

10 Tips for a Great Resume

A **resume** is a selling tool that helps tell your story, communicate your value, and gain a competitive edge in your job search. Following are **10 tips** to help you prepare a distinctive document to position you positively and win an interview.

1

Put yourself in the shoes of your reader. Looking at hiring from an employer's perspective is an essential first step in preparing your resume and launching your job search. Consider the knowledge/skills/experience/personality characteristics he or she will be looking for, and then begin with a plan to clearly demonstrate these throughout your resume. When deciding what information to include, ask yourself:

- What are my core qualifications for this position that the reader should know about?
- What skill-based evidence do I have to support my candidacy for this position?

2

Write a dynamic OBJECTIVE, PROFILE, or SKILLS SUMMARY section to focus the reader's attention on your skills and areas of interest. It should provide a quick snapshot of who you are and the best you have to offer as it relates to your target position. Organize and format your material to create a cohesive introduction and capture immediate attention.

Example: Third-year Tulane University student seeking an **Environmental Engineering Internship** utilizing mechanical, technical, and communication skills in the alternative and sustainable energy industry. Qualified by a unique blend of project management, research, and data analysis skills gained through academic projects and field experience.

3

Describe your experience, strengths, and selling points in brief bulleted sentences or phrases. Begin each description with a strong action verb and use keywords relating to the position, especially those you find in the job announcement. Use \$s, %s, and #s to quantify your successes.

Examples:

- Launched introduction of Old Navy credit card campaign and exceeded campaign goals by 15% in five-store region.
- Coordinated logistics of campus-wide charity event attracting 6000 supporters and raising more than \$20k for cancer research.
- Designed customer database implementing entity-relationship schema and SQL queries using HTML/PHP web interface, meeting client specifications and deadline.

4

Present your information in an organized format to maximize readability with the most relevant information first. Typically, this means selecting an easy-to-read font (10-12 point), setting margins of no less than three quarters of an inch, and organizing sections with descriptive headings on a single page with as much white space as possible.



5 **Begin the EDUCATION section with your highest degree** and the date you will receive it. Study abroad may be included in this section, if relevant, along with your GPA and any notable coursework relevant to the position. High school information should only be included if it gives you a competitive advantage.

Example:

Bachelor of Science, Economics GPA: 3.9 May 2011
 Tulane University, New Orleans, LA
 Minor: English



6 **Include experience** – paid or unpaid – related to the position you are applying for in an EXPERIENCE section. (This section may also be titled Professional Experience or Relevant Experience.) List your job title, organization worked for, location, and dates of employment followed by two to four bulleted sentences or phrases describing your accomplishments and the significant impact you made on the organization.

Example:

Research Associate January-May 2010
 Chemistry Department, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA
 • Analyzed data for optimizing bioluminescent qualities of silicate nanoparticles for use as cellular biomarkers.



7 **Consider describing extracurricular, community service, and volunteer experience** in a section titled LEADERSHIP or LEADERSHIP & SERVICE. Add a descriptive bullet to elaborate on leadership experiences or commitments where you contributed significantly to the success of the organization. Include dates if relevant.

Example:

Tour Guide, Delta Tau Delta Fraternity, Tulane Spring 2011
Public Relations Officer, Public Health Society, Tulane Fall 2009-Spring 2010



8 **Highlight technical, language, lab, research, and/or computer skills** in a defined SKILLS section. Include levels of proficiency where relevant.

Example:

Lab: Chromatography • Enzyme assays • Plasmid amplification • Electrophoresis
Computer: Comsol • Paraview • Bioedit • MATLAB • Microsoft Office
Languages: French (fluent) • Spanish (intermediate)



9 **Proofread** your resume, cover letter, and other supporting documents for typos and grammatical errors. Then ask someone else to proof it again. Check especially for accuracy in your contact information. Read your resume backwards to keep your brain from missing typos or missing letters.



10 **Field test** your resume with friends, mentors, parents, and professors. Ask for feedback, recommendations, and referrals to others who can help you make the connections you need in your job search.