

Resume Writing for the 21st Century

Here are the main topics of this course:

- **Understanding The Purpose of The Resume**
- **Resume Formats**
 - *Chronological*
 - *Functional*
 - *Combination*
- **What To Put In The Resume**
 - *Work Experience*
 - *Academic Experience*
 - *Relevant Projects*
- **Resume Styles**
- **How To Design The Resume**
- **Developing A Resume For The Electronic Age**
 - *Formatting For Electronic Submission (e-mail)*
 - *Formatting For Scanned Systems*
 - *Key Words For Improved "Hits"*
- **Practice Writing The Resume**



Understanding the Purpose of the Resume



A resume is an essential element in any job search because it is a catalog of what you have to offer to prospective employers. Sent out with your application letter, it is the basis for their decision to invite you for a job interview. The resume tells prospective employers:

- Who you are
- What you know
- What you can do
- What you have done
- What your job objectives are

In order to sharpen your competitive edge in a highly competitive job market, a job seeker must tailor each resume and application letter to capture the interest of a particular employer. There are three steps to help you prepare the resume:

1. Analyze yourself and your background
2. Identify those to whom you will submit your resume--(your readers)
3. Organize and prepare the resume

Resume Formats

A number of different formats can be used: chronological, functional, or combination. The most important thing is to make sure your resume is attractive, well organized, easy to read, and free of errors. A typical paper format uses the following heads:

- Employment Objective
- Education
- Employment Experience
- Special Skills and Activities
- References (optional)

Remember: potential employers will scan your resume. One survey conducted by a human resource manager found that 20% of employers spent 60 seconds reading the resume; 24% spent 30 seconds; 29% spent under 15 seconds; and 26% spent 20 seconds. Therefore, no matter what format you use, be sure to include previous actions, results, abilities, especially specific skills such as computer skills.



Chronological, Functional, and Combination Resumes



Chronological: Focus is on your most recent experiences in the field you desire. Your last job and your latest schooling are probably the most important areas. Be sure to include dates (1998-present). This format is recommended if you have a clear job target, your job title and company are impressive, and your next job will be a logical progression up from your past experience.

Functional: Focus is on skills and strengths and de-emphasizes job titles, employers, etc. This type is appropriate if you are a recent graduate with no work experience, if you have been out of work for a long time, and if you are changing careers. Instead of listing your jobs, list the functions you've performed ("Project Development," "Sales," "Training," etc).

The functional arrangement is useful for stressing your skills or for demonstrating your diversity of experiences.

Combination: Focus is on your experience, especially with one employer. If you have had four or more years with your current employer and you are in middle or senior management, use this format.

The following pages have a sample of a student resume in a functional style (**Figure 1**) and advanced resume organized by job in a combination style (**Figure 2**).

Sally Ann Smith
655 Southeast 50th Street
Woodbridge, New Jersey 07665
(201) 777-9999

Employment Objective

Financial research assistant, leading to a management position in corporate finance.

Education

Rutgers University (New Brunswick)
Bachelor of Business Administration (Expected June 2002)
Major: Finance Minor: Computer Science
Dean's List: 3.88 grade point average of possible 4.0
Honor Society

Employment Experience

FIRST BANK (Woodbridge, New Jersey)

- Research Assistant Intern, Summer and Fall Quarters, 2000
- Assisted manager of corporate planning and developed computer model for long-range planning.

MARTIN FINANCIAL RESEARCH COMPANY (New Brunswick, New Jersey)

- Editorial Assistant Intern, 2000 to 2001
- Provided research assistance to staff and designed a concept for in-house financial audits.

Special Skills and Activities

- Associate Editor, Business School Alumni Newsletter
- Wrote three articles on financial planning with computer models; surveyed business periodicals for potential articles; edited submissions.
- President, Women's Transit Program
- Coordinated activities to provide safe nighttime transportation to and from dormitories and campus buildings.

(Figure 1)

Sally Ann Smith
655 Southeast 50th Street
Woodbridge, New Jersey 07665
(201) 777-9999

Employment Objective

Senior Research Analyst in corporate offices of research-oriented manufacturing firm.

