resumes online at www.business.wsu.edu/carsoncenter

OUTLINE

- **Name**
  - 20-24 font and bold. It can be centered or to the side.
- **Address/Phone/Email**
  - 12 font. It can be centered or to the side.
  - Use 2 digit abbreviations for state with no periods in between or at the end. (i.e., WA)
  - Be sure to include area code with your phone number.
  - No need to write "Email:" or "Phone:" unless you also have a fax number on your resume.
  - If you have a home phone and a cell phone, you can write (hm) and (cell) after the numbers. (Be sure your phone recording is appropriate.)
  - Make sure your email address is appropriate and professional.
- **Objective**
  - Include an objective, especially when submitting your resume without a cover letter.
  - The objective should be specific and concise (1 – 3 sentences).
- **Education**
  - Do not list high school. You can list a community college and AA degree.
  - Be sure to bold your degree and major as well as your minor if you have one.
  - Can include Related Coursework – list relevant/interesting course titles (not course #'s).
  - Include your GPA (you can include cumulative or major GPA or both). If you don't include it, employers will assume it is not good.
  - If you have studied abroad, state the school, location and the dates.
  - List the month and year you plan to complete your degree/graduate.
- **Summary of Qualifications** (You can also refer to this section as Qualifications, Skills, Profile, etc.)
  - Must be specific (not generic) and relevant.
  - You need at least three points (bullets) to make the section worthwhile.
- **Experience** (Can title this section as Work Experience, Related Experience, Employment History, etc.)
  - Chronological resumes need to have the most recent employment or experiences first.
  - Usually work titles need to be more visual (bold or caps) than the company.
  - Always list the city and state (or country).
  - Do not include addresses, zip codes, or employer's name (this goes on the reference page).
  - Include volunteer experience (can also be a separate section if there is enough).
  - Include internships you have done.
  - When describing work experience, you need to do more than simply list your job responsibilities. Present specific accomplishments/achievements: percentages increased, accounts expanded, awards won, budget responsible for, programs developed, etc. (use numbers whenever possible – they stand out). Make sure your numbers are accurate.
  - Lead sentences with power, action words (i.e., Designed, Supervised, Analyzed, etc.)
  - Past jobs need to be explained in past tense.
  - Can list section titled "Additional Experience" and only list title, company and dates (usually this is done when the job is self-explanatory or too many experiences to list).
  - Be sure to use the exact words that are in the job description of the job you are applying for.
  - List dates of experience. Preference is to record them on the right-hand side (either tabbed or right-justified). On the left-hand side they take away from your job titles.
  - Functional resumes list and explain work skills in sections (Mgt, Sales, etc.) and then general employment info. (title, company, dates) afterward with no descriptions.
- **Honors/Awards/Activities/, Involvement/Leadership, Clubs/Organizations, and Computer Skills**
  - Title the section(s) as appropriate for your accomplishments.
  - This is very important to most employers (especially if you held leadership positions).
- **References**
  - DO NOT put this section or "References available upon request" at the end of your resume.
  - Do have a separate reference page that matches your resume heading and format and list at least 3-4 people as references. Do not put personal friends or acquaintances. Do include their title, the company they work for, full address, phone number(s), and email address.
  - Always check with references before listing them as a reference. Be sure they will represent you well and help you to land the job!