



The Art of Writing a Successful Resume

Your Resume

While the primary purpose of the resume is to help you secure a job, I would also like to encourage you to look at the document in more celebratory terms. Rarely will you have such a concise snapshot of your accomplishments and capabilities. So, in addition to the resume's practical value, remember to use this document as a means to help you enjoy who you are and what you have achieved across your professional career.

Understanding the Game

In order to produce the best resume possible, you must be prepared to stand in the shoes of your reader. Depending on the job you are applying for, you may be competing against dozens, hundreds, maybe even thousands of other applicants. So, you must do your best to set yourself apart from this competition. Your reader (and sometimes there are more than one) must have a reason to stay engaged with your resume.

Often, experienced readers can make a decision on a resume in less than 30 seconds (i.e. whether or not to proceed to the next round in the hiring process). With this in mind, you want to provide the reader with immediate accessible information that entices them to read more deeply into your experiences and talents. This is what the Executive Profile is for (the first section at the top of your resume with Core Competencies and a short paragraph).

Furthermore, your resume must be **concise, well organized, and easy to navigate**. Most important, it should have absolutely no mistakes with respect to grammar, spelling, or punctuation. **The importance of proofreading your resume cannot be stressed enough.**

Remember: The sole function of the resume is to get you an interview, not to relay every detail of every thing that you have accomplished thus far. If you are fortunate enough to gain an interview, you will almost certainly be asked to expand on aspects of the resume in more detail.

Conveying Your Strengths

Many people assume that listing their professional and academic accomplishments confidently constitutes bragging. This is not true. List your achievements with sureness, knowing that this is how you are going to separate yourself from the competition.

The Formats in This Resume Builder Package

The included resume formats are based on a template that has been consistently and successfully utilized to gain interviews for high-level executives and administrators, including CEOs, CIOs, Community College Presidents, CTOs, and Managing Directors.



IMPORTANT FACTS TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GET STARTED:

- Save Your Work Consistently. There is nothing worse than having to start a document from scratch because you forgot to save it repeatedly.
- Read through all of the directions below before you begin. If you don't, you risk choosing a format that does not work for you. And, you may have to go back and start over.

Using The Examples or Template:

There are many examples of real, position-specific resumes in the “Examples” folder. Some match the standard format of this resume-builder package (resume_1.doc in “Resume_Templates” folder). Some have unique styles and formatting specific to the requests, skills, and experiences of the owner.

Before you begin writing your resume, please explore them. In particular, look at all of the resumes with an “A” before the file name. These are a selection of resumes that present varied styles, unique ways of presenting information, and good word usage. They are valuable to peruse no matter what position you are seeking for. The resumes with a “B” before the name are position specific. **When you write your resume, you can either use the template or you can use one of these resume examples as your base.**

You Will Need Basic Microsoft Word Skills to Use The Resume-Builder

You will need to know how to do the following:

- Highlight and Delete
- Copy, Cut, and Paste
- Bullet Points
- Convert and save as a .PDF (see addendum C below)
- Bonus: Paragraph Function, Tab Spacing

THE PROCESS:

STEP 1: Gather Your Information

Gather all of the information that speaks to your professional experience, including past resumes and a job description that indicates either the job that you want to apply for or a similar position you want. Be sure and fill out the questionnaire included in this package. For information that is already on an existing resume, **you do not need to re-write it in the questionnaire.**

STEP 2: Pick Your Template and Set Up Your Sections

Choose one of the resume templates or resume examples in this package to use as your base. Pick whichever feels most comfortable to work with. Then set up the sections you want in your resume. You can delete sections you don't want, change section titles you want to keep, and change the order of sections using the copy and paste command.



Job Sections: Set up a section for each organization that you have worked for. At the bottom of the resume, there are additional (and optional) sections that you may copy and paste into your resume. This means that you most likely will need to delete some sections on the resume template. If necessary, you can create more job sections using the copy and paste command.

For jobs within single companies at which you have held several positions, use the job section that has multiple positions located at the bottom of the resume.