Employment Experience

PRATT & WHITNEY AIRCRAFT DIVISION--May 2000 to Present

Senior Financial Analyst

- Report to Senior Vice-President for Corporate Financial Planning
- Develop manufacturing cost estimates for jet propulsion engine equipment
- With Department of Defense procurement officers and engineers based on prototypes developed in Pratt & Whitney's research laboratories

Financial Analyst

- Assisted in funding estimates for major Department of Defense contracts for troop carriers
- Researched funding options recommending those with most favorable rates and terms
- Recommended by the senior financial analyst as his replacement upon his retirement

FIRST BANK (Woodbridge, New Jersey)--September 19 to May 2000

- Developed computer models for short-and-long range planning

Education

Master of Business Administration (In Progress)
Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania

Bachelor of Business Administration (magna cum laude), 19
Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey
Major: Finance Minor: Computer Science

Special Skills and Activities

Published "Developing Computer Models for Financial Planning." *Rutgers Finance Journal*
(Vol.28, No.2, pp. 134-148).

Association for Corporate Financial Planning, Senior Member

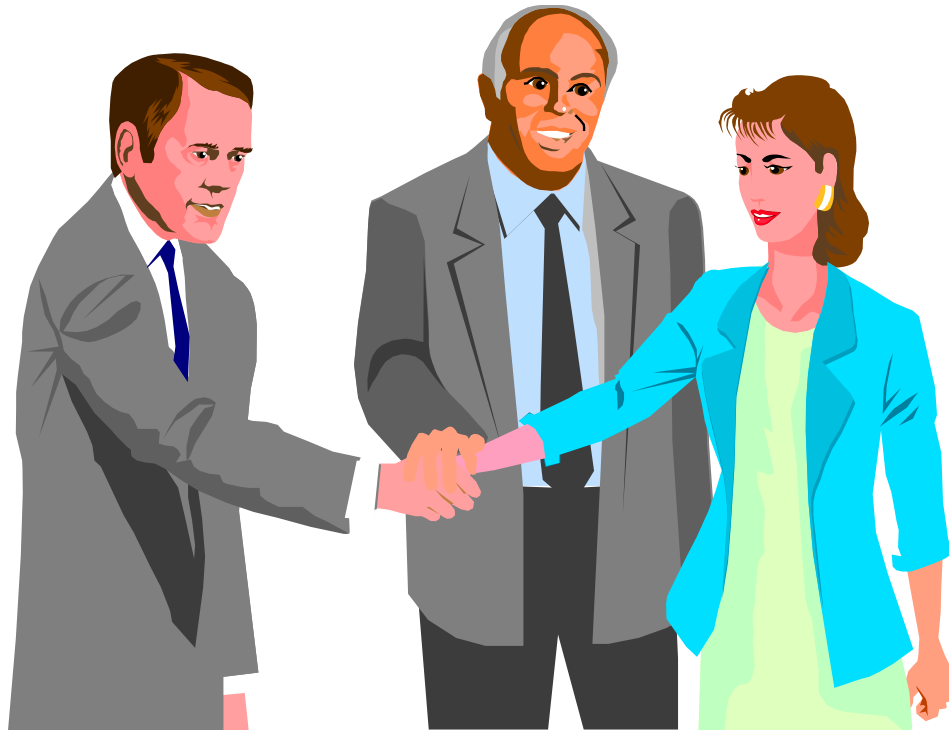
(Figure 2)

Ten Resume Writing Tips for Technical Positions

1. List your technical knowledge first in an itemized fashion.
2. Use as many buzzwords as you can conjure up which reflect your work and school experience.
3. List all operating systems you know. List all programming languages and platforms with which you're experienced. List all software you've thoroughly used. This will satisfy the visual curiosities of hiring managers and OCR scanners conducting key word searches. List your qualifications in order of relevance, from most to least. Only list your degree and educational qualifications first if they are truly relevant to the job for which you are applying. If you've already done what you want to do in a new job, by all means, list it first, even if it wasn't your most recent job. Abandon any strict adherence to a chronological ordering of your experience. Quantify your experience wherever possible. Cite numerical figures, such as monetary budgets/funds saved, time periods/efficiency improved, lines of code written/debugged, numbers of machines administered/fixed, etc. which demonstrate progress or accomplishments due directly to your work.
4. Begin sentences with action verbs. Portray yourself as someone who is active, uses his/her brain, and gets things done. Stick with the past tense, even for descriptions of currently held positions, to avoid confusion.
5. Don't sell yourself short. This is by far the biggest mistake of all resumes, technical and otherwise. Your experiences are worthy for review by hiring managers. Treat your resume as an advertisement for you. Be sure to thoroughly "sell" yourself by highlighting all of your strengths. If you've got a valuable asset resume, list it anyway as its own resume segment.
6. Be concise. As a rule of thumb, resumes reflecting five years or less experience should fit on one page. More extensive experience can justify usage of a second page. Consider three pages (about 15 years or more experience) an absolute limit. Avoid lengthy descriptions of whole projects of which you were only a part. Consolidate action verbs where one task or responsibility encompasses other tasks and duties. Minimize usage of articles (the, an, a) and never use "I" or other pronouns to identify yourself.
7. Omit needless items. Leave all these things off your resume: social security number, marital status, health, citizenship, age, scholarships, irrelevant awards, irrelevant associations and memberships, irrelevant publications, irrelevant recreational confusing and never used references, reference of references ("available upon request"), travel history, previous pay rates.
8. Have a trusted friend review your resume. Be sure to pick someone who is attentive to details, can effectively critique your writing, and will give an honest and objective opinion. Seriously consider their advice. Get a third and fourth opinion if you can.

