

Career Development Services

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Providing personalized guidance for career exploration, access, and success

First-Rate Resumes:
**Helpful tips, best practices,
and three sample resumes**

What is a Resume?

A resume is a **targeted marketing document** that makes your skills, accomplishments, education, and training relevant to a potential employer. It is not a comprehensive list of everything you have ever done: instead, it makes the case for *why* you are the most qualified candidate for the position you're seeking by presenting evidence of your qualifications.

Resumes open doors to job interviews; interviews open doors to jobs. For this reason, a resume is one of the most important financial documents you will ever own. It is always worth your time and effort to tailor it to your specific audience.

Why Write a Resume?

A resume helps you keep track of your professional experience, including the skills you have acquired and the accomplishments you can list. Keep it updated! Pay special attention to your dates of employment, as this is often key information potential employers notice.

Many hiring managers, especially those recruiting for higher-paying jobs, require that candidates submit resumes instead of (or in addition to) job applications. Having an updated resume that is ready to go will allow you to take advantage of opportunities as they arise.

First-Rate Resumes

The average resume is reviewed for less than a minute. You can make sure your resume passes to the next round by creating a first-rate resume: use a reader-friendly *format*, include detailed *content*, and focus on winning *words*. A resume targeted to a company's needs or a specific job will get attention faster than a generic resume designed for multiple employers.

In addition, there are *basic best practices* you should follow in writing a resume:

- ☑ **Don't falsify information.** Don't list credentials you don't have or jobs you haven't held.
- ☑ **Proofread.** Check your resume for spelling, grammatical, and word choice errors before you send it out. Someone who accidentally writes "Highly attention to detail" has not misspelled anything – but sending out a resume with this phrase undermines the idea that this candidate is, in fact, paying attention to details. (And always remember to double-check the spelling of Peirce College!)
- ☑ **Keep it fresh.** The general rule of thumb is to include 10 years of experience on your resume, because experience that is older than a decade may not be relevant. (However, always include your degree or other credentials, regardless of your graduation date!)

Focus on your accomplishments, not just daily tasks.

Potential employers want to know what you did to go above and beyond your “other duties as assigned.” For example, a retail associate may write:

TASK: Ran the cash register

ACCOMPLISHMENT: Provided exemplary customer service by ensuring accurate order transactions and efficient checkout processes for over 400 customers each day

Which version is more compelling? The accomplishment statement not only signals that you understand why your daily work was important, it also paints a richer image of how you work.

Basic Resume Formats

Most resumes follow one of three formats:

- Chronological:** This is the most common resume type. It begins by listing your most recent job in the Professional Experience section. It is best for job seekers who have advanced through one field. It is also suitable for people who have not gone through many job changes or long gaps.
- Functional:** This format focuses attention on the skills developed at different jobs. The dates of employment play a minor role. This is suitable for entry level, career changers, and mature professionals with various experiences.
- Combination:** This resume lists your experience in chronological order, and also emphasizes skills the way you would with a functional resume. Dates and process are both important.

With all formats, your resume should be attractive and easy to read. Use bullets, underlining, italicizing, and spacing to help each section stand out. Times New Roman and Arial are safe, classic fonts to use: they are easy-to-read and are not usually garbled by other computer systems. Don't make the font any smaller than 10 pt. Try to always use the default page margin in your word processor, but if you have to deviate, don't make the margins smaller than $\frac{1}{2}$ inch on each side. A typical resume is one page long, so be concise.

Keywords are nouns or short phrases that describe education and experience. They represent the essential knowledge, skills and abilities required to do a job. Employers usually include keywords for desirable attributes in job descriptions, so you can get a sense of the keywords to include on your resume from a job description. Keywords are also the words that are usually programmed into an Applicant Tracking System (ATS), which is a digital tool most large employers use to screen resumes.

Resume Content

All standard resumes include the following information:

Heading

- This section of the resume includes your name (you can use a bold or larger font to make it stand out), your address, and your contact information. Include your phone number, a professional email address, and your LinkedIn URL.
- Do not use titles like *Miss*, *Ms.*, *Mrs.*, or *Mr.* Today's business standards center on the idea of professional neutrality, and honorifics are not generally used in American workplaces.

Summary of Qualifications

- A professional summary of your experience and qualifications provides a snapshot of relate the most to the job for which you are applying.
- Keep it brief! You shouldn't use more than 3 or 4 lines to provide a potential employer with your core skills.
- A professional summary replaces the older *objective* section, which generally does little to sell your skills and qualifications to a potential employer.

Education

- This section usually includes the name of the institution, its city and state, the date (or anticipated date) of your graduation, the degree awarded, and your field of study.
- Include your GPA if it is a 3.0 or higher, but only if you received your degree in the last 1-2 years.
- Don't include information about your high school if you've taken any college courses.

