

# Effective Resumés and Cover Letters

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# Resumé Basics



# Job Search Stages

**Degree:** You meet a minimum or preferred qualification

**Resume & Cover Letter:** You possess the skills and qualifications they are looking for

## **Interview:**

- Your experiences demonstrate your skills and abilities to perform the job duties
- You are motivated to do the job
- You are a good fit for the organization

**Job!**



# Resumés

- Goal—to get an interview
- Must illustrate that you meet the requirements listed in the job announcement



# Who reads your resumé?

- Computer (ATS—Applicant Tracking System)
- HR professional
- Hiring Manager

## Strategy

- Must match requirements and keywords as much as possible
- Must tailor for each position

Be ruthless! Lots of great things will not be included.



# General Résumé Tips

- Know your industry/audience
  - Ask for examples and feedback
- No absolute standard format, but there are some suggested do's and don'ts
- Having an 'insider' vouch for you can move your résumé to the interview pile



# General Formatting Rules

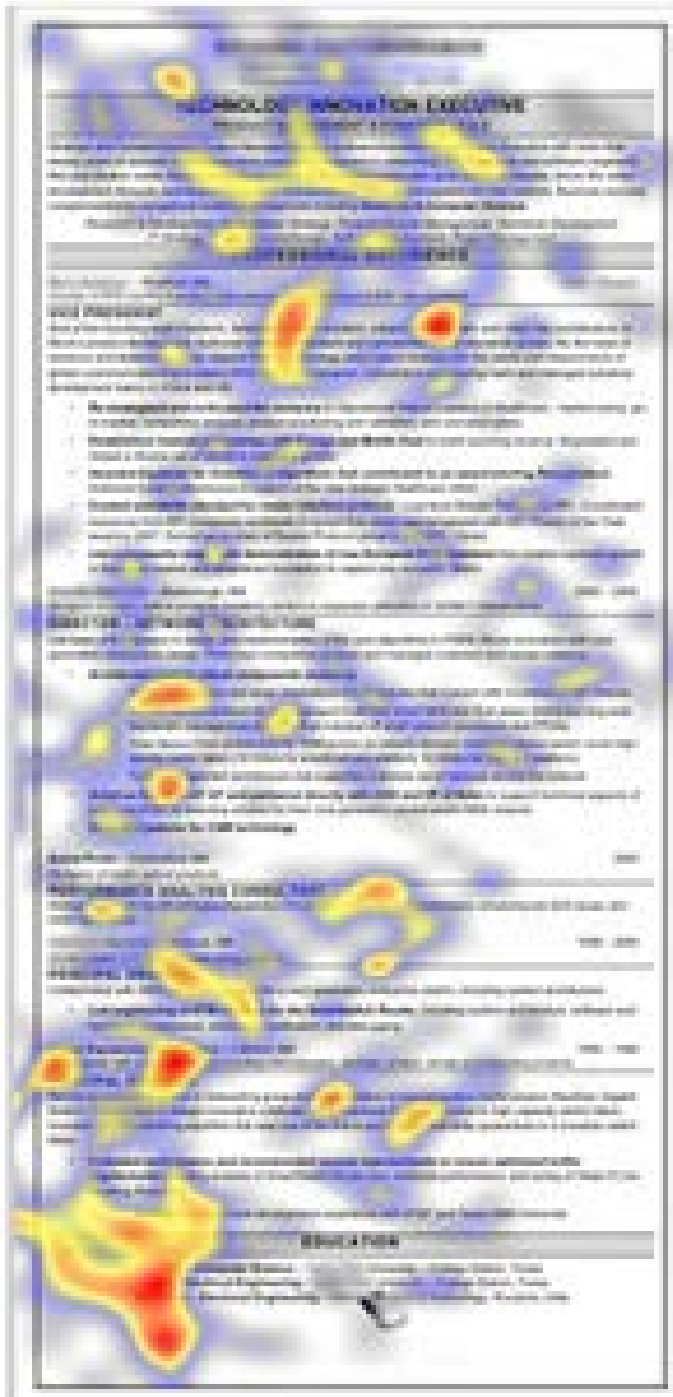
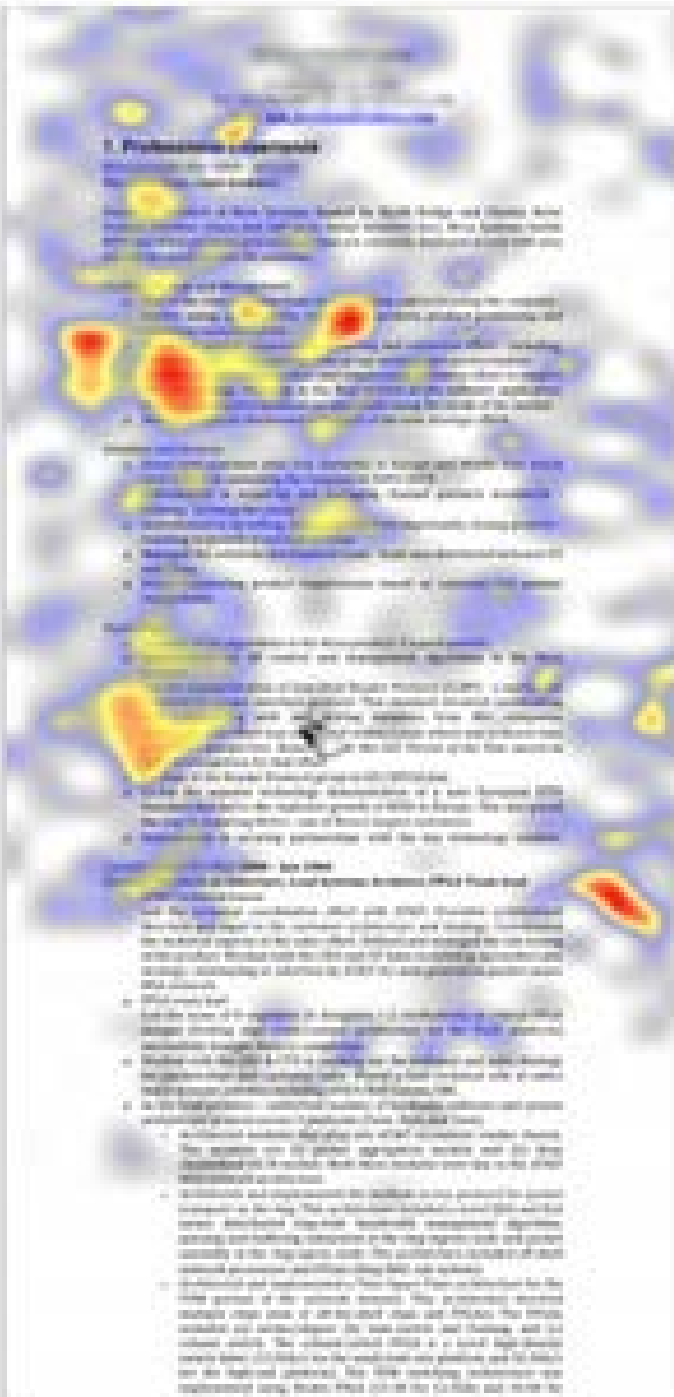
- Simple font: Times New Roman, Arial, Georgia
- Font size: 10-12
- Margins: does not have to be a full inch, but don't go too small (top/bottom: 0.5" side: 0.75")
- Align dates on the right
- Use Bold, Underline and Italics sparingly
- Use bullet points, not paragraphs
- Use spacing to your advantage
- Length



