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Resume Writing Guide

2014 Edition



University of Hawai'i,
HILO

Creating Your Resume

This discussion is designed as a workbook to help you produce the first draft of a resume. It focuses on the types of resumes most often used in business, private non-profit, and government agencies. While it does not specifically address the needs of persons seeking employment in very creative fields or higher education, most of the principles addressed here are applicable to the creative resume and to the curriculum vitae.

The main purpose of preparing a resume is to produce a marketing tool to help you get an interview for a job, an internship or graduate school admission. A resume also can be useful in your networking efforts and is sometimes required to apply for membership in professional associations. Additionally, the preliminary self-evaluation that you do will help you prepare for the interview process.

Step One; Doing First-Things First:

The first step in producing an effective resume is to assess thoroughly your professional abilities, technical skills, personal attributes, experience, and accomplishments. Do not neglect this step or minimize its importance. Before you begin to write your resume, take stock of what you have to offer prospective employers.

One way to start is by making lists for each of the above categories:

What are my major transferable skills/abilities? (Read "Life Skills"; e.g.: organizational ability, analytical ability, time management skills, leadership ability, interpersonal communication, etc.):

What special, technical, or field-specific business skills do I have? (E.g.: bilingual, word-processing, spreadsheet, data base management, programming languages, clerical, cash handling, customer service, sales, etc.)

What are some of my more important personal attributes and how do they relate to the world-of-work? (E.g.: Ability to remain calm under pressure helps me work effectively in high stress situations):

Make a list of the places and situations in which you have exercised the preceding abilities, skills, and attributes. (E.g.: Part-time jobs, internships, volunteer activities, clubs & organizations, research projects, sports, etc.):

Finally, make a list of your accomplishments. (Some of these accomplishments will be used to tell prospective employers how you made a difference in each organization or in your personal development. Strive for at least three accomplishments for each organization or situation you listed in the preceding step.) Writing out specific answers (What did I do, Where did I do it, How did I do it and What were the results?) to the list of questions on the facing page may help you in this process.

Generate A List Of Accomplishments

Think about the problems you've faced, the solutions you've devised and ask yourself:

- What did I do? / How did I do it?/ Of what events am I most proud?
- Did I do something faster, better, cheaper than it had been done before?
- Did I increase membership, participation, or sales?
- Did I save my organization any money or eliminate waste?
- Did I identify and/or help solve any problems?
- Did I institute any new methods, systems, or procedures?
- Did I suggest a new service, product, or project?
- Did I re-organize or improve an existing system?
- Did I refine the nature of an existing task?
- Did I maintain a consistently high level of performance?
- Did I demonstrate leadership skills and/or did I exhibit good team player skills?
- Did I reach out for more work or more responsibility?
- Did I achieve results with little or no supervision?
- Did I accomplish something others thought could not be done?
- Did I motivate others?
- Did I coordinate any event or project?
- Did I train another person? What were the results?
- Did I tutor anyone? Did their grades improve?
- If I didn't improve the organization, did I improve my skills?

Now Quantify The Results You Uncovered Through The Above Exercise:

Compare: "Organized business fraternity philanthropic events."

to

"Organized business fraternity philanthropic events; resulted in contributions of over \$4,000.00."

Compare: "Served food."

to

"Developed tact and diplomacy in dealing with customers in a fast-paced environment."

Compare: "Responsible for typing and filing"

to

"Commended for efficiency and accuracy in completing office duties."

Step Two; Deciding What To Ephasize:

Identifying your primary career objective helps you decide which skills and experiences to emphasize and which ones to omit when composing your resume. Some of you have already identified your career/job objective. Those of you who have not done so, may want to contact the counseling center for assistance with this process.

Ideally, each resume you produce will be tailored to fit the specific job that you are applying for. In circumstance where precise tailoring is not possible, construct your resume so that it is targeted towards your primary career/job objective. You can then use your cover letter to call attention to or add job-specific skills.