STEP 3: Fill Out the Body of Your Resume

To fill out your resume, start with your name, address, and contact information at the top. Next, fill out the job title in the executive summary because this is usually the job you want, but it can be your current position as well. Then, fill out the Education Section and other non-job areas (volunteer experience, certifications, presentations, awards, etc.)

Now you will need to focus on the job sections (Professional Experience). Fill out the job headers: organization name, job title, location, and dates of employment. Your most recent position should be at the top, and it should end with your oldest position. Unless requested, you do not need to include months, only years.

You have two options for your work history: Highlight your Results or your Responsibilities.

Results are quantifiable achievements. In other words, you can measure the specific outcome of the actions you took.

- Good Example: *Generated \$40K in sales revenue in four years. Used aggressive online marketing and cold calling techniques.*
- Bad Example: *Increased effectiveness of marketing plan.*

Responsibilities are everything else.

- Good Example: *Called new customers to ensure satisfaction with product.*

Results: If you are going to focus on presenting **results** in your bulleted list (this is the preferred option), then you can use the paragraph section (just below the job title) to write down your general responsibilities. What did you do everyday? What did you handle? How many people did you manage? What kind of a budget was involved? In the paragraph, **be sure to use complete sentences.**
For an example, see: "Results_Focused_Resume.pdf"

Responsibilities: If you are going to focus on presenting **responsibilities** in the bulleted list, then you can use the paragraph section to present a one or two line description of the organization (i.e. what they offered, size of organization, budget, etc.), a brief overall description of your work responsibilities OR, delete the paragraph section altogether. Also, if present, delete the "Results" sub-header.
For an example, see: "Responsibilities_Focused_Resume.pdf"



Bullets: Whether you focus on results or responsibilities, make sure that the first word of every bullet point is a verb and is in the proper tense (i.e. if you are doing it now then it would be “prepare”, but if you did it in the past then it would be “prepared”).

Never use the same beginning verb twice in the same section. So, if you use the word “managed” somewhere, start other bullets with words like “oversaw, headed, led, and coordinated.” **Please see Addendum B below for ideas. For bullets, don’t use complete sentences.** Use as few words as possible without making a sentence awkward. (Take a look at the samples.) Break up long sentences into several short ones.

- Good Example: *Wrote briefs for upper management on weekly basis.*
- Bad Example: *Wrote many briefs for my organization’s upper management on a weekly basis.*

Spillover: If a single company section spills over from one page onto the next, either work to eliminate this, or repeat the name of company (or job title) followed by “-cont.-” at the top of the page that it spills onto. Italicise this mini-header and make sure that it isn’t bulleted.

For example: *The Jones Company – cont. –*

STEP 4: Fill Out the Executive Profile

Fill out the description paragraph and Core Competencies at the top. For the **Core Competencies**, if possible, you will want to include items on the job description that you are applying for. Be concise and consistent. Decide whether you want to start each sentence with a verb (manage), or an area (budget management), or otherwise. Every point should be in the same format (just like with the bullets). The one exception is special skills like language fluency (fluent in French, English, and German), special

Core Competencies

- ✓ *Document Drafting: Estate Planning, Probate, Personal Injury, Worker’s Comp, & Family Law*
- ✓ *Client Relationships: Information Maintenance & Case Updates*
- ✓ *Office Operations: Equipment, Computers & Software in Network Environment*
- ✓ *Schedule Administration: Setting & Adherence*
- ✓ *Data Coordination: Entry & Filing*
- ✓ *Certified Notary Public*

Core Competencies

- ✓ Multi-Departmental Program Management
- ✓ Global, Cross-Functional Team Leadership
- ✓ Integrated Launch Planning
- ✓ Operational Improvement Methodologies
- ✓ Change Control & Administration
- ✓ Budgetary Planning
- ✓ Report Generation & Presentation
- ✓ Risk identification & Mitigation

certifications, or special clearances. These should go at the bottom of the list.

For the **Executive Summary paragraph**, be precise. You can include skills, personality traits, results, and areas you have worked in (experienced in pharmaceutical and health equipment sales), etc. As with bullets, never start a sentence with a word that you already used to start another sentence. Try to vary the words you use overall. Sentences do not need to be complete, but make sure that you are



consistent. If you use complete sentences then every sentence should be complete. If you use incomplete sentences then every sentence should be incomplete.

