

Résumé Writing Workshop

Bellingham Public Library – February 8, March 8 and May 5, 2012
presented by Bea Hait, CPRW, NCRW

A résumé is a self-marketing tool that showcases your job skills and your value to a potential employer.

Writing tips

- Write in first person, omitting the "I" and using varied sentence lengths.
- Use action verbs in active tense and nouns relevant to the target industry. These are "keywords" that are often used as search criteria in applicant tracking systems.
- Ban "responsible for ..." from your résumé. Begin sentences using action verbs.
- Use dates wisely: placement, years only, month and year, eliminate from education if "dating" you.
- Use white space and graphic elements for eye appeal and to lead the eye through the page.
- Use correct spelling, grammar and punctuation. Don't rely on the computer's spell check. Proofread, proofread, proofread!
- Use common fonts such as Helvetica, Arial, Times New Roman, Tahoma, Verdana, Geneva, Monaco, Palatino, Century Schoolbook.

Setting up the résumé layout and key elements

- Start with the easy sections (beginning and end: typically contact info and education).
- Identify a target – what do you want to do?
- List basic info of Work Experience: employer, title, dates – fill in details later.
- Enter other section headings.

Writing the heart of the résumé

- What skills are needed to perform the target job?
- What are your knowledge, skills and abilities? How do they relate to the target job?
- Accomplishments: CAR: Challenge – Action- Results
- Provide metrics: numbers, percentages, comparisons, timelines. Tell how well you performed your job and how you improved efficiencies, saved time, saved money, improved profitability, boosted performance ...
- Does your job task statement answer the question, So what? Why is this important?
- Testimonials and letters of reference – insert "pull quotes" into the résumé (or cover letter) to let someone else sing your praises and provide an "upfront" reference

Presenting your resume

- Save the document in MS Word (.doc rather than .docx) for uploading.
- Use your first and last name in the document title. (Don't name the file "My résumé.")
- Print single-sided.
- Ideally print on a laser printer using good (at least 24 lb.) linen paper. NOT copy paper!
- Do not staple pages together unless you will be distributing the résumé at a job fair.
- Bring several prints with you when attending an interview.
- If submitting online where you are directed to "paste or insert résumé here" – convert the MS Word file to ASCII (plain text) so that the content pastes cleanly.

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Resources

Résumé Magic by Susan Britton Whitcomb

Cover Letter Magic by Wendy Enelow and Louise Kursmark

Interview Magic by Susan Britton Whitcomb

Job Search Magic by Susan Britton Whitcomb

Expert Résumés series by Wendy Enelow and Louise Kursmark

for Career Changers

for Computer and Web Jobs

for Engineers

for Health Care Careers

for Teachers and Educators

for Recent Graduates

for Manufacturing Careers

College Grad Résumés to Land \$75,000+ Jobs by Wendy Enelow and Louise Kursmark

For Career Exploration / Industry Keyword Research

O*Net Online www.onetonline.org

Occupational Information Network

US Dept. of Labor/Employment and Training Administration

Occupational Outlook Handbook www.bls.gov/oco/
Bureau of Labor Statistics

For Federal Résumés

Federal Resume Guidebook: Strategies for Writing a Winning Federal Resume, 5th Edition
by Kathryn Troutman