My primary career objective is _____

The principal abilities, skills, attributes, and experience that employers in this field look for are:

Step Three; Pulling it All Together:

The next step is to put all this information together in an attractive format that focuses on the job that you are trying to get, looks professional; can be easily read, documents your key skills & qualifications and stresses accomplishments & results. I refer to these features of a good resume as the Five Key Principles of Resume Writing:

Five Key Principles of Resume Writing:

1. Tailor Your Resume
2. Look Professional
3. Be Easily Read
4. Document Skills and Experience
5. Stress Accomplishments

Use the information about yourself and the information that you have discovered about the job or opportunity to build a resume that is specifically **tailored to fit the job that you are applying for**.

A professional image is achieved by making sure your resume is attractively arranged on high quality paper, using standard fonts. Your resume must contain no misspellings or typographic errors and it must be logically organized so that your most important skills and accomplishments stand out. Use a positive tone that conveys confidence. Avoid negative statements or explanation of problems.

"Easily Read" means, "Easily Scanned." Most managers tell us they spend no more than 20 to 30 seconds scanning a resume during the initial screening process. During those few seconds, they decide whether to reject the applicant or to place her resume in a (small) stack that will be evaluated in greater detail. Your first challenge is to make it into that short stack.

You do this by making sure your resume is brief and easily scanned. Unless you are working in a very technical field and have many years of experience, limit your resume length to one page -- two at the most.

Consider using a "bullet" format; listing one task or accomplishment per line. Begin each bullet with an action verb and write in phrases -- not complete sentences. Express one thought per line and one line per thought. The table below contains a few sample action verbs to get you started. You will probably think of many others once you begin composing your resume.

Sample Action Words

Achieved	Controlled	Developed	Guided	Managed	Reduced
Adapted	Convinced	Directed	Handled	Operate	Researched
Advised	Coordinated	Employed	Implemented	Organized	Served
Analyzed	Counseled	Equipped	Improved	Performed	Sold
Assisted	Created	Established	Increased	Persuaded	Supervised
Authored	Decided	Evaluated	Initiated	Planned	Taught
Built	Delivered	Expanded	Led	Processed	Trained
Completed	Designed	Generated	Maintained	Produced	Wrote

You may also increase "scan-ability" by using bold type to emphasize key points, but use it sparingly. To avoid shifts or changes in formatting that often occurs when files are printed on different printers, save your final version in Portable Document Format (PDF) whenever you are going to send a resume by electronic means.

Use computer screening programs to your advantage: Computerized screening systems work by conducting a series of "Key word" searches and identifying the resumes with the most matches for screening by a human resource person or department manager. You can use this to your advantage by conducting as thorough research as possible to identify the skills, experience and terminology the employer is looking for. Many times the ad or position description will list the specific requirements the employer wants. By modifying your terminology to fit that used by the employer, you will increase your chances of making it through the computer screening successfully.

Focus on accomplishments and results by minimizing job descriptions and listings of responsibilities. Your responsibilities are not nearly as important as what you did with those responsibilities. Let your job or position title tell them what your duties were; use your bullets to tell them how you made a difference in each position. Speaking of position titles, you do not have to use your precise payroll title; use titles that are descriptive of your responsibilities. For example: "Accounting Clerk Intern" is much more descriptive than "Intern".

OK, ready to write? Not so fast! You have one more decision to make before you start typing your resume. What format are you going to use? There is no magic or prescribed format, you may construct your resume in any format that is consistent with the key principles discussed above and that portrays your skills and experience at a glance. There are three basic formats in general use today: chronological, functional and combination. Each has its own advantages and disadvantages. Lets look briefly at each of these three types:

The Chronological Format. This is the most commonly used type and is therefore the type that most employers are used to seeing. It emphasizes the positions that you have held and the experiences that you have had. Strictly speaking, we probably should call this a "Reverse Chronological" resume because your current or most recent position is generally listed first and then previous positions follow in reverse chronological order.

Figure 1 is a template that describes the various components of a resume using the chronological resume format. Figure 2 shows an example of a chronological resume. You do not have to use all the categories that are depicted -- omit the ones that you do not need or cannot use effectively. In figure 3 (Targeted Section Chronological Resume), note how the writer has "targeted" a specific section of her resume to emphasize her writing experience..

The Functional Format: The use of the functional format is best limited to circumstances that require you to avoid emphasizing your employment record. You might choose this format if you have no work experience, have significant gaps in your employment record, have a pattern of short term jobs (subsequent to graduation from college), or have held several positions in which you have exercised the same skills. It is also often used by persons who are making a drastic career change and who want to emphasize their transferable skills. In the functional resume format, you emphasize your skills rather than the positions you have held. Figure 4 shows an example of the functional resume format.