Ten Resume Writing Tips for Technical Positions (continued)

9. Proofread, proofread, and proofread. Be sure to catch all spelling errors, grammatical weaknesses, unusual punctuation, and inconsistent capitalizations. Proofread it numerous times over at least two days to allow a fresh eye to catch any hidden mistakes
10. Stick with laser prints. Don't waste your money on special bond paper, matching envelopes, or any color deviancies away from plain white. Your resume will be photocopied, faxed, and scanned numerous times, defeating any special paper efforts, assuming your original resume doesn't first end up in the circular file.



The Format of an Electronic and Scanned Resume

Length: Limit to two pages and print on separate sheets. Limit the length of your lines to 60-65 characters.

Paper and Ink: Use white paper and black ink.

Typeface and Graphics: Use Helvetica, Sans Serif, or Times because the letters are clearly separated one from another. The scanner works best with simplicity so avoid the use of:

Technique	Problems in Electronic Resumes
Italics, underlining, fancy typefaces	Scanners need clear, distinct characters or they will see blots and blurs rather than letters.
Columns or any other kind of landscaping	Scanners read from left to right, so columns look like different pages of information to a scanner; also diagrams and pictures can confuse scanners, as these devices are designed primarily to read text.
Shading	Scanners need clear contrast between letters and background, so shading increases the likelihood of reading errors by a scanner.
Boxes	Computers are confused by the vertical lines in boxes which they may read as the letter "l."

- Use capital letters, rather than bold typeface, italics or underlining, because ASCII will not recognize these conventional methods for emphasizing key information.
- Eliminate Greek symbols, math symbols, and business symbols, and hyphenated line breaks.

See an example of an electronic format in **(Figure 3)** on the next page.

Format of an Electronic Resume

Your Name
Mailing address
Contact number/E-mail Address

KEY WORD SUMMARY:

This section contains key words a computer must see to consider you a qualified candidate.

Instructional Technologist with experience in the areas of needs analysis, consulting, problem solving, client negotiations, and training design, development and implementation for educational, governmental, and corporate environments.

EXPERIENCE:

MOST RECENT OR CURRENT EMPLOYER Dates of Employment

Title of Your Most Recent Position

Describe the knowledge, skills, and abilities demonstrated in your position in a three -five sentence paragraph.

- (Bullets must be filled-in and dark for the scanners).
-
-

Repeat the format above for each position.

EDUCATION:

List degrees, certificates, most important occupational training and licenses .

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS AND AWARDS:

Also include trade organizations and leadership positions.

(Figure 3)

Internet Resumes

Unlike its paper and electronic cousins, the Internet resume is designed solely for its functionality. The format is a slimmed down version of your electronic resume and is different than both the paper and electronic resume because of:

Contents

1. YOUR NAME:

JAMES Q. SEEKER

1224 Northeast Spring Street
Bakersfield, California 88898
[-778-335/jseeker@aol.com](mailto:jseeker@aol.com)

E-MAIL IS NOW THE PREFERRED WAY TO RECEIVE RESUMES

Not only do most human resource professionals now prefer to receive resumes via e-mail, some are using technology to scan and screen resumes, according to the Society for Human Resource Management's (SHRM) Cover Letters and Resumes Survey.

This survey mentioned that while 34% of human resources professionals say they prefer email resumes, only 17% of job seekers send resumes that way. About a quarter (24%) of the respondents said they electronically scan resumes and use databases to store them, while 9% screen resumes electronically with a database that searches for specific criteria. Nearly all respondents (96%) rated the quality of cover letters and resumes they received (not applicants' qualifications) as good or fair--and most (76%) said that typos or grammatical errors in a cover letter mean the applicant is out of the running.