Examples of Executive Summaries:

- Skilled, certified Paralegal and Notary with experience assisting attorneys in Estate Planning, Probate, Personal Injury, Worker’s Comp, Family Law, and Business Law. Handles multiple priorities with ease. Drafts excellent communications and documentation, including: court forms, deeds, and business fillings. Develops and manages data spreadsheets with precision. Skilled at performing general administrative duties and resourceful in completing other assigned tasks. Diligent, loyal and affable.
- Globally-astute management leader and strategist with proven history of success in \$MM product development lifecycles. Known for ability to “Get it done,” in high-growth environments while also increasing internal efficiencies and reducing costs. Comfortable with worldwide, multi-functional staff management. Drives results through leadership, detailed resource coordination, and process expertise. Highly skilled at developing strong relationships with executive leadership and stakeholders. Innovative and agile problem solver.

STEP 6: Adjust All Spacing

Review the spacing and adjust it on your monitor. Then, print your resume and notice where else you need to adjust it.

STEP 7: Self-Check Your Resume

This is important. A potential employer may toss out a resume with errors. **Please see Addendum A below.**

STEP 8: Have a Friend or Colleague Read Your Resume

Please make sure they look for:

- a) Grammar errors
- b) Spelling errors
- c) Formatting inconsistencies

STEP 9: Save Your Resume in Two Formats

Save your resume as both a .doc (Microsoft Word format) and as a .pdf (Adobe Acrobat – Portable Document Format). If you are going to submit your resume online to an organization, or email it to someone, you will want to send it as a .pdf. The formatting may be altered otherwise. (see Addendum C below)

If You Need Additional Help

- Make an appointment at a local business or employment center where they can review your resume and help you with any details. Your local library may also provide this service.
- See if your college or university provides any assistance with this (alumnae services or career center).
- Find a provider to do final edits or alterations on a small job contract site like UpWork.com.
- Hire us to help you. please contact Kerri at Kerri@7nightingales.com.



FINAL CHECK PROCESS (ADDENDUM A)

Writing, Grammar, and Spelling

1. Run **spell-check and grammar-check** in Microsoft Word and make appropriate changes.
2. Ensure consistent **article usage** ("a", "an", "the") throughout your resume (recommended: eliminate all articles).
3. Use **1st person** (minus the "I"), not 3rd person, for all verbs in job descriptions and bullets (e.g. direct projects ...).
4. Use the NY Times or other major newspapers online to verify accuracy of tricky **spelling and word usage** questions.
5. **Check that hyphen usage** is correct (e.g. on-time projects, 20-year period).
6. Use **state abbreviations** (NY, not New York).

Display & Formatting

1. **Page margins** are at least .75 inches on left, right, top, and bottom (recommended: 1 inch).
2. All paragraphs and bullets are **left-aligned**, not justified.
3. Make sure you are consistent in your use of periods. Are there periods after some bullet points and not others?
4. Make sure you are consistent in your capitalization. Do some bullet points begin with a capital and others not?
5. **Spacing after periods** is consistent, i.e. two spaces throughout or one space throughout.
6. Font sizes, types, and weights are **consistent** throughout the resume (e.g. company names match).
7. **Font spacing** is Normal, not Expanded.
8. Paragraph spacing, line spacing, and line break sizes are **consistent** throughout resume.



ACTION VERB LIST (ADDENDUM B)

Management Skills

administered, analyzed, assigned, attained, chaired, consolidated, contracted, coordinated, delegated, developed, directed, evaluated, executed, improved, increased, organized, oversaw, planned, prioritized, produced, recommended, reviewed, scheduled, strengthened, supervised

Communication Skills

addressed, arbitrated, arranged, authored, collaborated, convinced, corresponded, developed, directed, drafted, edited, enlisted, formulated, influenced, interpreted, lectured, mediated, moderated, negotiated, persuaded, promoted, publicized, reconciled, recruited, spoke, translated, wrote

