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CAREER SERVICES RESOURCE CENTER:
CRAFTING YOUR RESUME

CAREER SERVICES AT TEXAS A&M AT GALVESTON
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THE IMPORTANCE OF A RESUME...

A resume is an advertisement for you. The objective of the resume is to provide a brief, attractive, easy-to-read summary of your qualifications for employment. It should not be a life history nor include information that would have a negative or neutral impact on your prospects for employment. It should be error-free and present your credentials in a positive but honest manner.

There are a number of ways to write a resume using different styles and formats. What you include and how you choose to present it depends on your experiences, major accomplishments, and the position you are seeking.

WHAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED?

- Contact information (heading)
- Summary/Objective
- Education
- Experience
- Additional sections – Activities, Leadership Positions, Awards/Honors, Volunteer Work, Relevant Skills

GENERAL TIPS

- **Editing**
 - Make every word count! Be concise, avoid redundancy, incorporate power verbs.
 - Edit and re-edit until it says exactly what you want. Eliminate unimportant details.
 - Have several other people review your resume. You can expect to have several drafts of your resume before you perfect the content and layout.
- **Length**
 - Limit the length of your resume to one page. Exceptions would be for people with graduate degrees and/or extensive experience.
 - Recommended font size is 10-12 for the body portion of the resume, and 14-16 for your name at the top of the document
- **Language**
 - Use active voice. Employ brief, descriptive phrases rather than full sentences.
 - Do not use first person singular (I, me, my, mine).
- **Content**
 - Focus on content that sells you the best.
 - Don't include salary information or personal information such as height, weight, marital status, etc.
 - Do not limit yourself by resume samples you may come across—be creative—make your resume represent you!
 - Consider your audience—tailor your resume to each employer's needs.

- **Paper**
 - Print your resume on high quality white or ivory bond paper.
 - Choose a conservative style; do not use fancy fonts or colors that may distract the reader.

HEADING

Include your full name, campus and permanent addresses, telephone numbers, and email address.

SUMMARY/OBJECTIVE

Your resume needs a statement or synopsis to grab the reader's attention and tell the reader what you want to do or what you are qualified to do.

- An objective states the general field or specific position for which you are applying.
- A summary details your experience, special skills or knowledge, and any other important data that makes you stand out.
- You will usually choose either an objective **OR** a summary, rather than both.

Sample Objective:

Seeking an Aquarium Education Specialist Position

Sample Summary:

- Graduated top of class in Marine Biology.
- Over two years volunteer experience at world-renowned aquarium, focusing on shark and penguin exhibits.
- Published independent research on tiger fish feeding habits.
- Excellent communication skills, both verbal and written.
- Fluent in Spanish.

Summary or Objective?

Each has its pros and cons. Some employers, especially human resources professionals, like an objective because it allows them to quickly identify you as a potential candidate and match you for a specific position. One problem with an objective is that you must edit your objective for each position or career field. Also, too narrow an objective may prevent you from being considered by the same employer for other positions, while too broad an objective may be meaningless. Because summaries focus on skills and achievements, they are great for telling employers what you've done and what you can do. Make sure to tailor your summary statements to each specific field or position. Use your best judgment when deciding between an objective and a summary. Consider how you would phrase each and which would best market your skills and potential to prospective employers.

EDUCATION

- List schools attended, including the name of the school, location, graduation date, degree, and major/minor.
- You may also want to briefly describe your curriculum, abilities, skills, and competencies obtained as they relate to the type of employment you are seeking.
- Unless there is enough information to add a separate section, you could include research, projects, scholarships, or that you financed all or a portion of your college expenses.
- Include your cumulative or major GPA if it is a 3.0 or above.

EXPERIENCE

- List your work experience in reverse chronological order. Include the name and location of your employer (city and state only), your job title, and responsibilities.
- Briefly summarize skills you acquired from each job. Be sure to incorporate power verbs. If you've held many jobs, you may want to be selective as to which to include on the basis of relative importance to your current goals and how recent the employment was.
- Don't discount unrelated employment, as it usually demonstrates transferable skills that can impress a potential employer.
- Don't forget to include unpaid internships, volunteer jobs, special class projects, and extracurricular activities. You can include these in the same category, or under special headings of their own.

ACTIVITIES AND HONORS

- Usually presented in list form.
- You may want to describe an organization if its affiliation is unclear.
- List offices you held and any additional responsibilities you assumed.

SKILLS

- List specific skills such as knowledge of computer programs, technical equipment, research methods, foreign languages.

MODIFIED CATEGORIES

- Depending upon your field, you may want to include categories such as: shipping experience, maritime experience, military, research, lab skills, teaching experience, etc.

OTHER CATEGORIES

- Don't be limited by the categories you see on sample resumes. Organize the categories to make the most impact upon an employer. Make your categories work for you!

FORMATS

There are many resume formats, but the most common are reverse chronological and skills-based.

Reverse Chronological:

A straightforward resume that lists work experience and achievements from most recent backwards. It focuses on details of employment and education including dates, employers, titles, job descriptions. This is the traditional, conservative format focusing on WHERE you have been. The goal of this format is to show progression, positioning you for the next upward career step. Be sure to focus on areas of specific relevance to your target position or career field.

Skills Resume:

This resume is oriented to what skill sets the job seeker can bring to the employer, rather than narrating history. This is the non-traditional, modern format where the focus is on what skills you possess. The goal of this format is to show your transferable skills. Education and experience sections are still included, but the focus is on the skills section. It is a good format for college graduates with little relevant work experience because it allows emphasis of skills gained through related and unrelated employment, volunteer experiences, class projects, and campus activities.

REFERENCES

- References should be printed separately on paper that matches your resume.
- Include your resume heading at the top and at least three references listed below. Include the person's name, title, employer, address, phone number, email address.
- Make it available to the interviewer only when asked for.
- **BE SURE TO ASK PERMISSION BEFORE USING SOMEONE AS A REFERENCE!**
- It is not necessary to use the words "References available upon request" at the end of your resume.

ELECTRONIC RESUMES

Many employers prefer to receive resumes electronically, via email or through online search methods. When they do receive resumes via fax or postal mail, they may scan the resume into a database from which they pull matching candidates. In some cases, your resume will no longer be initially reviewed by a person, but rather by a computer. Computers read resumes differently than people do. To make sure that no important information about you is lost in the scanning process and to increase your chances of being electronically selected, we suggest the following guidelines for writing an electronic resume.

Emailing Resumes, Online Formats, etc.

It is important to follow whatever instructions the employer requests for submitting electronic resumes.

- If sending as an attachment, save your resume as rich text format (.rtf). This will allow employers to open your file even if they use a different version or program than that which you used to create the resume.

- If inputting directly into the body of an email or an online space for writing your resume, avoid overly complicated formats such as tabs, columns, bullets, bolds, lines, italics. They may translate as unreadable text.
- Do not use borders, graphics or landscape printing
- Don't number pages (for online resume posting). You can't be certain where the page breaks will fall.
- Emphasize keywords that match the job description and the industry. This will ensure that your resume receives lots of "hits" when scanning devices search for matches.
- Use standard fonts (such as Arial, Courier, Times New Roman, etc.).
- Clearly state functional and geographic preferences
- For mailing, do not fold – use a flat 9" x 12" large envelope

You may want to insert a summary paragraph near the top of your resume, listing important keywords that identify your skills and other qualifications in plain type. Once identified by a computer search, a person will then review your resume.

How do you know if a company scans resumes? ASK! Call the Human Resources Office or a contact person within the company.