Resumes in a Digital Job Market

Resumes are one of the most vital documents to get right when applying for jobs: they are how potential employers first evaluate you as a potential employee. Moreover, in today's digital job market where it's likely that a computer or AI program reads your resume first, you must understand how *not* to lose opportunities to a robot misreading your resume.

Key Resume Tips

- Keep your resume to **one page**–a resume is a snapshot of what is *most relevant* about you to an employer. Recruiters typically spend **only 6-7 seconds** reading a resume (Indeed, 2022), so that one page should *also* be easy to skim.
- Make sure to use **consistent formatting** throughout the document (e.g., with the same readable fonts—like Arial or Times New Roman—used for main text, headings, subheadings, etc.). You want to make the job of reading your resume as easy as possible for your reader.
- Exclude what's *irrelevant* to the job. Even if a skill or part of your experience is impressive, it may not be relevant to what you're applying for. For example, you shouldn't include video editing skills when applying for a chemical engineering role if those skills aren't needed. However, **transferable skills** from a retail job—like time management—may work! The key is presenting your skills in such a way that they are relevant to the position to which you are applying.
- Tailor your resume to the job–**match keywords and phrases** on the job description in your resume. Never submit the same generic resume for many different roles. You can even include the company in your resume file name—recruiters generally love the effort (e.g., "Stephen Curry - Resume for Apple").
- Consider your resume **online-first**, as most job applications are also online. You can reduce your page margins to fit more information; however, never set your margins less than 0.5," and don't use the extra space to include irrelevant information. Unless you're going to an in-person job fair, you might *never* give someone a physical, printed resume.
- Write all points on your resume using **strong, active verbs**. Moreover, focus on the impact and results **you personally** achieved in your experience.
  - Instead of "Handled social media content," consider providing the results instead.
  - An improvement would be "Planned, created, and implemented (**active verbs**) social media content strategy (**what you did**) to increase brand awareness by 500,000 impressions (**measurable result**)."

Steve Rogers

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EDUCATION

B.S. Marketing   August 2022 - May 2024 (expected)
San Jose State University, San Jose, CA
- **Activities**: Writing Center Tutor, Marketing Club

AA Business Administration   August 2020 - May 2022
De Anza College, Cupertino, CA

WORK EXPERIENCE

Social Media Marketing Intern - CORSAIR, Milpitas, CA   August 2023 - Present
- Create compelling written, graphic, and video content for social media using Adobe Creative Cloud to increase brand awareness and sales
- Foster a positive Discord community, increasing daily engagement by 10%
- Effectively manage time to meet all deadlines and take on extra responsibilities

Writing Tutor (Level 3) - SJSU Writing Center, San Jose, CA   August 2022 – Present
- Empower students to communicate better by helping them improve writing skills
- Develop personal technical written skills such as grammar, organization, composition, structure, and flow to improve ideas, reduce mistakes, and increase comprehensibility in communication
- Earned certifications to work with ESL peers, treat students with disabilities equitably, and assist graduate students on advanced papers

Barista - Gong Cha, San Jose, CA   May 2021 - August 2022
- Cultivated positive environment for peers and customers through effective customer service and teamwork
- Generated the most quarterly boba sales twice in a row through implementing skills learned in marketing classes and improving the store's social media presence

SKILLS

- **Marketing:** Social Media Management + Analysis; Content Marketing (photo, video); Copywriting; Social Media Ads
- **Technical Skills:** Adobe Creative Cloud, Canva, Microsoft Excel, Hootsuite (certified May 2023), Tableau
- **Soft Skills:** Creative Problem Solving; Teamwork; Communication (interpersonal, written, presentation); Time Management
- **Languages:** English (Native), Spanish (Fluent)

PERSONAL INTERESTS

Content Creation, Photography, Language Learning, Basketball, Gardening, Coffee Craft

ACADEMIC PROJECTS

Integrated Marketing Communications Report, Class Project   April 2022
- Developed hypothetical marketing communications report for Disney, evaluating current market standing, analyzing **trends**, identifying **opportunities,** and **creating a comprehensive marketing strategy** in a well-designed, brand-appropriate booklet and presentation; earned an A+ grade

Resume Sections

Contact Information: Include your name, cell phone number, email address, and LinkedIn profile. Do not include your physical address, especially with the **risk of fraudulent job listings** online, but you may want to include your city or region. You may also include a **personal website** or link to a **portfolio** if relevant to the job.

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Education: List your academics in reverse-chronological order (most recent first). Including your GPA is optional but usually not necessary (as other parts of your resume provide more relevant information). You may also consider sharing activities, concentrations, certificates, and relevant coursework.

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Work Experience: In reverse-chronological order, share work experience relevant to the job you're applying for. Points of your experience can be relevant even if the job title itself is not (e.g., the customer service, teamwork, and sales skills from the barista position in our sample resume); these are **transferable skills**.

Use the **STAR Method** for writing accomplishment statements about your work experience. Not all statements *must* follow this method or be written in this order, but you should *try* to structure your statements so they include the following components.

