

RESUME GUIDELINES

A resume is a one-of-a kind professional summary that employers and recruiters use to get a grasp of your experiences, skills, interests, and achievements. If written well, a resume is your ticket for that coveted interview spot. So showcase—don't list. Be succinct—not longwinded. Take your time—don't rush. Those busy recruiters and HR managers will zip through your resume if it doesn't pique their interest. In fact, most prospective employers will spend 6-30 seconds reviewing it. To ensure that yours gets the attention it deserves, we recommend that all Price School students use the following guidelines.

BEFORE YOU START

Prepare a list of all your experiences: work and internships, extracurricular activities, academic, research and project based experiences, and your skills and interests. Include the name of the organization, its location, your title, and the dates you were there. For each experience, explain your purpose, your task(s), and the results of your work. Think about your responsibilities. Think about the skills you used and the ones that you gained. Leave no stone unturned—you can delete extraneous details later.

LAYOUT & FORMAT

- Length: Resumes should be one page, unless you are a Ph.D. student or have more than five years of work experience. If you are applying for a position within the Federal Government, let us know. We can supply you with a special guide.
- Appearance: Be consistent. Adapt the same formatting approach throughout the entire document so that it looks clean, and is easy to read. Please do not use templates downloaded from the internet to create and modify resumes. Since these templates are designed in a table format, they are difficult to modify.
 - Margins: 0.5" – 1"
 - Font: Calibri, Times New Roman, Cambria and Avenir are great choices
 - Size: 10-12 point is the norm. Your name and section headings can be larger, specifically 13-16.
 - Use Bullet Points to describe key accomplishments and contributions (see p. 4 more on this).
 - Abbreviations: only abbreviate states and months. If you write "Los Angeles, CA" for your first bullet point, do not write: "L.A., CA" for the second. Note: Do not abbreviate words (e.g., pres. for president; dept. for department; intl. for international).
 - Paper: unless you are submitting your resume online, it should be printed on resume paper.

CONTENT

When describing your experiences, always begin phrases with action words (page 6 has a list). The goal here is to grab the reader's attention and present your best skills. Note: Avoid nonspecific terms like "Helped", "Responsible for", and "Duties included". Don't use personal pronouns, and don't forget to use the past tense unless it's a position that you currently hold.

CATEGORIES

Price resumes are divided into sections (usually three to five). For example: Education, Work Experience, Leadership & Extracurricular Activities, and Additional Information

EDUCATION

- Include your current degree, school, major, relevant coursework, and any other higher education institutions from which you have graduated (list only month and year). Include your dissertation if

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related to the position being sought or to your career of interest. You may include your GPA; our rule of thumb is list if it's 3.0 or above.

- Degrees should be listed in reverse chronological order (current degree first). See our examples below

University of Southern California, Sol Price School of Public Policy

Los Angeles, CA

Master of Public Administration

May 2016

- *Honors*: Recipient of Dean's Merit Scholarship
- *Leadership*: Social Committee Co-Chair, Graduate Policy & Administration Community
- *Membership*: Graduate Policy and Administration Community (GPAC)
- *Related Coursework*: Policy and Program Administration, Economy for Policy, Planning and Development, Modeling and Operations Research

Washington University in St. Louis

St. Louis, MO

Bachelor of Arts, Economics; Minor: Business

May 2009

- *Honors*: Dean's Honor List; GPA 3.8/4.0

- Degree in italics: NOTE Master of Public Administration NOT Masters
- Location and dates: list the city and state; list the date of your graduation only (do not list the years you attended); right justified. Do not include "expected" for a future graduation date.
- Supplementary information: *Honors, Leadership, Membership, Related Coursework* (These should be in italics). It is not necessary to use all of these categories – pick the ones that specifically apply to your situation. If you have another category in mind, run it by us first.
- Study Abroad: always include this; it's interesting and reflects international experience.
- Certificate Programs: if you completed a certificate program at an academic institution and believe it is critical to include this information on your résumé, please type the certificate program in the "EDUCATION" section the same way as the other academic degrees that are listed. Please note that this is NOT the same as non-academic certifications or licenses (i.e., CPA, CFA, etc.), which should be included in the "ADDITIONAL INFORMATION" section.
- Exclude transfer programs such as associate degrees from a community college
- If you have taken and completed MOOC'S (Massive Open Online Courses), these would go under Additional Information, too.
- If you have more than one degree from the same institution, use this format:

