

Resume Help

One of the early steps in preparing for a job search is the development of a high quality resume that represents your skills, experience and educational attainments. Your resume, usually a concise one-pager, is the document that either will attract an employer to call you in for an interview or will block you from having that opportunity. Without an interview, of course, there is no possibility that you will get a job.

Preparing to Write Your resume

Before beginning your resume, review your education, work experience, interests, extracurricular activities, travel, foreign language ability, military service, memberships and community service in order to determine what to include. Carefully consider what you have accomplished and the skills you have developed through your experience. Employers are particularly interested in examples of leadership, self-motivation and communication skills.

Gathering and organizing this diverse information can be daunting. However, if you make a practice of noting this information as it occurs and keeping this information in one place, future resumes and applications will be much easier to complete. The Kuder Career Planning System gives you the opportunity to record and organize that information within the resume Builder area. You can create a resume that has the following sections:

- Summary
- Work Experience
- Education
- Skills
- Certifications
- Languages
- Honors and Awards
- Organizations

It is very easy to enter and edit the information and to keep your e-portfolio updated. If you create and label your initial resume as a Master resume, you can add all of the information you might need in the future to create a resume. The information you store here is available to you at any time, from anywhere you have internet access, as long as you remember your User Name and Password. You can continue to update and add information throughout your life. When you are ready to create a new resume or fill out an application for educational opportunities or financial aid, that information will be available and neatly organized for you.

Creating Your resume

To begin a new resume using the Kuder Career Planning System, simply click on Add New resume from the resume Builder main page. Begin by completing the following fields:

- Resume Title - Give your new resume a unique name.
- Summary - Type in a brief, clearly worded statement of what you want to do, where you want to do it and your skills that are relevant for the desired position. Your objective should be customized to each type of position for which you apply.
- Resume Format - There are two basic resume formats. Choose the one that will best highlight your strengths.
 - o The chronological resume stresses continuity of employment. It is especially effective if your work history is related to your career goals and you can show increasing responsibility. Items under each heading are presented in reverse chronological order, beginning with the most recent dates or the most relevant experience. Include dates of employment, names and addresses of employers, job titles and brief descriptions of your responsibilities and accomplishments in each instance. Chronological resume example (Opens in a new window.)
 - o The functional resume is arranged according to skills and/or job function experience (such as Organization, Research, Management, Communications, etc.). All experiences that show proficiency in a specific skill are grouped together, minimizing or not mentioning names of past employers or dates. This format can be useful for persons with considerable volunteer (rather than paid) experience, career changers and recent college graduates with limited employment who wish to emphasize skills they have acquired in schooling. Functional resume example (Opens in a new window.)

- Resume Style - Choose a style that best expresses your personality. While the Kuder system offers you a great deal of flexibility in choosing which items will be included in your resume and in which style that information will be presented, you may wish to customize the resume further or create your own unique style. In order to do this, select and copy the information from your resume and paste it into word processing or desktop publishing software to edit it further.
 - o The basic resume style has the least amount of formatting. It is suitable for copying into another program for additional editing as described above or for use as an electronic resume, which can be submitted in print form or on diskette to be scanned into a searchable database, included in, or attached to an e-mail message.
 - o The contemporary, elegant and professional styles are all suitable for printing. Simply choose the style you prefer. PLEASE NOTE: In order to print a resume that can be given to potential employers, you may need to change your browser's default setting so that it does not print the web page header and footer information. Changing this setting is usually done through the browser's Page Setup dialogue.

When you have completed the required information, click "Save" to save your resume. If you do not wish to save this resume, click on the "Cancel" button.

Begin to build the body of your resume by adding content in the appropriate fields. Use the information you collected during your preparation stage, as described above. If you do not have information for a particular category, that category will not appear on your final resume.

- Work Experience - Provide information about your work experience, including full-time, part-time, summer, volunteer and internship experiences. Describe accomplishments and specific tasks rather than "responsibilities." Emphasize transferable skills, especially as they relate to the employer who will read your resume. Begin phrases with "action" verbs such as organized, planned, led and advised. Omit personal pronouns and be positive and concise.
- Education - List educational institutions you have attended. If you are completing a postsecondary degree, you may not wish to include high school information.
- Skills - If you plan to complete a functional resume, this area is vital; it is optional for a chronological resume. List specific skills such as Management Skills, Organizational Skills and Leadership Abilities; then provide specific evidence indicating how you have developed and used those skills.
- Certifications - List any certifications you have received that may help show your skill level.
- Languages - Enter any languages you speak.
- Honors and Awards - Describe any awards or honors you have earned.
- Organizations - List extracurricular activities if they are relevant to work, describing them in the same style as work experience. Include examples of leadership, offices held and program planning involvement. Include information about any memberships in professional organizations or fraternities, mentioning offices, titles, special duties and achievements.

As you complete the information in the resume Edit form, you may wish to click periodically on the "Print" button at the top of the page to see how your resume looks as you complete the information. Modify the content as necessary so that it accurately and attractively portrays your strengths and skills.

Resume Tips

Besides the fact that your resume must represent strong skills and experience for the position, it should have the following characteristics:

- Look attractive and be very accurate in spelling, punctuation and format.
- Adequately state your skills and experience and how these relate to the position, for which you are applying.
- Indicate, if possible, positive outcomes that the organization will have because of your use of your skills and experience on its behalf.
- Avoid use of the pronoun "I."
- Omit information such as your weight, description of a disability, or number of children that might exclude you from an interview or raise unwanted questions.
- Have some characteristics that will set it apart from other resumes. (Print on high quality, lightly colored paper and use good formatting.)
- Not be more than two pages in length and usually only one for a recent graduate.
- Be printed on a laser printer, using high quality bond paper that matches the quality and color of paper you use for your cover letter, envelope and references list.

Sending Your Resume

If you plan to submit your resume on paper, click on "Printable View" at the top of the page and then select your preferred resume style. Modify your browser settings so that the header and footer information will not print, then select "Print" from your browser menu.

A short, well-written cover letter should accompany your printed resume. The cover letter has two purposes: to get the recipient to read your resume and to elicit a response that will lead to an interview. While a well-written letter will not guarantee you a position, a poorly written letter could eliminate you as a candidate, regardless of your qualifications. The following guidelines will help you write a good cover letter:

- Send both a letter and a resume whenever you apply for either an advertised or an unadvertised position.
- Address the letter to a specific person by name and title. If you do not have that information, call the company's Human Resource Development office or use its web site to try to get this information.
- In the first paragraph, mention the position for which you are applying, who referred you, how you learned of the position and/or why you are interested in working for the company.
- Briefly refer to the qualifications and experience that you have for the position. State that you are enclosing a resume that describes your skills and experience in more detail.
- Emphasize what you can do for the employer rather than how the job would benefit you.
- Include one or more phone numbers and, if you have one, an e-mail address where you can be reached.
- Make each cover letter look original and tailored to a specific position, even if you are using a template.
- Use correct grammar, spelling and punctuation. Use good business form. Errors in any one of these may erase your opportunity for an interview.
- Print each cover letter on standard size bond stationery that matches that of your resume.
- Try to trigger reader interest. Make your first sentence count!

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