Professional Experience

- Generally, you should include information about the last 10 years of your work experience. The order in which you list jobs depends on the resume format (see above).
- With any format, more recent jobs are listed above older jobs.
- For each position you list, include the name of the company, your title, the employer's city and state, your dates of employment (month and year), and a description of accomplishments that relate to your target job/employer.
- To maximize impact, describe your accomplishments by:

- **Using action verbs.** Examples include: accomplished, collaborated, developed, exceeded, improved, performed, solved, utilized.
- Using **specific and measurable terms that are quantified** as much as possible. Include numbers, dollar amounts, and percentages wherever possible.
- Relating your past skills and experiences to the job you seek. As often as possible, mirror the language of your target job. For example, if the job description uses the word *client* instead of *customer*, change the language of your resume so that you are talking about *clients*.

Skills/Qualifications

- Before writing your resume, it is important to recognize and make a list of your transferable skills. Your skills probably include:
 - Specialized skills (certifications, proprietary software systems)
 - Computer skills (general software systems or programs)
 - Office skills
 - Communications skills
 - Relevant coursework (especially if you have not yet used those skills on the job)
- Be specific about what you know and relate it to the job you want.
- Reflect the language of the job description. Applicant Tracking Systems are often programmed to search for specific terms, so if the job description requests that applicants know how to use *Microsoft Word*, write *Microsoft Word* instead of *MS Word*.

Activities/Professional Organizations

- List your membership or other affiliation with national associations or professional organizations. Include the dates of membership, if relevant.
- Include your involvement in clubs or student organizations relevant to your target position, especially if you held an elected office.
- List your membership in or nomination to any honor societies or academic organizations.
- If you have relevant volunteer work or community service experience, include it in this section of your resume.

Honors

- List any academic awards or recognition, including the dean's list (with dates), *Who's Who* nomination any merit-based scholarships, or prizes.
- Include all workplace awards or recognition, including Employee of the Month awards, customer service prizes, or other honors granted by former employers.

Best Practices

You should:

- Keep your resume brief, using no more than 1-2 pages
- Include your name and contact information at the top of the first page and as a header on any subsequent pages
- Open with a strong professional summary that highlights your fit for your target job
- Mention your accomplishments, awards, and positive results
- Use the keywords from your target job description
- Include a cover letter
- Use the right format for your skills
- Be neat, organized, and professional
- Use the same font and verb tense throughout (e.g., stick with writing in all present tense or all past tense)
- Use a professional email address (e.g., use tony.smith@email.com instead of ilovemykids1234@hotmail.com)
- Proofread...and then proofread again

You should not:

- Rely on a template
- Misrepresent your qualifications
- Misspell
- Use colored paper or fancy fonts
- Supply personal information like age, marital status, religion, or national origin
- Include past salary information
- List affiliations with groups that may be considered discriminatory
- Include references or the phrase "references available upon request"
- Include hobbies or personal interests unless they are directly relevant to your target job
- Abbreviate your degrees (e.g., write "Bachelor of Science," not "BS")
- Start phrases in experience section with non-action words (e.g., don't write "Responsible for..." when you can write "Drove results to...")
- Include a photograph

Use action verbs to highlight your achievements.

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Achievement | Informed | Communication | Refined | Produced | Initiative |
| Attained | Resolved | Convinced | Revamped | Programmed | Administered |
| Awarded | | Defined | Standardized | Verified | Created |
| Completed | Efficiency | Documented | Streamlined | | Designed |
| Demonstrated | Accelerated | Edited | Strengthened | Management | Developed |
| Earned | Conserved | Persuaded | Updated | Cultivated | Established |
| Exceeded | Delivered | Promoted | Transformed | Directed | Formalized |
| Outperformed | Expanded | Publicized | | Enabled | Implemented |
| Showcased | Improved | Reviewed | Leadership | Facilitated | Introduced |
| Succeeded | Maximized | | Authorized | Fostered | Launched |
| | Reduced | Process | Coordinated | Guided | Spearheaded |
| Customer Service | Sustained | Improvement | Delegated | Motivated | |
| Advised | Yielded | Clarified | Ensured | Supervised | |
| Coached | | Customized | Executed | Taught | |
| Consulted | | Modified | Monitored | Trained | |
| Educated | | Overhauled | Organized | | |

SAMPLE: Chronological Resume

WILL U. INTERVIEWME

215-555-1234 • winterviewme@student.peirce.edu
123 Pine Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102 • linkedin.com/in/winterviewme

Bilingual Sales and Marketing Professional with 15 Years of Experience

Proven leader and expert in motivating staff. Able to manage large projects while simultaneously evaluating effectiveness. Consistently exceeds sales goals to drive average annual revenues of \$25.1 million.

EDUCATION

Peirce College, Philadelphia, PA

Bachelor of Science, Business Administration; concentration in Management

June 2016

Associate of Science, Business Administration

June 2005

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Customer Service Associate

June 2015 – Present

Wawa

Philadelphia, PA

- Provided friendly, efficient customer service for 250+ customers each shift at busiest store location in Philadelphia
- Ensured merchandise was consistently displayed attractively and conveniently, contributing to a 10% increase in quarterly sales

Manager

August 2010 - June 2015

The Tourten Group

Philadelphia, PA

- Managed high-performing staff of 10 with annual sales volume of over \$25 million
- Cultivated crucial business relationships by serving as primary point of contact for premier accounts valued at \$5M or more
- Drove ambitious sales goals through targeted forecasting, resulting in year-to-year growth of 8%

Sale Representative

February 2005 - August 2010

Pearson Problem Solvers, Inc.