University of Southern California

Master of Business Administration, Marshall School of Business

- *Honors*: Healy Family Endowed Fellowship; Dean's Honor List, GPA: 3.77/4.0
- *Leadership*: President, Entrepreneur & Venture Management Association

Master of Real Estate Development, Sol Price School of Public Policy

- *Leadership*: Vice President, Graduate Real Estate Association

HONORS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

List those relevant to your major, and are well known within your field of interest or nationally (i.e., Dean's Merit Scholarship; Presidential Management Fellowship). Make an appointment with us so we can help you

determine which ones to keep. You may have received honors and awards from your home institution either in the U.S. or abroad that recruiters are not familiar with.

EXPERIENCE

Show, don't tell! Avoid flowery adjectives, personal pronouns, and adverbs unless absolutely necessary. Instead, provide concrete examples of your work demonstrating your skills and personal attributes. A well-written resume and cover letter is a manifestation of superior writing skills.

Structuring the experience section of your resume is dependent on a two factors: what you are looking for and what you have done. Regardless of how you decide to organize this section, you should follow these guidelines:

- All experience listings must include the organization name, your position within the organization, the location (city and state), and dates. (Month and year is preferred, although it's suitable to put the seasons and year, or just the years as long as you have sufficient work experience.)
- When describing an experience, be as concise and interesting as possible.
- List what you've done in reverse chronological order, placing your most recent experience first and then working backwards.
- Show quantitative results when you can (e.g., "Increased efficiency by 20%" or "Cut budget by 30% in five months"). When listing money, you should not use the word 'dollars'; use 'million' and 'billion' but for thousand simply list the amount – for example, \$4,000 or \$400,000 or \$4 million or \$4 billion
- If you have more than one position from the same company, we suggest you use this format:

Frito-Lay North America (a division of PepsiCo)
Finance Analyst – Brand (Marketing) Finance

Plano, TX
2010 – 2012

Partnered with marketing teams to deliver profitable growth across key national brands.

- Managed \$750 million Frito-Lay Dips portfolio business, which included forecasting demand to ensure sufficient product supply and identifying key sales, profit mix, and share opportunities.
- Modeled the profitability and return on Tostitos, Ruffles, and dip promotional bundles and ran comparative price-size architecture analytics for the company and competitors to continually assess Frito-Lay's consumer value proposition.
- Managed \$8 million G&A budget for the Marketing Finance organization and successfully delivered under-budget by \$400,000 through careful headcount and T&E expense management.
- Designed, created, and managed performance-tracking reports across brands and business units based on need from marketing to better understand business growth drivers.

Finance Analyst – Sales Finance, Convenience & Gas Customer Channel

2009 – 2010

Finance partner to key account managers overseeing ten national convenience & gas station (C&G) customers.

- Owned the \$210 million sales and demand forecasts for five national convenience and gas station customers, collaborating closely with sales partners to identify incremental sales opportunities.
- Provided necessary support to sales team in modeling specific retail pricing/promotion scenarios, which led to more profitable events, most notably in building the financials for five distinct chip, dip, and beverage bundle promotions that were merchandised in 47,000 convenience stores nationwide.

BULLET POINTS: IN-DEPTH

The bulleted statements that follow your scoping statement should:

- Support scoping statement in descending order of importance, if you choose to have one
- State your major accomplishments while in that role
- Be IMPACTful – what did you do, how did you do it, and what was the result
- Quantify when possible (#, %, \$). Keep in mind: zero through ten is spelled out; 11 begins numerics
- Emphasize transferable skills (leadership, teamwork, communication, etc.)
- Use action verbs/avoid passive verbs ('collaborated with' instead of 'worked with'....)
- Use appropriate, relevant jargon as it relates to the position for which you are applying
- Ideally there should be no more than five bullets per job position
- For each bullet point ask yourself: "So what?" - Is this important from the recruiter's perspective? If something is relevant, then keep it. If irrelevant, you should ask yourself if it can be rewritten to be relevant. If yes, keep; if not, discard.

