

Resume & Letter Writing

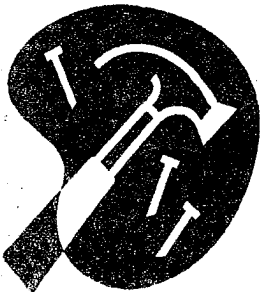
JOB SHOP RESOURCES

Employment Specialists:

Appointments for individual help constructing your resume or cover letter.

Receive feedback about their effectiveness.

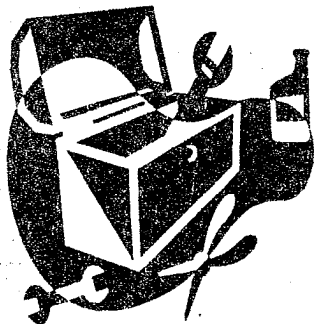
Call 414-297-6244 for an appointment



TECH CONNECT: The Wisconsin Technical College Job System

www.matc.edu (select JOBSHOP on left side of screen)
Register in the JOBSHOP to access the system off campus.

Room S203 at the Downtown campus
or call: 414-297-6244



Resumes

An effective resume succinctly describes your education and experience in relation to the job you are applying for. You will often make your first impressions on employers through your writing, and you'll want those impressions to be outstanding. Your resume is a written snapshot that should clearly support your career goal and be tailored to that position. Information on the resume should be presented in order of relevance to the position.

Developing a Resume

1. Analyze the job description for skills and abilities

Review job descriptions for the skills and abilities that employers are seeking.

Read through the descriptions and highlight the required skills, attributes and qualifications. Use these words in your resume.

2. Create a list of accomplishments

Take some time to think about your accomplishments: the things you did well, enjoyed doing, and were proud of. Include education/training, volunteer opportunities, jobs, projects, school assignments, travel and group/team activities. Describe in detail what you did, who you did it with, what equipment you used and what happened. Quantify your results, if possible, and use commonly understood terminology. Identify the personal strengths and skills that you used to achieve your accomplishments. Don't be humble; this is your chance to promote your skills and abilities.

3. Analyze experiences for relevant skill area

Analyze your experience to identify your skill areas as they relate to the types of positions for which you are applying.

4. Write descriptive phrases

Using action verbs write short phrases to describe what you did that illustrates each skill. Be concise and specific. Arrange the descriptive phrases in order of relevance to the position for which you are applying. (See page 5)

5. Choose the appropriate format

Avoid using resume templates that come with word processing applications. Not only are resume templates all too familiar to employers, but they are inflexible; often they won't allow you to move sections around or to modify headings. There are several resume formats to choose from so be sure to choose the format that best presents your background and qualifications. Samples of each resume format can be found in the Sample Resumes section. (p.6-8)

Chronological

This resume lists your background in a reverse chronological sequence, starting with the most recent. You may arrange your headings various ways, depending upon what aspects of your background you wish to stress. This format works best when your work, volunteer and academic experiences relate directly to the type of job for which you are applying. It is preferred by most on-campus recruiters and business employers.

Skills/Functional

This resume highlights your most important skills or functions. Headings are built around these areas. Job titles, employers and dates of employment are listed in a brief section at the bottom of the page. This format allows you to highlight skills, knowledge and abilities relevant to the position regardless of where and when you obtained them. It works well when your work experience is not directly related to your career goal or you are entering the job market for the first time, or you are making a career change.

Combination

This resume format works well for the job seeker with some work experience related to job they are applying. It highlights related experience, but still allows an area to emphasize specific skills directly related to the target position regardless of whether these were learned on the job, in school or through a volunteer experience.

Use a Resume to:

1. Respond to an advertised job vacancy.
2. Send to employers that interest you after you have researched an organization.
3. Present to a potential employer at the time of an interview.
4. Reinforce a personal contact you have already established with an employer.
5. Submit to employers before on-campus interviews.