**Goal is to make the  
document very easy to  
scan QUICKLY.**







*“What Recruiters Look at During the 6 Seconds They Spend on your Resume”*

Vivian Giang,  
Business Insider,  
4/9/12



# Starting at the top...



# Contact Information

## Must have:

- Full name
- Email
- Phone

## Optional:

- Address
- Personalized LinkedIn url

**TIP:** Make sure that your email is professional-looking and that your voicemail greeting sounds professional (that may be the first contact an employer has with you).





**Objective**

**Instead**

- **Profile**
- **Summary**
- **Summary of Qualifications**



# Summary Statement

- The things that make you most qualified and relevant for that specific job
- Format:
  - Bullet points
  - Short paragraph (2-3 sentences)
  - A combination of the two
- This is the most valuable real estate on your resumé so don't waste this space!



## Profile

Efficient and thorough public health professional, comfortable in both a team environment and independently. Experienced in statistical analysis, research design and implementation, including the following skills:

- ◆ Proficient with Statistical Analysis Software (SAS, SPSS)
- ◆ Development and collection of surveys
- ◆ Exceptional writing and communication skills
- ◆ Facilitation of collaboration between individuals and organizations
- ◆ Strong understanding of grant proposals, methods and protocols
- ◆ Execution of data collection and statistical analysis



# Education

- Spell out your degree on first line
- Institution and location on second line
- Only note graduation date (first line, aligned to the right)
- Do not include GPA
- **Optional:** relevant coursework, Thesis/Dissertation title



# Professional Experience

- List in reverse chronological order
- First line: title (in BOLD) on left, time period (Month/Year spans) on right
- Second line: organization and location
- 2-5 bullets capturing most significant and relevant accomplishments (not a list of all duties)
- Every bullet starts with a strong action verb





# Action Verbs

- 185 Powerful Verbs That Will Make Your Resume Awesome (The Daily Muse)

<http://www.themuse.com/advice/185-powerful-verbs-that-will-make-your-resume-awesome>



# Strong Resumé Words

Instead of	
Utilize	Use
Assisted	Collaborated, Contributed to
Responsible for	Proposed and implemented..., Maintained, Managed
Worked	Facilitated, Launched, Reduced, Created

“6 Words That Might Get Your Resumé Tossed in the Trash,” Lily Zhang, TheMuse.com, accessed 2/5/16



# Professional Experience Tips

- May include unpaid experience, if it was of a significant duration or commitment, and is relevant to the job
- Double check verb tenses
- Quantify when possible



# Professional Experience Tips

- Try to avoid jargon and generic catch phrases
- Show don't tell
  - Give examples of teams you have worked on or ways you have pitched in on a team instead of saying 'team player'
- If your bullet points sound like they could be in a job description, you have not gone far enough



# Example: Detailed Yet Succinct Bullets

Managed database and analyzed clinical research data

vs.