The Combination Format: As the name implies, the combination format is a combination of the functional and chronological formats. The combination resume is formed by adding a listing of employers and positions held to the functional resume. This shows the potential employer where you have gained the skills you are highlighting. If you have a stable employment record, it is important to include it because it helps remove some of the suspicions that often rise in the mind of employers reading functional resumes. Figure 5 contains an example of a combination resume.

Step Four; Putting It On Paper:

You know what employers are looking for. You know what your skills and accomplishments are and how they relate to the world of work, and you have selected the general format you are going to use. Now, lets get started. Regardless of the format you have chosen, the following information should be included in your resume in some form:

Heading: At the top of the page you should list your name, address and telephone number, and e-mail address. List your day-time phone number. If you do not have ready access to a phone during the day, list your residence number. Make sure some responsible person is there to take a message for you or invest in a message machine (Warning: Keep your messages business like!) or answering service.

Objective: Your resume does not have to contain an objective. If you decide to use one, state it clearly and succinctly. Avoid the use of lengthy, meaningless objective statements such as, "A challenging and rewarding assignment in a dynamic company that will use my exceptional managerial skills". If you decide to use an objective statement, I recommend you produce at least one version without it to use at career fairs, etc.

Qualifications Summary: Most recent graduates probably will not use this section or may title it "<Field Specific*> Skills" (E.G.: "Business Skills, or "Marketing Skills"). It is generally used only by people who have several years of experience and/or technical skills that they want to bring to prospective employers attention at the beginning of the resume. The key word here is "Summary". You do not need to provide details or tell where you gained the special skill--that should be apparent in your experience section.

Education: For many recent graduates this may be the first line of your resume. List education before experience when education is your strength, and experience first when it is

your greatest strength. This principle of leading with your strengths should be used throughout your resume. You can even use this principle within sections to decide which order you are going to list things. For example: If your degree is directly related to the type of work you are pursuing, list your degree first and University of Hawaii at Hilo second. If it is not, then graduating from UH Hilo is your strength so list University of Hawaii at Hilo first. If your major is not related to your work, but you have coursework that is, you may want to include a subsection that begins, "Relevant courses: . . .". Include your Grade Point Average if it is 3.0 or above.

Activities and/or Honors: Recent graduates and continuing students also should include academic honors (Dean's List, honor societies, scholarships). You may list honors separately or as a subheading under education. University activities that display evidence of leadership, initiative, community involvement or the use of special skills may be listed in an "Activities" section or may be listed in your experience section. Use the method of organization which best presents your greatest skills and achievements first.

Experience: (Remember that experience is not limited to paid experience.) You have several choices as to how you will portray your experience. You may list it in reverse chronological order including part-time jobs, internships, and organizational positions all in one section. You may create special sections, e.g.: "Marketing Experience" and "Related Experience", and arrange the positions in reverse chronological order within each section. Alternatively, you may decide to use a functional resume and detail your experience under the skills you decide to emphasize.

Other Information: You may want to highlight other achievements or skills that are not easily incorporated into the other sections. This may include such things as licenses, credentials, publications, etc. Simply create an appropriate heading and insert it in your resume so that it gets the attention it merits.

References: You do not generally list your references on your resume. Instead, type them on a separate sheet of paper and take them to the interview with you. If space permits, you may include a line at the end of your resume that says, "References available upon request".

Do not include: Usually you do not include personal information such as ethnicity, age, marital status, religion, sports, hobbies etc. Note that we used the word "usually". If your research indicates some element of personal information may increase your chances of getting an interview then by all means use it.

Step 5; Preparing A Cover Letter:

Cover Letters: In most cases, a cover letter should accompany each resume or application that you submit for professional positions. Cover letters let you draw attention to particular experiences or skills mentioned in your resume. A cover letter gains you an additional 8 to 10 seconds of attention to capture the employers interest – use them wisely.

Goals & Objectives: The goal of your cover letter is to quickly & clearly

- Point out your skills, knowledge and track record *as they relate to the position.*
- Explain how your qualifications can make a difference in the employers organization

- Persuade the reader to read your resume with positive expectations.