1. **Situation**: Provide context for your job and responsibilities—typically covered by title/company.
    a. e.g., Barista at Gong Cha (title + company)
2. **Task/Action**: What was the problem, and how did **you specifically** fix or improve it?
    a. e.g., "improving the store's social media presence"
3. **Result**: How did your solution impact the workplace? Ideally, include metrics (if available and applicable).
    a. e.g., "generated the most quarterly boba sales twice in a row"

Barista - Gong Cha, San Jose, CA	May 2021 - August 2022

- Cultivated positive environment for peers and customers through effective ==customer service and teamwork==
- Generated the most ==quarterly boba sales== twice in a row through implementing skills learned in marketing classes and improving the store's social media presence

Skills: This section warrants the most creativity—you might separate skills into categories (e.g., job skills vs. technical skills vs. soft skills) to make them more skimmable, especially if you are listing many items. Similarly, include **certifications** for these skills if relevant. Focus on skills that are needed for the job to which you are applying—pull this information from the job posting if possible. Do not list items that are not relevant to the specific job.

SKILLS

- **Marketing:** Social Media Management + Analysis; Content Marketing (photo, video); Copywriting; Social Media Ads
- **Technical Skills:** Adobe Creative Cloud, Canva, Microsoft Excel, Hootsuite (==certified May 2023==), Tableau
- **Soft Skills:** Creative Problem Solving; Teamwork; Communication (interpersonal, written, presentation); Time Management

Personal Interests: Many organizations hire for your cultural fit and attitude as much as (if not more than) your skills and experience. Depending on the impression an organization gives you, it may be smart to include personal interests to help show your personality. Additionally, include personal interests that demonstrate skills relevant to the job—such as "travel" or "language learning" for an international operations role—to help exemplify your personality/cultural fit for the role. However, if space is limited on your resume, this section should be the first to cut.

PERSONAL INTERESTS

Content Creation, Photography, Language Learning, Basketball, Gardening, Coffee Craft

Academic/Volunteer Projects: Depending on your amount of work experience, you may want to add relevant academic projects, work in student organizations, or other volunteer experience to help bolster your resume. Even if you weren't paid, relevant experience is still relevant! As you gain more work experience, this section will no longer be needed.

ACADEMIC PROJECTS

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Additional Sections to Consider: Because resumes entail what's most **relevant to the job**, the exact sections you include may vary. Here are some examples of other sections you might consider adding to your document.

- **Honors and Awards:** If you've earned relevant awards, even if tangentially so, consider including them, especially if you do not have extensive work experience.
- **Work Projects and/or Publications**: If you've had any particularly impressive projects or publications that you want to bring attention to, they may warrant their own section.
- **References**: If former managers or co-workers consent, you might include contact information for references who'd recommend you to future employers. However, current best practice recommends that references generally aren't needed on an initial resume; if you progress in the hiring process, then the supervisor and/or hiring committee will ask for references when they need them.

Additional Notes and Resources

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
Outside of rare scenarios, **never include a photo on your resume**. Many employers take issues related to equal employment opportunity seriously, so including a photo may disqualify you before your resume is even considered.

The Confidence Gap
Another major equity issue is the "there are no qualified (diverse) candidates" problem: Men tend to apply for jobs if they feel they meet 60% of the requirements, but women generally only apply if they think they are a 100% match (Kelly, 2021). This issue leads to an apparent lack of female candidates to recruiters even when a woman may be significantly more qualified than their more confident male counterpart (Kelly, 2021). As such, **apply for jobs even if you don't feel 100% confident**.

Standard Formatting
Generally, your resume should **look boring** and be exported as a .doc, .docx, or .pdf file. There **are exceptions**, such as artistically tailoring your resume for design-oriented roles or adding visual flair when delivering a resume in-person at a job fair. However, you **should** implement **strategic bolding** of key phrases to help guide the recruiter's attention.

Online Accessibility
Many digital job postings let you automatically fill in the application using information from your resume. If the autofill output is incorrect, that may indicate formatting issues for *other* online resume auto-reading robots.

One solution is a service (free for SJSU students for up to 10 uses) called **VMock**. It's an AI tool that can evaluate your resume's formatting, usage of the STAR method, strength of language, and more. We do not endorse it as your one-stop resume fixer since it can at times make

mistakes or provide ill-advised suggestions. That said, VMock is useful as a "second pair of eyes," and it's even more useful to see if your resume works well with online job postings when a robot reads your resume first or auto-fills an application using your resume's info.

Final Reminders

Remember that most recruiters spend under 10 seconds reading your resume!

- Keep it to one page and make it **skimmable**, with clear categories and strategic bolding.
- Use the **STAR method** when listing accomplishment statements from your work experience with an emphasis on **results** and *your* **contributions**.
- Include unpaid experience (class projects, clubs, volunteer work) if it's **relevant**.
- **Tailor your resume** to the job you're applying for with **matching keywords.**
- **Be confident enough to apply!** Do not disqualify yourself by assuming you will not get the job.
- **Do not include a photo** to avoid automatically disqualifying yourself.

References

Indeed Editorial Team. *How Long Do Hiring Managers Look at a Resume?* Indeed, July 8, 2022,

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look-at-resumes

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Kelly, Pilar. *The Resume Gap is Real.* The Women's Network, December 13, 2021,

https://www.thewomens.network/blog/the-resume-gap-is-real