*Senior Research Specialist*

July 2004 – Present

- Coordinate laboratory and administrative activities relating to Emory's collaboration with Vaxgen, Inc. (San Francisco, CA) as a research site in a Phase 2 Human Clinical Trial
- Design, develop, and implement use of an MS Access database for the collection and storage of 7+ years worth of sensitive data
- Analyze 5+ years worth of Phase 1 clinical trial data using SAS and MS Excel and compose final reports and formal posters for presentation at national and international conferences
- Supervise all day-to-day activities of a service core lab, guaranteeing quality and reliability of all data produced for other researchers

“Resume Preparation Guide,” Emory University, Rollins School of Public Health, Office of Career Services (June 2010), p11.



# Additional Sections

- Volunteer & Leadership Experience
  - Amount of detail will depend upon relevance and your role
- Presentations & Publications
  - Format as a citation, with your name in bold
- Honors & Awards
  - Explain significance if needed
- Training & Certification
  - If a professional certification, and required for job, may include toward top, right after education



# Additional Sections

- Skills
  - Computer, languages
- Professional Memberships
  - Note officer and committee positions
- Professional Development
  - Can serve as a catch-all to save space



# Example: Student Experience

## UNMC College of Public Health Student-led Projects

12/10-12/12

### *Utility of Using Stress Echocardiography and Ejection Fraction on Dobutamine to Predict Cardiac Events*

- Utilized a data set of 450 patients to compare the efficacy of two methods of predicting cardiac events using various statistical analyses in SPSS

### *LGBT Youth “Community Readiness” Analysis*

- Co-authored a report for the LGBT community leadership, based on World Café results, using principles of community-based participatory research

### *Live Well Omaha*

- Reviewed the existing evaluation plan of the Healthy Neighborhood Stores project and created a comprehensive suggested evaluation plan with detailed protocol





# Resumé Final Tips: Don't

- Do not include:
  - References
  - Objective
  - Personal Information (marital status, religion, nationality, etc.)
  - Grammatical errors or typos
- NEVER use a resumé template



# Resumé Final Tips: Do

- Save and submit as a PDF
- Make sure file name is “NAME Resume”
- Have several people proofread
- Keep a master resumé with all of your experience included so you can modify quickly



# COVER LETTERS



# Cover Letter

- Your persuasion piece (“everything your mom would say about you”)
- Use professional/business letter formatting, salutation, date, contact info, etc.
- **Tip:** Use the header/contact info from your resumé to tie the two documents together



# Dear ?

- Never address the letter “To whom it may concern”
- Ways to find out who the hiring manager is:
  - Company website
  - Google (the hiring manager may be mentioned in other job listings)
  - LinkedIn
  - Call (ask HR or receptionist the name of the hiring manager)
- Last resort “Dear Hiring Manager”



# Cover Letter: Part I

- Strong opening that sets you apart, identifies the exact position you are applying for, how you found it and don't be afraid to name drop

**Purpose of this section: grab their attention!**



## Example-Be specific about why you are interested in this job and their company

“Having grown up with the Cincinnati Zoo (literally) in my backyard, I understand firsthand how you’ve earned your reputation as one of the most family-friendly venues in the State of Ohio. For 20 years, I’ve been impressed as your customer; now I want to impress visitors in the same way your team has so graciously done for me.”

“The Cover Letters That Make Hiring Managers Smile (Then Call You),” Jenny Foss, *The Muse* (February 2, 2014).



# Cover Letter: Part II

- Highlight the handful of skills and experiences that make you most qualified for the job
- Explicitly connect the dots between your resumé (skills & experiences) and the position

**Purpose of this section: Show them what you will bring to this job and their organization**





# Cover Letter: Part II Tips

- Do not spend too much time detailing every experience or restating things from your resumé—mention examples, then tie to their job
- Research the company and people to determine how to frame yourself and your experience (commitment to service, collaboration, etc.)
- Be genuine



# Cover Letter: Part III

- Brief closing, expressing enthusiasm, how you can be contacted, and thanking for their time and consideration



# Career Fairs

- Research organizations in advance if possible
- Prepare several tailored resumés
- Skip the cover letter, unless there is a specific position at a specific employer
- Talk with as many of the employers as possible—you don't know what you don't know, and may discover a great fit
- Use as a networking opportunity
  - Get industry knowledge
  - Ask to get connected with someone in X area





**Questions?**



# University of Nebraska Medical Center<sup>SM</sup>

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