Conshohocken, PA

- Created and implemented sales plan to promote inventory control system for retailers

SKILLS/QUALIFICATIONS

- Microsoft Word, Excel, Access, and PowerPoint
- PageMaker
- Fluent in Spanish
- Salesforce CRM platform

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS/AWARDS

- Member, National Association of Management Professionals
- Delta Mu Delta
- Who's Who Among American College Students
- Dean's List

SAMPLE: Functional Resume

WILL U. INTERVIEWME
Experienced Sales Professional

123 Pine Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102
215-555-1234 • [linkedin.com/in/winterviewme](https://www.linkedin.com/in/winterviewme)
willuinterviewme@student.peirce.edu

Summary of Qualifications

Twelve years successful experience in direct sales of a range of products and services. Extensive practical hands-on experience as co-owner and manager of a small business. Motivated and enthusiastic about developing good relations with clients.

Relevant Skills

Sales and New Account Development

- Increased a small publication's advertising revenue through market research and promotion
- Developed new distribution outlets for a special interest magazine in Northern California
- Made cold calls and follow-up visits to retail outlets throughout the region
- Organized detailed route books and financial recordkeeping
- Increased readership successfully by more than 40 percent over a two-year period

Customer Relations

- Served as vendor representative for Jana Imports
- Coordinated product information and distribution for 75 field representatives and major accounts
- Promoted giftware products at trade shows throughout the region
- Collaborated with face-to-face contacts with new and established customers
- Oversaw the production of advertising and its placement in major trade publications

Advertising, Marketing, Distributing

- Organized and styled merchandise for effective presentation in a 20-page giftware catalog.
 - Kept accurate, current computer records of inventory, international suppliers, brokers, shippers.
 - Managed all aspects of order taking and processing, both at Bill's Dairy and Jana Imports.
-

Employment History

| | | |
|--------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 2013-present | <i>Sales Coordinator</i> | Jana Imports, Oakland, CA |
| 2007-2013 | <i>Distribution Coordinator</i> | Déjà Vu Publishing Co., Baltimore, MD |
| 2004-2007 | <i>Co-Owner/Manager</i> | Bill's Dairy Products, Charleston, WV |

Education

Peirce College, Philadelphia, PA
Bachelor of Science, Business Administration; concentration in Management June 2016

SAMPLE: Combination Resume

Will U. Interviewme

Experienced Sales Professional

123 Pine Street Philadelphia, PA 19102 ❖ 215-555-1234 ❖ willuinterviewme@student.peirce.edu

Summary of Qualifications

- ❖ Excellent oral and written communication skills
- ❖ Verifiable track record of consistently meeting sales quotas
- ❖ Skilled negotiator with a strong understanding of the industry

Education

PEIRCE COLLEGE, Philadelphia, PA

Anticipated May 2017

Bachelor of Science, Business Administration; concentration in Marketing

Relevant Coursework

- ❖ Internet Marketing
- ❖ Marketing Management
- ❖ Selling Strategies
- ❖ International Marketing
- ❖ Customer Relationship Management
- ❖ Marketing Research

Academic Projects

- ❖ Created a promotional plan (objectives, brand positioning, strategies and tactics) for three different types of businesses (tourism, food/beverage and entertainment)
- ❖ Developed, implemented, and analyzed through SPSS a questionnaire to answer why a department had decreasing sales

Related Experience

Account Executive

June 2007 - Present

COMCAST

Philadelphia, PA

- ❖ Solicit orders from local businesses and advertising agencies
- ❖ Increase sales volume from established accounts

Sales Associate

September 2005 - May 2007

EXPRESS

Philadelphia, PA

- ❖ Maintained customer service, product knowledge and product placement to help sell clothing
- ❖ Increased sales by creating new visual displays through product placement and innovative style

Computer Skills

- ❖ Microsoft Office Suite
- ❖ Filemaker Pro
- ❖ Adobe PageMaker
- ❖ InDesign

Professional Organizations

Member, The Young Entrepreneur's Network

April 2010 - Present

Anatomy of a Resume

In your professional summary, provide a brief overview of your relevant skills & qualifications (base your language on your target job description)

A 2-3 word tagline can help a potential employer see who you are at a glance

List your professional history in chronological order, starting with your most recent job

Throughout your resume, use the language from the job description, especially the keywords that tell you exactly what the employer is seeking

If relevant, add information about volunteer or other activities that demonstrate that you are a good fit for the target position

Include a neutral email address that reflects your name, and list your LinkedIn profile if you have one

List 2-3 accomplishments for each job, and include exact numbers or percentages wherever you can

List all of your education, training, and certificates (even if you haven't graduated yet!)



Your resume is the most financially important document you own, because resumes open doors to new opportunities for you. It is worth your time and energy to customize your resume for each job application you submit.