An example

- Researched, analyzed and interpreted marketing data of five key competitors.

After asking "So what?"

- Researched, analyzed and interpreted marketing data of five key competitors. Recommended market entry and product launch strategy to VP of Marketing increasing sales 7% vs the prior year.

ACTIVITIES

Most resumes contain a secondary section that lists information on your extracurricular activities. The names of this section can vary from Extracurricular Activities to Leadership & Community Service. We can help you determine the appropriate title for this section and what to include.

SKILLS & INTERESTS

Break out skills separately into subcategories: if you have strong computer skills in administrative, creative, and programming applications, create a "Software" category with your knowledge of Microsoft Office, Dreamweaver, InDesign, etc., and a "Programming" category where you list programming languages. "Language" is another popular subcategory. Keep in mind, however, that every item on your resume is a potential question from your interviewer, so be honest about what you know. Language fluency is usually categorized as: elementary proficiency, working proficiency, professional proficiency, or native/bilingual.

- Do not overlook the importance of this section of your résumé – recruiters often look here first before reading other parts of your résumé. Why? Because they are looking for unique skills, attributes and characteristics that separate you from others. This section allows you to differentiate yourself but also find points of commonality with the recruiter.

DON'T INCLUDE:

- Personal information: resume writing conventions vary by country and by culture. In the U.S., it is illegal for employers to ask about your race, religion, national orientation, age, marital status, or other personal information. NEVER list your Social Security number on your resume.

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- Citizenship status. Generally, employers only need to know if you are legal to work in the United States, not whether you're a citizen or permanent resident. If citizenship status is critical to making a hiring decision, an employer will ask. In all cases, students should respect the qualifications requested by employers, and only apply for those positions for which they are appropriately qualified. (Note: In some cases, students may wish to volunteer information about citizenship, particularly if the information is in the student's favor. If you have questions, please contact Career Services for more information.)
- References. Do not include a reference list with your resume unless requested by the employer.

REMEMBER

Your resume is a document that you have complete control of. Make it perfect, because you can. Take into account all the feedback you have received, embrace the red pen marks, and distill it all down to something that feels right to you.

NEED ADDITIONAL HELP?

Schedule an appointment with the Office of Career Services by stopping by VKC Suite 382, calling 213-740-0546 or emailing price.careers@usc.edu. We can help you with all phases of the process, from figuring out how to write your first resume, to proofreading your final copy.

Do you have one of these FAQ's? Come talk to us!

- Should I include high school information?
- Should I include TA experience?
- Should I include interests? If yes, how many and how specific?
- Objective vs. Summary: which one is right for me? Should I include one at all?
- I will be taking a class next term that relates to my career interests. Should I include it?
- What is the best way to email a resume?
- LinkedIn: should I include a link to my profile in my header

UNBEATABLE ACTION VERB LIST

You Led a Project

If you were in charge of a project or initiative from start to finish, skip “led” and instead try:

1. Chaired
2. Controlled
3. Coordinated
4. Executed
5. Headed
6. Operated
7. Orchestrated
8. Organized
9. Oversaw
10. Planned
11. Produced
12. Programmed

You Envisioned and Brought to Life a Project

And if you actually developed, created, or introduced that project into your company? Try:

13. Administered
14. Built
15. Charted
16. Created
17. Designed
18. Developed
19. Devised
20. Founded
21. Engineered
22. Established
23. Formalized
24. Formed
25. Formulated
26. Implemented
27. Incorporated
28. Initiated
29. Instituted
30. Introduced
31. Launched
32. Pioneered
33. Spearheaded

You Saved the Company Time or Money

Hiring managers love candidates who’ve helped a team operate more efficiently or cost-effectively. To show just how much you saved, try:

34. Conserved
35. Consolidated
36. Decreased
37. Deducted
38. Diagnosed
39. Lessened
40. Reconciled
41. Reduced
42. Yielded

You Increased Efficiency, Sales, Revenue, or Customer Satisfaction

Along similar lines, if you can show that your work boosted the company’s numbers in some way, you’re bound to impress. In these cases, consider:

