

RÉSUMÉ FORMAT

Common Résumé Blunders

by Kim Isaacs, M.A., C.P.R.W., N.C.R.W.

Make sure your résumé is top-notch by avoiding some common résumé blunders:

#1: Too Focused on Job Duties

One of the most prevalent résumé blunders is to turn a résumé into a boring listing of job duties and responsibilities. Many people even use their company job descriptions as a guide to developing their résumés. To create a résumé that is a cut above the rest, you should go beyond showing what was required of you, and demonstrate how you made a difference at each company. Provide specific examples of how the company benefited from your performance. When developing your achievements, ask yourself the following questions:

- ✓ How did you perform the job better than others would have?
- ✓ What were the problems or challenges that you or the organization faced? What did you do to overcome the problems? What were the results of your efforts? How did the company benefit from your performance?
- ✓ Did you receive any awards, special recognition or promotions as a result of your performance?

#2: Objective Statement That Is Flowery or Too General

Many candidates lose their readers from the very beginning of the résumé—the “objective statement.” The worst objective statements start with, “A challenging position that will enable me to contribute to organizational goals while offering an opportunity for growth and advancement.” This type of statement is overused and too general, and therefore wastes valuable space. If you are on a career track, consider replacing the objective with a tagline, which is a statement of what you do or what your area of specialty is.

#3: Too Short or Too Long

Too many people try to squeeze their experiences onto one page. When formatting the résumé to fit on one page, many job seekers delete their impressive achievements. The reverse is also true. Take the candidate who rambles on and on for pages about irrelevant or redundant experiences—the reader will easily be bored. When writing your résumé, ask yourself, “Will this statement help me land an interview?” Only include information that elicits the answer “yes” to that question.

The rule about the appropriate length of a résumé is that there is no rule. Factors that go into the decision regarding length include occupation, industry, years of experience, scope of accomplishments and education. The most important guideline is that every word in the résumé should sell the candidate.

#4: Use of Personal Pronouns (“I” and “me”) and Articles (“an” and “the”)

A résumé is a form of business communication, which should be concise and written in a telegraphic style. There should not be any mention of “I” or “me” and only minimal use of articles. Here is an example:

The statement:

I developed a new product that added \$2 million in sales and increased the gross margin of the market segment by 12%.

Should be changed to:

Developed new product that added \$2 million in sales and increased gross margin of market segment by 12%.

#5: Listing Personal or Irrelevant Information

Many people include their interests, such as reading, hiking, snowboarding, etc. These should only be included if they relate to the job objective. For example, if a candidate is applying for a position as a ski instructor, he or she should list cross-country skiing as a hobby.

Personal information, such as date of birth, marital status, height and weight, should normally not be included on the résumé. There are several expectations, however, such as some entertainment professionals and job seekers outside of the United States.

#6: Using a Functional Résumé When There Is a Good Career History

One of the pet peeves cited by hiring managers is a candidate who describes his or her skills and achievements but doesn't connect them with a particular job. It is irksome not to see the career progression and the impact made at each position. Unless you have a résumé emergency situation, such as virtually no work history or excessive job hopping, avoid the functional résumé format. One of the most effective résumé formats is the modified chronological type. Here is the basic layout:

- ✓ Header (name, address, email address, phone number)
- ✓ Lead with a strong profile section (detailing the scope of your experience and areas of proficiency)
- ✓ Reverse chronological employment history (emphasizing achievements in the past 10-15 years)
- ✓ Education (this might be moved to the top for new grads)

Other related topics include professional affiliations, community activities, technical expertise, publications/patents and languages spoken.

#7: Not Including a Summary or Profile Section That Makes an Initial Hard Sell

A summary section is one of the greatest tools that a job seeker has. Candidates who have done their homework will know the type of skills and competencies that are important in the position. The summary should demonstrate the skill level and experiences directly related to the position being sought. To create a high-impact summary statement, peruse job openings on Monster.com

to determine what features are important to employers. Next, write a list of your matching skills, experience and education. These selling points can then be incorporated into the summary.

