

FINDING WORK

Preparing Your Resume

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A resume is a summary of your experiences, skills and accomplishments. The resume includes more detailed information than a letter of application. Ideally, it should make you stand out in a positive way for an employer and show how you are different from the rest of the applicants. It is one way to get invited to a job interview. Your resume is the first impression a potential employer will have of you; you want it to be a good one!

A well written resume highlighting your skills and experiences is key to your job search success.

Remember, the main purpose of a resume is to obtain a job interview. Therefore, your summary of relevant paid and non-paid work experiences, marketable skills and education should be tailored to fit the prospective employer's needs. The resume should relate your skills and accomplishments to the requirements of the position. It should also provide a prospective employer with an overview of how you can contribute to the needs of their organization.

TYPES OF RESUMES

In general, there are two types of resumes—chronological resumes and functional resumes.

- **Chronological Resume:** This kind of resume provides a year-by-year outline of your education, work experiences and related information. This resume format is more traditional and is the best choice for those who have continuous work experiences. An example of a chronological resume is found in Figure 1.
- **Functional Resume:** A functional resume highlights clusters of skills and abilities you have obtained from past experiences. This resume type relates these to the job for which you are applying. An example of a functional resume is shown in Figure 2. Individuals with little paid work experiences, those re-entering the job market or those changing careers may decide to use a functional resume since this resume type focuses attention on what you can do rather than where you have been in the workforce.

Regardless of whether your resume is a chronological resume or a functional resume, it is a good idea to have someone read your resume before you submit it to an employer. It is essential that your resume be error free. Spelling errors, typos and other mistakes do not make a good first impression.

WRITING YOUR RESUME

Most resumes include some of the following information in a one- to two-page format:

- Your name, address, phone number and email
- A sentence describing your career objective (This can be optional)
- A list of schools or colleges attended and degrees or certificates received
- A list of your competencies and skills that are relevant to the job you are seeking
- A list of work experiences, including full time jobs and part time work
- A statement indicating the availability of references (This can be optional)

Your resume should be modified when applying for different jobs. For example, the sentence describing your career objective should fit the job for which you are applying. In addition, you may want to add or drop some statements on your resume so the resume includes only experiences that apply to the position you are seeking.

Key Tips for Developing Your Resume

- List your name and contact information centered at the top of your resume. It is best to avoid placing your name on the left side in case your resume is paper clipped with other materials.
- Develop your career objective to include at least three parts—the type of position you desire, the type of company you would like to work for, and any specific skills you bring to the position. (Including a career objective is optional and not always required for a resume.)
- List your degrees beginning with the most recent one first. Be sure to list any certificates or special trainings you have received.
- Use the heading “experience” instead of “employment.” Using this heading will allow you to list a variety of work experiences beyond full or part time employment including volunteer experiences and internships.
- Be consistent with your formatting and the use of headings.
- Describe your accomplishments and experiences using action words such as addressed, compiled, achieved, implemented, maintained, operated, coordinated, etc. Avoid starting any description of your work experiences with the phrase “responsibilities included”. You want your resume to show action and experience.

Don't worry too much about any gaps in your employment. Instead, focus on what skills you have learned during those times between work. You can list courses, trainings or volunteer work you did during these gap periods to show that you were still active and learning.

SELECTING REFERENCES

Selecting your potential references is very important. Include references who know you well and have positive things to say about you. They should include character references as well as people you may have worked for or with on committees or volunteer programs. It is advisable to use people who are professionals or are well-known in the community. Relatives should not be used as professional references.

Potential references should be contacted to obtain permission to use their names. Check that you have correct name spellings, correct addresses and correct telephone numbers before you give their names to potential employers. An employer may contact references either before or after an interview.

An enthusiastic reference from a reputable source can make the difference in whether or not you get the job. When you ask people to be references for you, give them a copy of your resume and update them on recent accomplishments. If possible, explain what type of job you are seeking or jobs for which you are applying.

Don't forget to thank those you use as a reference. Be sure to let them know the results of your job search.