43. Accelerated
44. Achieved
45. Advanced
46. Amplified
47. Boosted
48. Capitalized
49. Delivered
50. Enhanced
51. Expanded
52. Expedited
53. Furthered
54. Gained
55. Generated
56. Improved
57. Lifted
58. Maximized
59. Outpaced
60. Stimulated
61. Sustained

You Changed or Improved Something

So, you brought your department’s invoicing system out of the Stone Age and onto the

interwebs? Talk about the amazing changes you made at your office with these words:

- 62. Centralized
- 63. Clarified
- 64. Converted
- 65. Customized
- 66. Influenced
- 67. Integrated
- 68. Merged
- 69. Modified
- 70. Overhauled
- 71. Redesigned
- 72. Refined
- 73. Refocused
- 74. Rehabilitated
- 75. Remodeled
- 76. Reorganized
- 77. Replaced
- 78. Restructured
- 79. Revamped
- 80. Revitalized
- 81. Simplified
- 82. Standardized
- 83. Streamlined
- 84. Strengthened
- 85. Updated
- 86. Upgraded
- 87. Transformed

You Managed a Team

Instead of reciting your management duties, like “Led a team...” or “Managed employees...” show what an inspirational leader you were, with terms like:

- 88. Aligned
- 89. Cultivated
- 90. Directed
- 91. Enabled
- 92. Facilitated
- 93. Fostered
- 94. Guided
- 95. Hired
- 96. Inspired
- 97. Mentored

- 98. Mobilized
- 99. Motivated
- 100. Recruited
- 101. Regulated
- 102. Shaped
- 103. Supervised
- 104. Taught
- 105. Trained
- 106. Unified
- 107. United

You Brought in Partners, Funding, or Resources

Were you “responsible for” a great new partner, sponsor, or source of funding? Try:

- 108. Acquired
- 109. Forged
- 110. Navigated
- 111. Negotiated
- 112. Partnered
- 113. Secured

You Supported Customers

Because manning the phones or answering questions really means you’re advising customers and meeting their needs, use:

- 114. Advised
- 115. Advocated
- 116. Arbitrated
- 117. Coached
- 118. Consulted
- 119. Educated
- 120. Fielded
- 121. Informed
- 122. Resolved

You Were a Research Machine

Did your job include research, analysis, or fact-finding? Mix up your verbiage with these words:

- 123. Analyzed
- 124. Assembled
- 125. Assessed
- 126. Audited
- 127. Calculated
- 128. Discovered

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- 129. Evaluated
- 130. Examined
- 131. Explored
- 132. Forecasted
- 133. Identified
- 134. Interpreted
- 135. Investigated
- 136. Mapped
- 137. Measured
- 138. Qualified
- 139. Quantified
- 140. Surveyed
- 141. Tested
- 142. Tracked

You Wrote or Communicated

Was writing, speaking, lobbying, or otherwise communicating part of your gig? You can explain just how compelling you were with words like:

- 143. Authored
- 144. Briefed
- 145. Campaigned
- 146. Co-authored
- 147. Composed
- 148. Conveyed
- 149. Convinced
- 150. Corresponded
- 151. Counseled
- 152. Critiqued
- 153. Defined
- 154. Documented
- 155. Edited
- 156. Illustrated
- 157. Lobbied
- 158. Persuaded
- 159. Promoted
- 160. Publicized
- 161. Reviewed

You Oversaw or Regulated

Whether you enforced protocol or managed your department's requests, describe what you really did, better, with these words:

- 162. Authorized
- 163. Blocked
- 164. Delegated
- 165. Dispatched
- 166. Enforced
- 167. Ensured
- 168. Inspected
- 169. Itemized
- 170. Monitored
- 171. Screened
- 172. Scrutinized
- 173. Verified

You Achieved Something

Did you hit your goals? Win a coveted department award? Don't forget to include that on your resume, with words like:

- 174. Attained
- 175. Awarded
- 176. Completed
- 177. Demonstrated
- 178. Earned
- 179. Exceeded
- 180. Outperformed
- 181. Reached
- 182. Showcased
- 183. Succeeded
- 184. Surpassed
- 185. Targeted