Resume Tips for First Year Students

1. As a first or even a second semester student, it's okay to include work experience, leadership or highlights of activities, and accomplishments from high school. By your third and fourth semesters in college your resume should include experience and activities primarily from college.
2. If you don't have much work experience, you can include other information on your resume. The components that most strongly demonstrate transferable skills related to your objective should appear near the top of your resume.

Sending Resumes and Letters Electronically

1. When submitting a resume via an organization's website, use the formatting and display style recommended by the website.
2. To send your resume via email, find out the employer's format preference when possible. Although some recruiters accept attachments, others prefer your resume be included in the text of the email message. If you're unable to ask for the employer's preference, send it both ways in one message.
2. Unless you are told otherwise, include a cover letter. Send both the resume and cover letter in on email message.

Tips for sending your resume as an attachment

1. Create your resume using a common word processing program.
2. Give the document a name the recruiter will associate with you, such as "MillerJennifer.doc". This will enable a recruiter to find your resume once it's saved on a computer. Don't name the document "Resume.doc".
3. Be absolutely sure your document is free of viruses.
4. Send it electronically to a friend to make sure it's easy to open, the formatting stays correct, and the document is virus-free.

Tips for sending your resume in the text of the email message

1. The cover letter should appear above your resume.
2. Do not use bold, underlining, bullets, distinctive fonts, colored text, or html codes. Consider asterisks (*), plus signs (+), dashes, all capital letters and various combinations of these to highlight text.
3. Send it electronically to yourself or to a friend to see how it will look.
4. Text resumes look plain and ordinary, but employers are used to this. Don't worry if your resume is not as attractive in text format as long as the content is convincing.

Developing a Scannable Resume

Some large employers collect and make resume information accessible utilizing resume database tracking systems. They scan incoming resumes into a database (sometimes letters, too) and when they have openings retrieve resumes using relevant keywords.

1. It is permissible to ask an employer if you should provide a scannable resume. Some companies will indicate on their website if they scan resumes and even give tips on how to format your resume.
2. Include industry or job-specific keywords, especially relevant skills, understandable abbreviations, major, fields of study, experience (e.g., marketing research, java, html, sales, gel electrophoresis).
3. Use 10-14 point font size (preferably 12 pt.)
4. Avoid italics, underlining, fancy fonts, bullets and multiple columns. Use spacing or all capital for emphasis.
5. Boldface may not be accepted by all systems; unless instructed do not use bolding in your format.
6. Avoid centering.
7. Print on white paper with high-resolution laser printer.
8. When submitting by mail, do not fold.

Resume Components

Component	Basics	Comments
Identifying Data	Name, address. Email address and phone number/message number should be at the top of the page (include area code and zip codes.)	Be sure that any message on your personal answering machine is appropriate for a potential employer. If you have a personal web page that you want potential employers to view, include the address here.
Education	Name of school, major degree received, graduation date, projected graduation date, or dates of attendance if no degree was completed.	Honors and grade point information is recommended in this section. If you attended more than one school, list the most recent first. It is not always necessary to list all of the schools you have attended. You should not list high school. You can list additional training you have taken in this section.
Experience/ Work History	Paid, volunteer or military. Emphasize duties, responsibilities, skills, abilities and accomplishments appropriate to the position for which you are applying. Note the job title, employing organization, and dates of employment.	In addition to describing job functions, identify your achievements and contributions to the position.
Job Objective	If used this is a one line specific description of the type of position desired.	The job objective should follow your name; address and telephone number at the top of your resume and should indicate a specific job objective versus a general statement of interest.
Skills & Abilities	Foreign languages, computer skills, office skills, lab techniques or transferable skills not mentioned elsewhere in the resume.	These can be listed separately or combined under one heading.
Languages	Mention if you are fluent in a foreign language.	If you understand a language but are not fluent, you still might want to mention it. For example: Fluent in Russian, conversational Spanish or read and write French.
Activities & Interests	In order of importance, list student activities/ organizations, professional associations and committees in which you have participated. List any offices that you held, and indicate the skills you used.	Include activities and interests that show leadership, initiative, or pertain to your career interest.
Community/ Volunteer Activities	List offices held organizations, projects and the skills demonstrated.	If the setting is political or religious, you may want to use generic descriptions (e.g, Youth Leader for church, Speech writer for City Council candidate.)
Honors	Include academic honors such as Dean's List, honor societies and scholarships.	These can be listed separately or as a subsection under education.
Travel	Include this section if your career interest involves travel or knowledge of other cultures.	You can also use this as a way of distinguishing yourself if you have substantial travel experience.
References	Although a common closing to a resume, the phrase "References Available upon Request" is not necessary. You could state that you have "Portfolio and/or Writing Samples Available upon request if appropriate for the job you are seeking.	When you are asked for references, create a separate page with the word "References" at the top. List names, titles and contact information. Always ask permission before using anyone's name as a reference. Do not use relatives friends as references. Try to use people who know about your work-related abilities. Former employers, volunteer project supervisors, school counselors and faculty are all good choices for references.