Guidelines:

- Research organizations to which you are applying to learn what they are looking for.
- Target your message and relate your skills and experience to a *specific* job in a *specific* organization
- Spotlight your accomplishments and measurable results and relate them to the employers business
- Whenever possible, send your letter to a specific person {by name}. Ideally the letter should be addressed to the person who is likely to make employment decisions.
- Use the same paper, heading and font that you used for your resume and print your letter using a laser printer for better quality.

Template & Sample: Figure 6 contains a cover letter template and Figure 7 contains a sample cover letter. See also: Yate, Martin (2003). Cover Letters that Knock 'em Dead, 5th Ed. Avon, MA: Adams Media Corporation – Available in the Career Center.

Step 6; Get Your Resume & Cover Letters Critiqued:

Before you begin distribution: Come to Career Development Services to have your resume & cover letter critiqued by a Career Counselor. You also should have your preliminary version of your resume critiqued by several managerial level persons from your target industry before distributing it.

Figure 1, Resume Template: Reverse Chronological Resume:

FIRST NAME MI. LAST NAME

Mailing Address, City, State, Zip Code (A/C) Phone Number e-mail address

Objective:

Briefly and succinctly, state the type of job and the industry you prefer.

Education:

University of Hawaii at Hilo*
BA/BS, Major Field of Study
GPA: (list if 3.0 or above)

May 200X

** If your Major Field of Study is closely related to your objective, place that above University of Hawaii at Hilo and bold it (in that case do not bold UHH).*

Include amplifying remarks that may strengthen your competitiveness. You may mention courses, independent studies, work commitments, scholarships, etc.

{ } Skills:

* Preface your skills title with an industry-specific title such as "MARKETING SKILLS".

Summarize any industry-related experience, technical, language, communication, or transferable skills that you possess.

{ } Experience:

* Preface your experience title with an industry-specific title such as "SALES EXPERIENCE".

Position Title (Most recent first)
FIRM/AGENCY, City, State

dates

- Accomplishment Bullets (How you made a difference at this organization)
- Minimize listing duties and tasks – describe how you made a difference
- Try to generate three or more bullets for each position in this section

Leadership Experience:

If you have any leadership experience whether elected, appointed, or simply assumed, describe it as if it were a job. Employers come to UH Hilo to recruit the future leaders of their company. Give yourself an appropriate title and follow the format suggested above.

Position Title (Most recent first)
CLUB/AGENCY, City, State

dates

- Accomplishment Bullets (See "Generate an Accomplishments List" exercise)
- Avoid simply listing duties and tasks – describe how you made a difference
- Try to generate three or more bullets for each position in this section

Related Experience:

As a general rule, if it is honest work, it is "Related" to your objective. If you lack space or accomplishment bullets, you may simply want to list the position title, firm or agency & dates.

Activities And Honors:

List any academic or other honors that you have earned, community activities, organizational activities that are not substantive enough to be listed under "Leadership Experience".

Figure 2; Sample Chronological Resume Format:

VICKI VULCAN

4### Kilauea Avenue, Hilo, HI 96720, (808) 935-#### vulcan@hawaii.edu

Objective:

A management trainee position in retail merchandising.

Education:

University of Hawai'i at Hilo

Bachelor of Arts in English
GPA: 3.46

May 2003

Business coursework includes: Financial, Managerial, and Intermediate Accounting; Auditing, Business Law, The Global Economy, Statistics, and Business Writing

Business Skills:

Retail Sales and Sales Management Experience. Bilingual Japanese/English. Conversational Spanish. Proficient in use of IBM-PC; Familiar with Macintosh operating system.. Extensive experience with WordPerfect and Pagemaker.

Experience:

Assistant Manager

ISLAND FURNITURE, Hilo, Hawaii

2000 - Present

- Joined firm as sales associate; rapidly promoted to Assistant Manager.
- Scheduled and supervised a staff of seven employees.
- Increased sales volume by 25% in six months time.

Program Coordinator

NATIVE HAWAIIAN EDUCATION PROJECT, UH HILO

1998 - 2000

- Began as volunteer; selected for promotion to Program Coordinator.
- Trained 15 new volunteers to work with at-risk elementary school children.
- Wrote, compiled and edited a twenty page manual for training volunteers.
- Expanded the program to include five additional elementary schools.