#8: Where Are the Keywords?

With the majority of large- and medium-size companies using technology to store résumés, the only hope a job seeker has of being found in an applicant search is the inclusion of relevant industry keywords. These do not have to be a separate section; rather, they can be sprinkled throughout the résumé.

A good way to determine keywords is to read job descriptions for positions that interest you. If you see industry buzzwords, incorporate them into your résumé.

#9: References Available...

Employers know that if you are searching for a job, you should have professional references. So this statement mainly wastes space. Use it only as a graphical element—to signal the end of a long résumé or to round out the page design.

#10: Typos!

One typo can land your résumé in the garbage. Two typos or more, and your chances are greatly diminished. Proofread, proofread, proofread, and show your résumé to several friends to have them proofread it as well. This document is a reflection of you and should be absolutely perfect.

RUBEN PEREZ

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Objective: Position as High School Principle.

EDUCATION

M.A., School Administration, UNIVERSITY OF THE PACIFIC, Stockton, CA
B.A., History and Physical Education, UNIVERSITY OF THE PACIFIC

Lifetime Teaching Credentials: General Elementary and Secondary
Lifetime Administrative Credentials: Standard, Elementary, and Secondary

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Association of California School Administrators
United Administrators of San Francisco

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- 19-year background in administration, at State Department of Education, high school, and university levels.
- Experience in all aspects of high school operations: curriculum development, academic department head, dean of students, personnel evaluation, master schedule building.
- Effective principal of a large comprehensive high school (ADA 2300), comprising a very diverse ethnic population.
- A creative and “take-charge” type administrator; proven ability to see what needs to be done, and do it.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Assistant Principal HARRISON HIGH SCHOOL, San Francisco, CA
1993-present BUSHNELL HIGH SCHOOL, San Francisco, CA

- Developed a successful plan for dropout prevention featuring one-to-one instruction for truant and high-risk students. Results:
 - eliminated disruptive classroom behavior;
 - reduced after-school detention;
 - upgraded the educational atmosphere;
 - increased revenues for ADA.
- Recovered over \$200,000 in ADA revenues for the school district.
- Restructured work schedule of the attendance technician to provide needed time and facilities for documenting legitimate absences.

1991-93 Management **Intern** AMFAC CORP., Food Division, Morgan Hill, CA
Trained staff and developed personnel for middle management positions.

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Ruben's résumé shows how you can focus on your unique achievements rather than job descriptions even when using a CHRONOLOGICAL FORMAT

RUBEN PEREZ

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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE & ACCOMPLISHMENTS (Continued)

1989-91 Director, **Special Projects** CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT, Sacramento, CA
Oversaw implementation and evaluation of federal and state special projects and programs for the District.

1986-89 Principal NORTH HIGH SCHOOL, Sacramento, CA

- Initiated the updating of course descriptions and expansion of course offerings, to accommodate the needs of both low achievers and gifted students.
- Originated and coordinated a highly successful "Career Day" program, which:
Provided students an in-depth exposure to a wide range of occupations;
- Helped teachers to relate their classroom subject matter to the world of work;
- Spearheaded a successful fund raising drive to replace antiquated lighting for school football field, raising \$30,000 through a specially arranged carnival.
- Coordinated the joint efforts of parents, students, community business leaders, and city officials to support this project.
- Increased ADA revenues by \$45,000 by initiating an in school study hall program which tremendously reduced class cutting.
- Effectively reduced youth gang activity on campus by bringing together a task force of parents and community representatives, including state legislators and local law enforcement agencies.
- Initiated the formation of minority student club to increase participation in campus activities. Results:
 - raised self-esteem and enhanced image with other students;
 - elected the first Hispanic female student body president;
 - developed a stabilizing force for working with youth gangs;
 - involved minority students in sponsorship of a popular annual talent show.
- Won recognition for providing outstanding and effective leadership.

1976-78 Asst. **Principal, Curriculum** SOUTH HIGH SCHOOL, Salinas, CA

- Developed and coordinated Master Schedule.
- Chaired the District's Student Attendance Review Board.
- Represented my high school on District Professional Curriculum Committee.