Resume Do's and Don'ts

Do

Use good quality paper

Use a readable font and print on a laser printer

Be specific in your objective, if you use one

Emphasize results produced, significant achievements, and recognition from others

Quantify when possible and use specific examples

Check the spelling of every word; make sure grammar and punctuation are correct

Have someone else proofread your resume

Get feedback from several people

Begin phrases with action verbs such as "developed," "initiated," etc.

Be truthful about your accomplishments

Keep your resume to one page unless you have extensive experience related to your job objective

Don't

Use resume templates that come with word processing software

Begin phrases with "I" or use complete sentences

Include personal information such as marital status, social security number, age, or national origin

Use flashy graphics or colored paper
Mention controversial activities or associations

List unrelated, detailed duties such as "opened mail" or "filed documents"

Exaggerate your experience

Use meaningless words or phrases such as "seeking a challenging position" or "seeking a position working with people"

Start phrases in the experience section with "My responsibilities (or duties) included"

Use abbreviations

Resume Checklist

1. Is the resume pleasing to the eye easy-to-read font, good layout?
2. Did you use bullets, **bold**, *italics* and underlining?
3. If you know your resume will be scanned, did you omit columns, *italics* and underlining?
4. Is information listed in order of importance and relevant to the position?
5. Is your name, address, city, state, zip code, telephone number and email address at the top of the page?
6. Does your objective (if used) state clearly the functional areas in which you seek employment and the level of the job you want?
7. Does the resume avoid generalities and focus on specific information about experience, projects, products, etc.?
8. Did you check the spelling of every word and make sure the grammar and punctuation is correct?
9. Do most phrases begin with action verbs such as "developed," "initiated," etc.?
10. Have you been truthful about your accomplishments rather than being falsely modest or hyping them too much?
11. If you were the employer, would you call you for an interview.

Verb List for Resumes and Letters

Words in bold are especially good for pointing out accomplishments.

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
correspond
developed
directed
drafted
edited
enlisted
formulated
influenced
interpreted
lectured
mediated
moderated
negotiated
persuaded
promoted
publicized
reconciled
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

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

More Verbs for Accomplishment

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

Sample Job Objectives:

A responsible position in retail sales.

Sales-oriented position in a retail or distribution business.

A responsible general office position in a busy, medium-sized organization.

Copywriter, Account Executive in Advertising or Public Relations Agency.

Responsible position requiring skills in public relations, writing, and reporting.

Medical assistant or secretary in a physician's office, hospital, or other health services environment.

Computer programming and/or systems analysis. Prefer an accounting-oriented emphasis and a solutions-oriented organization.

A management position in the warehousing industry. Position should require supervisory, problem-solving, and organizational skills.