2. The principal section headings; i.e.,

KEY WORD SUMMARY

EXPERIENCE

EDUCATION

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS & AWARDS; and

3. The names of your employers

See (**Figure 4**) on the next page.

Sample Internet Resume for Person Seeking an Entry-Level Position

SARAH S. SMITH
 2440 Bayview Terrace
 Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309
 (954) 791-8888/ssmith.hotmail.com

KEY WORD PREFACE:

Systems engineering. Bachelor of Science degree. Experience with jet propulsion engineering firm and municipal utility. Research in human-machine interface of maintenance subsystem designs and procedures. Managed budget, trained new employees, assisted jet propulsion engineers working on F-23 fighter jet.

EDUCATION:

Bachelor of Science Florida Atlantic University 2000
 Major: Systems Engineering Minor: Spanish

EXPERIENCE:

PRATT & WHITNEY AIRCRAFT DIVISION Summer, 2000

Project Team Member

Contributed to an interdisciplinary team under contract with a foreign country to develop improved plans for maintenance subsystems of jet engine fighter airplanes. Conducted research in foreign literature on alternative approaches used in jet engine propulsion laboratories. Wrote reports and conducted briefings on findings.

- + Completed research project planned for three months in six weeks.
- + Expanded project to include literature reviews in Spanish language engineering reports from Central and South America.

PALM BEACH COUNTY
 ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT Summer, 1999

Engineering Intern

Worked with various power generating facilities in large suburban county to ensure maximum operating efficiency and power output. Assisted in troubleshooting maintenance problems and in developing alternative procedures for repairing aging equipment installed in various county facilities.

Resume of SARAH S. SMITH
Page 2

- + Helped maintenance crews restore power to county facilities after lightening strike damage from major storm.
- + Documented repair work-around so they could be standardized and replicated.

CAMPUS EXPRESS COLLEGE BOOK STORE

Store Manager School Year 1995-1999

Cashier School Years 1992-1995

Helped finance college education by working four years at school's on-campus convenience store. Advanced from junior clerk of night shift to one of two student store managers. Oversaw staffing of all day shifts, daily receipts reconciliation, customer service efforts and inventory management.

- + Increased store revenues by 15% by improving student staff training.
- + Reduced pilferage by 25% by installing a new alarm system.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS AND AWARDS:

National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE)

Member, Student Chapter 1994-98

American Women's Business Association (AWBA)

Associate Member 1997-98

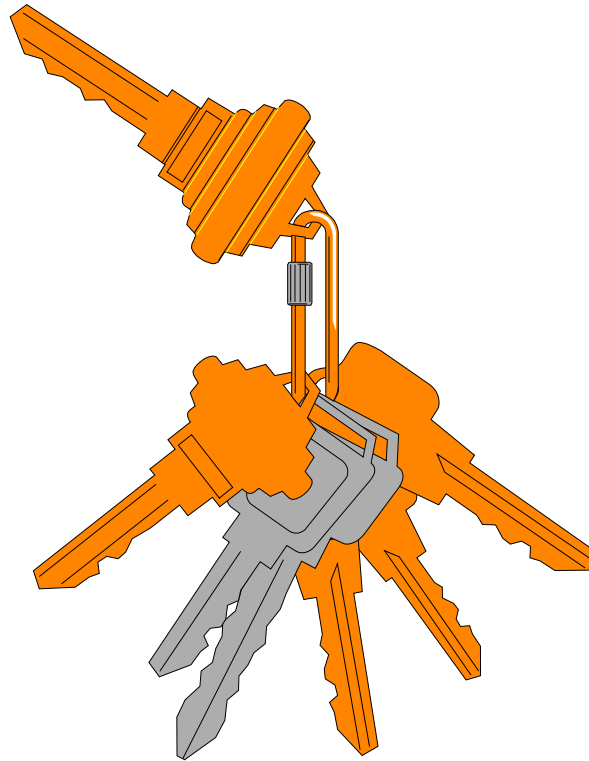
(Figure 4.)

The Importance of Key Words

The Key Word Preface or Key Word Summary contains the key words that a computer scans to help you qualify as a candidate for a specific position vacancy.