Office Assistant

THOMAS TEMPORARIES, INC., Hilo, Hawaii

1998- 2000

- Provided clerical support for several large corporate offices and law firms.
- Enhanced administrative skills and became proficient in the use of computers.
- Received several offers for permanent employment based on excellent performance.

Honors & Activities:

Deans List
Program Director, UH Hilo Business Investment Society
Contributing Writer, "Ke Kalahea", UH Hilo (Student newspaper)

Figure 3; Sample "Targeted Section" Chronological Resume:

VICKI VULCAN

4### Kilauea Avenue, Hilo, HI 96720, (808) 935 - ####

vvulcan@hawaii.edu

Career Objective:

An entry-level position on a newspaper editorial staff.

Editing / Reporting Skills:

Student newspaper editing and reporting experience. Bilingual Japanese/English. Conversational Spanish. Proficient in use of IBM-PC, familiar with MacIntosh operating system. Extensive experience with Microsoft Word and Pagemaker.

Education:

Bachelor of Arts in English

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AT HILO

May 2003

GPA: 3.46

Independent Research Project: Wrote a 40 page report on Japanese influences on Hawaiian culture. Researched current periodicals covering cultural, educational, economic, and social issues.

Writing Experience

Contributing Writer

KE KALAHEA, UH HILO

2000 - 2002

- Authored articles targeting Asian American issues for university student newspaper
- Researched community issues and interviewed prominent community leaders.

Program Coordinator/Editor

NATIVE HAWAIIAN EDUCATION PROJECT, UH HILO

1998 - 2000

- Compiled and edited a 20 page training manual for volunteers.
- Expanded program to include 3 additional elementary schools in East Hawaii.
- Recruited and trained student volunteers to work with at-risk elementary school children.

Related Experience:

Assistant Manager

ISLAND FURNITURE, Hilo, Hawaii

2000 - Present

- Joined firm as sales associate; rapidly promoted to assistant manager.
- Created ad copy and developed other promotional materials.
- Composed a variety of business correspondence.

Office Assistant

THOMAS TEMPORARIES, INC., Hilo, Hawaii

1998 - 2000

- Enhanced administrative skills and became proficient in the use of computers.
- Received several offers for permanent employment based on excellent performance.

Figure 4; Sample Functional Resume Format

ANDY VULCAN

5## Kinoole Avenue, Hilo, HI 96720
(808) 935-### avulcan@ucla.edu

Objective

A cooperative education position or internship in the computer science industry.

Education

Computer Science Minor, Economics Major Dec 2004
University of Hawaii at Hilo

Mathematics, Associate of Science June 2002
Fresno City College

Coursework includes: Software Development, Visual Basic Programming , Web Technology, Discrete Mathematics, Artificial Intelligence, Data Structures Programming, Operating Systems, Computer Networks and Data Communication, Compiler Theory, Artificial Intelligence, Analysis of Algorithms, and related mathematics courses.

Computer Skills

Technical:

Programming Languages: C++, FORTRAN, PASCAL, FoxPro, HTML, JAVA
Operating Systems & UNIX, X-Windows, SunView MS-DOS, MVS/ESA,

Environments: IBM 270/135, IBM 3033, IBM 3690, Burroughs B3600, Sun Micro-station

Application Software: Excel, Access, WordArt, DesignMaker, Microsoft Word 7.0,
WordPerfect 6.0

Programming:

- Designed purchasing system that operates on Novell Network using FoxPro.
- Produced computerized chess game using artificial intelligence techniques.
- Designed own homepage using HTML and JAVA.

Research:

- Participated in research project involving heuristic search algorithms.
- Prepared written reports of research projects.

ACTIVITIES/HONORS

Computer Science Students Association, UH Hilo
Webmasters Student Group, UH Hilo
National Association of Collegiate Scholars (NACS)
Representative at Large, Fresno City College

Figure 5; Sample Combination Resume Format:

BARRY VULCAN

20## Beverly Glenn Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90024, (310) 825-#### bvulcan@ix.netcom.net

Accomplishments

- Designated "Sales Person of the Year" three years in a row.
- Directed turn-around of sales force with declining production.
- Achieved a 57% increase in sales volume within first year as manager.
- Recommended new product line that resulted in \$3.5 million dollar increase in business.
- Designed system for inventory control that resulted in 30% reduction in merchandise loss.