An assertive and success-oriented professional, seeking a sales position offering both challenge and growth.

A middle/upper level management position with responsibilities including problem solving, planning, organizing, and budget management.

Desire a position in the office management, accounting, or administrative assistant area. Prefer a position requiring responsibility and a variety of tasks.

Desire a position in the office management, secretarial, or clerical area. Position should require flexibility, good organizational skills, and an ability to handle people.

Seeking a position requiring excellent business management skills in an office environment. Position should require a variety of tasks, including office management, word processing, and spreadsheet and database program use.

Challenging position in programming or related areas that would best utilize expertise in the business environment. This position should have many opportunities for an aggressive dedicated individual with leadership abilities to advance.

A position requiring skills in organizing, communicating, and dealing with people. Prefer a small- to mid-size organization engaged in creative activities. Background in office management, skilled in word processing, spreadsheets, Internet research, and other computer operations.

Chronological Resume Format

Doreen K. Johnson

1214 East Main Drive
Milwaukee, WI 53214

(414) 255-7456
johnsond@yahoo.com

OBJECTIVE:

Desiring a challenging and responsible position in accounting/bookkeeping. Bringing flexibility, good organizational skills and a strong background in spreadsheet processing and other computer operations.

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS:

Outstanding math skills; enjoy working with numbers
Knowledge of clerical details; record and file maintenance
Strong background in all aspects of customer service and support
Excellent organizational, planning and interpersonal communication skills

The Chronological
Format works best
if you have
extensive
experience related
to the position you
are applying for.

EDUCATION:

Milwaukee Area Technical College, Milwaukee, WI
Associate Degree, Accounting 2003-2005
Graduated: May 2004 GPA: 3.6/4.0

EXPERIENCE:

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------|--|--------------|
| Midwest Airlines Center | Milwaukee, WI | <i>Clerk/Bookkeeper</i> | 2002-Present |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Responsible for all accounts receivable and payable functions as auditor for hotel operations▪ Prepared daily, monthly and yearly balance sheets for auditing process▪ Oversaw daily cash control, prepared bank and credit card deposits▪ Collected payments for customer billing and posted to general ledger | |
| Hyatt Hotel | Milwaukee, WI | <i>Desk Clerk</i> | 2000-2002 |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Posted all room, tax and restaurant charges to individual accounts▪ Typed memos and reports using Microsoft Office Suite Software▪ Compiled comprehensive housekeeping reports for Head Housekeeper▪ Utilized computer to schedule reservations around the world for guests▪ Communicated with guests and customers via a 10 line switchboard system | |
| Grede Manufacturing | West Allis, WI | <i>Production Clerk</i> | 1995-2000 |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Handled and resolved customer concerns in a professional manner▪ Prepared financial statements using BANKO Accounting Software▪ Provided clerical support for three department managers▪ Reconciled budget expenditures and posted to appropriate accounts | |
| Mail Box Inc. | Cudahy, WI | <i>Job Cost Clerk</i> | 1991-1995 |
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Sorted and routed all incoming accounts payable invoices▪ Managed petty cash account and posted to appropriate ledger accounts▪ Provided courteous and professional service and information | |

Skills/Functional Resume Format

Doreen K. Johnson

1214 East Main Drive
Milwaukee, WI 53214

(414) 255-7456
johnsond@yahoo.com

OBJECTIVE:

Desiring a challenging and responsible position in accounting/bookkeeping. Bringing flexibility, good organizational skills and a strong background in spreadsheet processing and other computer operations.

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS:

Outstanding math skills; enjoy working with numbers
Knowledge of clerical details; record and file maintenance
Strong background in all aspects of customer service and support
Excellent organizational, planning and interpersonal communication skills

The Functional Format highlights your "Skills & Abilities" for a specific position. Revise the skills to match a specific job description.