- These key words are normally nouns or short phrases. They describe the knowledge, skills, abilities, and experience that the employer must see in a person's resume to consider him/her a qualified candidate.
- To get a feel for the key words an employer might want to see, check the vocabulary in the recruitment ads for your field of work.
- Check with an executive recruiter and a professional trade association to see if any of them have conducted searches recently for a position similar to yours.
- Think of key words as terms to describe your **ASSETS**. They include:
 - **Abilities:** Budget Management, Operations Research/Systems Analysis, AS 400 Programming, Oral and Written Communications Skills, Team Building, Sales Prospecting , and IBM Word Processing.
 - **Special Awards and Recognition:** MIS Department Top Performer Certificate, National Management Association Distinguished Service Award, Salesman of the Year.
 - **Special Licenses and Certifications:** Any designation or title you earned via study, test, evaluation, or other formal process conducted by your college or university, professional association, state or federal government, or other recognized institution. Key words for special ;licenses & certifications might include Cum Laude Graduate and Professional Engineer/License Number 12345.
 - **Experience:** Five years in the Jet Propulsion Industry, Two Years in Computer Sales and Administrative Assistant to Corporate Executives, Finance Chairman for Special Environmental Compliance Project.
 - **Training:** Master of Science in Structural Engineering, Pratt & Whitney Total Quality Management Training, Fluent in Spanish, Formal Training in Jet Propulsion Process Control.
 - **Synonyms:** Supervisor for Manager, MS for Masters of Science.

More on Key Words



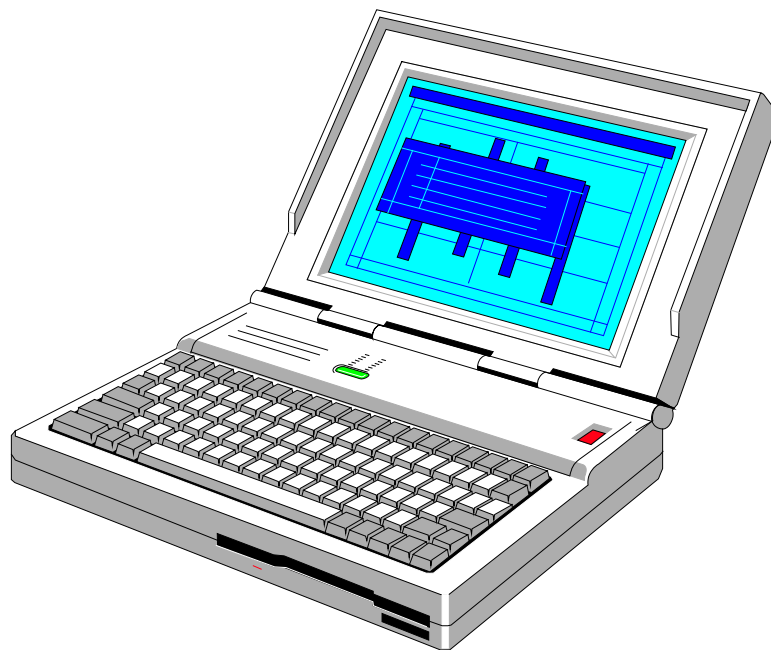
- They must be an accurate, honest expression of your qualifications.
- They must be the words and phrases used by employers to describe the qualifications required for a specific job.
- It is all right to use acronyms in an electronic resume.
- They detail three aspects of your background: skills, abilities and competencies; experience using those skills ,abilities and competencies; accomplishments in using those skill, abilities, and competencies on-the-job.
- Since the average computer screen is about 15 lines deep, limit the lines of your name, address, and key word summary to this amount

Key Word Summary

Human resource management and development. Five years experience in aircraft industry. Compensation & benefits. Employee relations. Staffing. Union relations. EEO/AA; Succession planning.

The 15-Step Process for Developing Your Internet Resume

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
4. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____



Basic Learning Systems

Office: (954) 474-4311

Toll-free: (888) 204-3600

Web Address: <http://www.basic-learning.com>

E-mail Address: info@basic-learning.com

See our website for learning products that target your professional growth, such as:

Bull's Eye Business Writing Workbook and optional six-week course

Breaking Through the Fear Barrier: Overcoming Presentation Anxiety Workbook

E-Books and Training Kits:

Effective Communication Skills

Listening Skills

Dealing with Difficult People

Managing Change

Telephone Skills

Setting Goals

Team Building

Customer Service

Online Business Courses:

Human resources

Management

Leadership

Project management

Creativity

We are also available for on-site training.