Skills & Experience Summary

Sales Promotion:

- Prepared and supervised sales promotion projects for major business organizations.
- Created newspaper, radio and television advertising campaigns for new product lines.
- Represented company at trade association meetings to promote products and services.

Sales Management:

- Recruited, trained and supervised local and regional sales staff.
- Developed and implemented sales training and development programs.
- Assigned territories, established quotas, and supervised achievement of goals.

Market Research:

- Organized and directed market research projects to determine customer needs.
- Prepared sales forecasts; made recommendations on product design, pricing and distribution.
- Composed detailed reports of survey results for corporate management team.

Empoyment History

Sales Manager GILMORE RESEARCH CORPORATION, Los Angeles, CA	2000 - Present
Assistant Sales Manager WEBER-UBICK ENGINEERING, Ceres, CA	1998 - 2000
Sales Associate N. STAHL & COMPANY, Fresno, CA	1995 - 1998

Education

Certificate in Marketing FRESNO CITY COLLEGE	1998
Bachelor of Arts in Economics UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AT HILO	1995

Figure 6; Cover Letter Template:

Your Name

Mailing Address, City, State, Zip (a/c) Phone Number

your email address

Date

Name of Contact

Title

Name of Organization

Address

City, State, Zip

Dear Mr./Ms. Last name of Contact:

INTRODUCTION: State the position or type of work for which you are applying. Identify how you learned of the opportunity. In one or two sentences, tell why the position and organization interest you. Give a very brief summary of your education and background. (E.g.: *"I will be graduating from UH Hilo with a Bachelors of Business Administration in May of this year and have had several internships related to this field."*)

SELL YOURSELF: (Research the company and the position beforehand!) Succinctly state why you are qualified for the position using the employers terminology and jargon. Highlight two or three major accomplishments that demonstrate your initiative, creativity, follow-through, communication skills, and problem solving abilities. Be sure to draw a connection between the needs of the current job opening and the skills and experience that you will bring to the job. This section may be one or two paragraphs long.

ASK FOR AN INTERVIEW: Re-emphasize your interest, politely thank the employer for their time, and request an interview – or indicate that you will call to arrange an interview.

Sincerely,

Don't forget to sign your letter!

Your Name Typed

Figure 7; Cover Letter Sample:

NOLEMANA K. KILA

P.O. Box 5X

Hilo, Hawaii 96721-005x (808) 981 – 2###

nkila@hotmail.com

January 10, 200x

Mr. Ugatta Job
Human Resource Manager
Big Island Medical Group
1176 Hunhau Street
Kailua-Kona, HI 96740

Aloha Mr. Job:

I am applying for the Human Resource Representative position that is listed on the UH Hilo Career Center's website. I will graduate from UH Hilo in May with a Bachelors Degree in Psychology and a Business Administration Minor. My internships in human resources and my academic training provide me with sound interpersonal and business skills. I am interested in this position because it involves providing human resource services in a health care environment. In addition, I noted that a recent edition of the Pacific Business News listed your Group as the fastest growing company on the Big Island.

You will note from my resume, that I have completed two human resource related internships – one with a health care organization. At the *Bay Clinic* in Hilo, I performed the duties, tasks, and responsibilities associated with employee benefit administration and observed clerks and supervisors in the payroll and labor relations section. At *ALTRES Staffing*, I gained a thorough understanding of the functions associated with the employment process. These experiences, combined with my computer proficiency (MS Access, Excel, Power Point & Word) allow me to be extremely innovative and efficient. I have developed strong written and verbal communication skills through such human resource activities as drafting job postings, interviewing & evaluating applicants, processing employee evaluations, explaining benefits packages and procedures. Through my student leadership positions, I have become comfortable speaking to audiences over 75 people.

I believe that I could be a valuable asset to the Big Island Medical Group and will call you within the week to arrange a meeting to discuss ways that I might be of benefit to your organization. In the meantime, I can be reached at (808) 981 – 2#### or you may email me at nkila@hotmail.com.

Sincerely,

Nolemana Kila

Nolemana K. Kila