EDUCATION:

Milwaukee Area Technical College, Milwaukee, WI
Associate Degree, Accounting 2003-2005
Graduated: May 2004 GPA: 3.6/4.0

SKILLS AND ABILITIES:

Bookkeeping:

- Responsible for all accounts receivable and payable functions as auditor for hotel operations
- Prepared daily, monthly, and yearly balance sheets for auditing process
- Oversaw daily cash control, prepared bank and credit card deposits
- Collected payments for customer billing and posted to general ledger

Clerical:

- Posted all room, tax and restaurant charges to houseguests' individual accounts
- Typed memos and reports using Microsoft Office Suite Software
- Compiled comprehensive housekeeping reports for Head Housekeeper
- Utilized computer to schedule reservations around the world for guests

Customer Service:

- Handled and resolved customer concerns in a professional manner
- Communicated with guests and customers via a 10 line switchboard system
- Provided courteous and professional service and information

EXPERIENCE:

Midwest Airlines Center	Milwaukee, WI	Clerk/Bookkeeper	2002-Present
Hyatt Hotel	Milwaukee, WI	Desk Clerk	2000-2002
Grede Manufacturing	West Allis, WI	Production Clerk	1995-2000
Mail Box Inc.	Cudahy, WI	Job Cost Clerk	1991-1995

Combination Resume Format

Doreen K. Johnson

1214 East Main Drive
Milwaukee, WI 53214

(414) 255-7456
johnsond@yahoo.com

OBJECTIVE:

Desiring a challenging and responsible position in accounting/bookkeeping. Bringing flexibility, good organizational skills and a strong background in spreadsheet processing and other computer operations.

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS:

Outstanding math skills; enjoy working with numbers
Knowledge of clerical details; record and file maintenance
Strong background in all aspects of customer service and support
Excellent organizational, planning and interpersonal communication skills

The Combination Format works well if you have some experience related to the position you are applying for. You highlight that experience as well as your related "Skills & Abilities."

EDUCATION:

Milwaukee Area Technical College, Milwaukee, WI
Associate Degree, Accounting 2003-2005
Graduated: May 2004 GPA: 3.6/4.0

SKILLS AND ABILITIES:

Bookkeeping:

- Responsible for all accounts receivable and payable functions as auditor for hotel operations
- Prepared daily, monthly, and yearly balance sheets for auditing process
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- Posted all room, tax and restaurant charges to houseguests' individual accounts
- Typed memos and reports using Microsoft Office Suite Software
- Compiled comprehensive housekeeping reports for Head Housekeeper
- Utilized computer to schedule reservations around the world for guests

EXPERIENCE:

Midwest Airlines Center Milwaukee, WI	Clerk/Bookkeeper	2002-Present
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Prepared financial statements using BANKO Accounting Software▪ Provided clerical support for three department managers▪ Reconciled budget expenditures and posted to appropriate accounts	
Hyatt Hotel Milwaukee, WI	Desk Clerk	2000-2002
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Sorted and routed all incoming accounts payable invoices▪ Managed petty cash account and posted to appropriate ledger accounts▪ Provided courteous and professional service and information	
Grede Manufacturing West Allis, WI	Production Clerk	1995-2000
Mail Box Inc Cudahy, WI	Job Cost Clerk	1991-1995

Cover Letters

Whenever you send out a resume, a cover letter must accompany it. The purpose of the letter is to personalize your resume for this employer and enable you to elaborate more fully on your qualifications.

Model of a Cover Letter

Your address
City, State Zip
Date

Name of Contact Person
Title
Organization
Street Address
City, State Zip

Dear (contact person):

Opening Paragraph: Why you are writing? Capture interest!

- Strong opening sentences to make the reader want to continue reading.
- Name the job for which you are applying. Tell how you learned about it.
- Mention the name of a person (if any) who referred you to the organization.
- Perhaps pose a question that zeros in on a high-need area for the employer.

Body Paragraph: Critical content section. Convince the reader of your skills.