1972-76 Educational **Consultant** STATE DEPT. OF EDUCATION, Sacramento, CA

- Led instructional team in the development and review of curriculum for educationally disadvantaged students statewide.
- Oversaw disbursement of \$18.3 million for compensatory education programs statewide.

1969-72 Project **Director** UNIVERSITY OF THE PACIFIC, Stockton, CA

- Coordinated and developed a pilot program funded by the federal government which entailed development of a GED curriculum for high school dropouts; recruited and placed students into college, job training programs, and jobs.

Todd makes a good presentation
for a vocational student seeking
apprentice experience.

TODD JAMISON

224 Crocker Avenue • Owen Sound, Ontario N4K N48 • (205) 987-6543

OBJECTIVE: Apprenticeship as a heavy duty equipment mechanic.

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Effective team player, conscientious worker.
- Experience on several group construction projects.
- Repaired and operated chain saws, lawn mowers, weed-eaters, circular saw, and wood splitter.

SUMMER WORK EXPERIENCE

1996 General *Labourer/Mechanical Assistant*, MUNICIPAL ROADS DEPARTMENT

- Performed minor equipment repairs.
- Assisted in the clearing of new road allowance.
- Proved myself to be a conscientious, reliable, and resourceful worker while assisting in the development of a new sanitary landfill at Cape Coker.

1995 *Parks and Maintenance Worker*, COUNTY PARKS & PUBLIC MAINTENANCE

- Assisted in the repairs of small engines and equipment.
- Operated a variety of equipment in the performance of park duties.
- Maintained lawns and gardens for cemeteries and for senior citizens.
- Proposed solution in the felling of a problem tree.

1994 *Farm Labourer*, MR. JAMES BARBER-FARMER, JOHNSON'S FIREWOOD

- Effectively performed daily farm chores.
- Assisted in repairs to heavy equipment.
- Performed a variety of repairs to smaller farm equipment.
- Operated all types of farm-related equipment.
- Operated wood chipper and chain saw.

EDUCATION

1994-present, *Heavy Equipment Technician*, SIR SANFORD FLEMING COLLEGE

- Obtained diploma as Heavy Equipment Technician:
 - Core coursework included hydraulics, power trains, engines, fuels and lubricants, welding, and mobile electrical systems;
 - Additional areas of study included human relations, environmental issues, preventive maintenance, and correct safety techniques.

Member of the School of Natural Resources Heavy Equipment Club.

Excellent references available on request.

Résumé written by Bill Lozza

LORRAINE CHAPMAN
7855 West End Avenue
Lafayette, CA 94549
(510) 987-6543

Just out of college a year, and without much work experience, Lorraine explores the possibilities in entry level public policy work. She chose a CHRONOLOGICAL FORMAT yet still emphasizes the experience most relevant to her tentative goal.

Objective: Position as research assistant, legislative advocate, and/or press aide with a public policy organization.

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Strong communication and research skills.
- Successful in promoting an organization and generating funding.
- Willing and able to handle a wide variety of tasks.
- Creative, resourceful, and thorough in developing a project.

EMPLOYMENT/RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

1995-present ***Administrative Asst.*** - MATT KURLE INC., IMPORTER/DISTRIBUTOR,
Orinda, CA

Jan-Aug 1994 ***Current Affairs Research Intern***- KQED PUBLIC TV, San Francisco, CA

COMMUNICATION & RESEARCH SKILLS

- Investigating program topics for "Express" show and "MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour," involving extensive library research and interviewing.
- Negotiating with government and private agencies for data and film footage.
- Summarized research and prepared informational packets for producers.
- Pre-interviewed studio guests. Wrote position for show moderator.