It is best not to list references on your resume, but to indicate that they are available upon request. It is important that you compile a list of your references to be given to a potential employer when they ask. See Figure 3 for an example.

If the employer requests that you obtain letters from your references, you need to call the references, give them the name and address of the employer and ask them to send a letter. It is important to check with the employer in about two weeks to see if they actually received the letters.

SENDING YOUR RESUME

Whether you send your resume by mail or email, it is important to include a letter of application. (See UT Extension Publication W 936-E for assistance in preparing this important document.) If you are sending your resume by traditional mail, remember to use a business envelope which has been properly addressed with the name of the business contact as well as your return address.

If you are submitting a paper copy of your resume, make sure that your resume is printed on good quality, white paper.

Figure 1: Example Chronological Resume

WILLIAM JOB SEEKER

1234 Anywhere Street
Anytown, TN 00000
(000) 000-0000
williamjobseeker@address.com

Vocational Objective

To obtain a dietary management trainee position with a local healthcare facility

Education

May 20XX Anytown Community College
Associate of Science in Hospitality Management
Completed 9 hours in Nutrition and Food Sciences

Experience

20XX-Present	<p>Banquet Planner and Coordinator, L and L Banquet Hall Somewhere, Tennessee</p> <p>Coordinate a team of 20 employees in preparing and serving banquet meals to community groups of 25-350 persons. Efforts resulted in an increase in gross income. Responsible for quality control and management of finances. Plan menus and table decorations with community representatives.</p>
20XX-20XX	<p>Kitchen Facility Planner, The Kitchen Design Shop Somewhere, Tennessee</p> <p>Developed and revised remodeling plans for church kitchen facilities. Purchased all equipment by bid procedure for kitchen facilities.</p>
20XX-20XX	<p>Head Cashier, Food and More Grocery Somewhere, Tennessee</p> <p>Recorded daily register transactions. Worked with team members to develop a new process for efficient checkout procedures. Received the Customer Service Award of Excellence.</p>

References

Available upon request.

Figure 2: Example Functional Resume

NANCY JOB SEEKER

1234 Anywhere Street
Anytown, TN 00000
(000) 000-0000
nancyjobseeker@address.com

Vocational Objective

To obtain a full-time position in consumer sales that utilizes selling, communication and leadership skills.

Education

December 20XX Anywhere High School
College Preparatory Program

Relevant Skills

Selling

- Demonstrated ability to meet consumer needs through selling retail goods
- Earned the Outstanding Representative award three times
- Consistently exceeded monthly sales goals

Communication

- Assisted in writing the new employee training manual
- Assisted in leading new employee orientations for approximately 15 employees
- Recognized for outstanding efforts in addressing customer concerns
- Maintained accurate store and inventory records

Leadership

- Mentored approximately 15 new customer service employees
- Chaired the employment engagement committee
- Assisted store manager in creating weekly work schedules
- Developed new opening and closing procedures for the store

Experience

20XX-20XX Customer Service Representative, The Cell Phone Stop
Somewhere, TN

References

Available upon request.

Figure 2: *Example References Handout*

WILLIAM JOB SEEKER

1234 Anywhere Street
Anytown, TN 00000
(000) 000-0000
nancyjobseeker@address.com

First Reference Name and Title

Address

Phone Number

Email Address

Second Reference Name and Title

Address

Phone Number

Email Address

Third Reference Name and Title

Address

Phone Number

Email Address

Are you a SNAP recipient interested in finding a job that can help you be self-sufficient? If so, contact us.

UT Extension offers Skill Up Tennessee, a program designed to help eligible SNAP participants gain the skills, training, work or experience that will increase their ability to obtain regular employment.

To find out more about this program check out skillup.tennessee.edu

Skill Up Tennessee is UT Extension's SNAP Employment and Training program. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment & Training (SNAP E&T) is a partnership between the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and states to provide training and employment services to eligible SNAP participants. Skill Up Tennessee is offered through a partnership with the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

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