- Acknowledge the skills required by the open position
- State the skills/strengths you will bring to the job and that parallel those needed to fill the position.
- Give examples of skills, achievements – and how they will transfer to the job.
- Comment on your knowledge of the company (their products, services, or special projects) and why you are interested in working for them.

Closing Paragraph: Ask for an interview – identify next step!

- Refer to enclosed resume
- State that you are available for a personal interview at her/his convenience.
- Make it easy for the person to contact you: list your phone number and times you can be reached. Even if it is on the resume, list it here again!

Sincerely, (Respectfully, etc.)

(sign your name)
Your Name Typed

Enclosures: Resume

Sample cover letter

1234 University Parkway
Boca Raton, FL 33431
(561) 555-4321

March 24, 2008

Ms. Stephanie P. Tate
Manager of College Relations
Frito Lay Company
P. O. Box 789
Dallas, TX 75235

Dear Ms. Tate:

I am very interested in the (*Position Title*) you posted with Student Employment Services Center at Milwaukee Area Technical College (*where you saw the position advertised*). When I graduate in May (or) I recently graduated in ____ 200__ with a (*degree you are earning/degree you have already earned*), I will be/am ready to apply my education to progressive company such as (*Company name from above*).

From my research, I have learned that your (*position*) department is *seeking an individual with* _____ *experience*. At MATC, I completed (*length of time*) semesters of (*job*) training. With this background, I could help your staff members resolve problems and quickly fit into the department's work flow with little additional training. In addition, I also have learned that your organization is seeking an individual with _____ *experience*. I have (*length of time*) years of (*matching experience*). These skills will be beneficial in a business setting such as (*Company name from above*) where teamwork is so important.

I welcome the opportunity to discuss my background with you in person. The best time to contact me is (*days of the week*) between (*time of day*) at (*your telephone number from above*). I look forward to meeting you and working for (*Company name from above*). Thank you.

Sincerely,

Your name
Enclosure (Resume)

Sample Thank You Letter after an Interview

Your address
Your city, state, zip
Your telephone #

March 26, 2008

Ms. Stephanie P. Tate
Manager of College Relations
Frito Lay Company
P. O. Box 789
Dallas, TX 75235

Dear Ms. Tate:

I enjoyed my interview with you yesterday, (day, date, at time) at *(Company name from above)* concerning the *(Position Title)* position. I am very interested in joining your organization and I know that I have the communication and position-related skills necessary to make a valuable contribution.

As you pointed out in the interview, the ability to *(communicate effectively/or other action described)* is an essential requirement of the position. I'd like to take this opportunity to reiterate that during my *(training or work experiences)*, I performed activities that allowed me to develop both my team working/building and communication skills. These skills are important in generating measureable progress in team settings which is so important to continued growth of an organization.

Again, I am very interested in the *(Position Title)* position and am confident about the contributions I could make to your agency. I look forward to exploring the opportunity further with you. If any additional information is needed or I may help in any way, please give me a call. I look forward to hearing from you within the next two weeks. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Your name

Sample Thank You Letter after a Career/Job Fair

Your address
Your city, state, zip
Your telephone #

March 26, 2008

Ms. Stephanie P. Tate
Manager of College Relations
Frito Lay Company
P. O. Box 789
Dallas, TX 75235

Dear Ms. Tate:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me at the MATC Career Fair today. I certainly appreciate your time and attention in the midst of so many students seeking jobs.

You were extremely thorough in explaining *(Company name from above)* *(position/program)* to me. Now that I have a better idea of what the position entails, I am even more convinced that I would be an asset to your team and to *(Company name from above)*.

The solid education in *(MATC program title/degree)* I am receiving/have received from MATC and the fact that I have worked my way through college show a strong work ethic and determination, two qualities important to success at *(Company name from above)*. I look forward to an opportunity speak to you further about the *(position/program)*. I will contact you next week to arrange an appointment.

Thank you again for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Your name