1992-93 ***Assistant Director***- ASUCD STUDENT FORUMS, U.C. Davis

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT- MEDIA/PUBLICITY

- Collaborated on the planning, promotion , and production of 30 public lectures (total audience 32,000); speakers included Geraldine Ferraro, author of Alice Walker, physicist Edward Teller:
 - Corresponded with prospective speakers and scheduled appearance dates;
 - Organized event logistics: seating, security, decor;
 - Coordinated and scheduled publicity; prepared advertising budget.
- Conceived and produced a comprehensive TV program on AIDS which was tied in with community AIDS Awareness Week:
 - Won funding of \$2,000 for the project through written and oral presentations;
 - Wrote press release, PSAs, advertising copy; worked with graphic artists on design of customized promotional materials;
 - Secured media coverage and re-broadcasting of the event on community TV;
 - Earned commendations from university administration and City of Davis.

FUND-RAISING & COMMUNITY RELATIONS

- Successfully won support and funding from campus and civic organizations through a variety of means:
 - Met with organizational directors to present program ideas and needs, securing donations of services: catering, limousine services, publicity.
 - Coordinated and promoted fund-raising receptions attended by civic leaders, generating significant funds for ASUCD and broad media coverage.

EDUCATION

B.A. Economics, cum laude, University of California, Davis 1994
Education Abroad Program- Tokyo, Japan, Summer 1994

Roger shows how his Navy recruiting talents are transferable to civilian sales.

ROGER C. PRITCHARD

900-17th Street • Imperial Beach, CA 91932 • (619) 987-6543

OBJECTIVE: A position in Technical Sales.

SUMMARY

Award-winning Navy Recruiter with in-depth experience in sales, marketing, prospecting and network development. Highly successful communicator and closer. Consistently exceeded monthly and annual quotas by up to 240%. Solid technical and supervisory background. Dedicated to top quality customer service.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE, U.S. Navy, 1976-Present

Recruiting Sales

Successfully completed a 180 hour course covering sales and marketing techniques (Naval Recruiting School), including prospecting; marketing; product/service information; and closing. As a Recruiter/Canvasser, built prospect list through community research; cold calling; public contract; land canvassing of likely sources, including schools, local businesses, and career counselors. Effectively communicated Navy features and benefits to prospects. Painted verbal pictures to contrast the advantages of buying the product (the Navy) versus the disadvantages of not buying.

- Led district recruiting force in sales, consistently exceeding monthly quota by 25-40%.
- Over a one-year period, exceeded district monthly contract average by over 240%.
- Ranked number one of 69 production recruiters.
- Named Recruiter of the Year in 1990.
- Awarded the Navy Achievement Medal as approved by the Secretary of the Navy for excellence in recruiting.

Communication/Marketing

Generated leads by presenting public service talks at schools and civic organizations. Distributed marketing materials. Contacted students nearing high school graduation, as well as recent graduates, via direct mail.

Developed a network of referral sources, including school counselors, current recruits awaiting departure and business owners.

- Proved extremely effective in direct public interactions, consistently setting appointments with 25% of all contacts.
- Through on-going positive client relations, maintained zero percent monthly loss rate (cancellations) versus the district average of 13%. This is especially significant because the time from closing until recruits to boot camp can span up to one year.

Management/Technical

As a Navy Construction Mechanic, managed, motivated and trained teams of up to 50 employees. Responsibilities included: performance counseling and evaluation, shift scheduling, and workload distribution. Developed professional training materials and delivered lectures. Provided career development information based on extensive knowledge of Navy career programs. Assisted in managing a \$600,000 budget.

Maintained, diagnosed and repaired a wide range of construction and material handling equipment, as well as truck/automotive systems. In-depth expertise in the following: gas/diesel engines; power trains; chassis and component assemblies; hydraulic valves and cylinders; fuel injection systems; general/special purpose test equipment; electrical systems; ignition systems; hydraulic/air vacuum braking systems.

EDUCATION

- Naval Recruiting School, U.S. Navy, 1995 (180 hours).
- Construction Mechanic School (Basic & Advanced), U.S. Navy, 1993, (960 hours).
- Leadership and Management Training, U.S. Navy, 1990, (80 hours).

Résumé written by Lynn Vincent