Research Skills

clarified, collected, critiqued, diagnosed, evaluated, examined, extracted, identified, inspected, interpreted, interviewed, investigated, organized, reviewed, summarized, surveyed, systematized

Technical Skills

assembled, built, calculated, computed, designed, devised, engineered, fabricated, maintained, operated, overhauled, programmed, remodeled, repaired, solved, upgraded

Teaching Skills

adapted, advised, clarified, coached, communicated, coordinated, demystified, developed, enabled, encouraged, evaluated, explained, facilitated, guided, informed, instructed, persuaded, set goals, stimulated, trained

Financial Skills

administered, allocated, analyzed, appraised, audited, balanced, budgeted, calculated, computed, developed, forecasted, managed, marketed, planned, projected, researched

Creative Skills

acted, conceptualized, created, customized, designed, developed, directed, established, fashioned, founded, illustrated, initiated, instituted, integrated, introduced, invented, originated, performed, planned, revitalized, shaped

Helping Skills

assessed, assisted, clarified, coached, counseled, demonstrated, diagnosed, educated, expedited, facilitated, familiarized, guided, motivated, referred, rehabilitated, represented

Clerical or Detail Skills

approved, arranged, catalogued, classified, collected, compiled, dispatched, executed, generated, implemented, inspected, monitored, operated, organized, prepared, processed, purchased, recorded, retrieved, screened, specified, systematized, tabulated, validated

Other Verbs

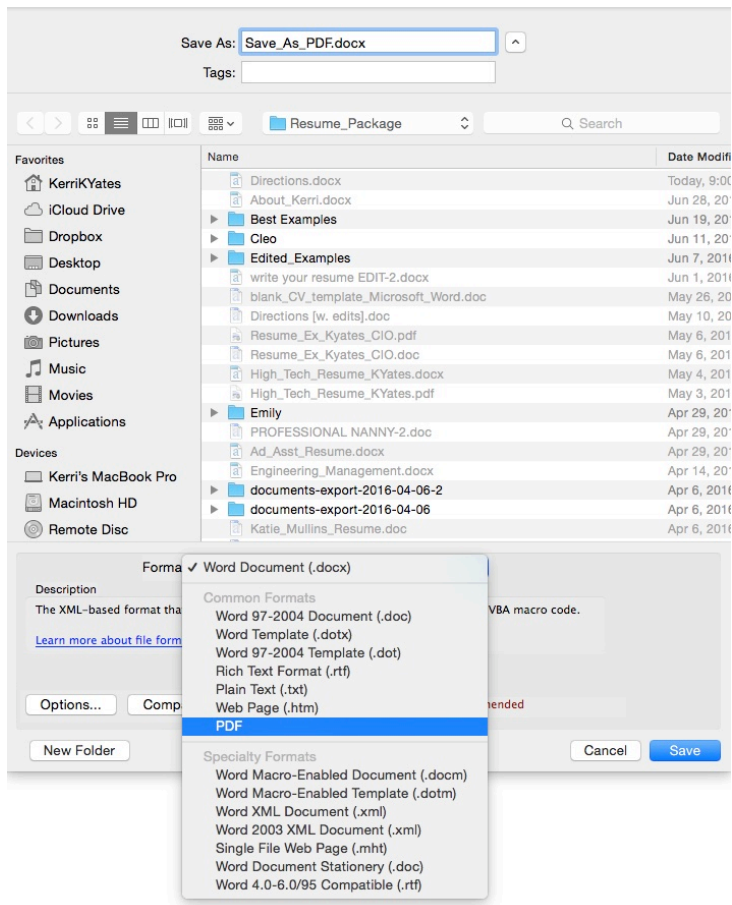
achieved, expanded, improved, pioneered, reduced (losses), resolved (problems), restored, spearheaded, transformed

From The Damn Good Resume Guide by Yana Parker, Berkeley: Ten Speed Press
<http://hrweb.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/action-verbs.pdf>



TO CREATE A .PDF DOCUMENT (ADDENDUM C)

1) In Microsoft Word, click “Save As”, then choose “.PDF” (see image below)



2) If you don't have this option, you can use a free online PDF converter tool. For example: PDF Online - <http://www.pdfonline.com/convert-pdf/>