

## Résumé Writing in a Nutshell

There is no lack of advice on writing résumés online. Based on my discussions with hiring managers and recruiters at technology companies, here are the essentials:

- 1. Design your résumé for easy scanning – both visually and electronically**  
Especially for positions with a lot of applicants, recruiters and hiring managers are looking for ways to cull the stack of résumés down to ones that will get their concentrated attention. Certain keywords need to pop out, especially position titles. Readers won't read the detail if they have already put your résumé in the "Meh" pile (i.e., indifference). See how easy it is to scan the attached sample résumé for position titles and other details.
  - Use a logical format, wide margins, clean type, and clear headings
  - Selectively apply bold and italic typeface that guide the reader's eye
  - Use bullets to call attention to important points (e.g. accomplishments)<sup>1</sup>
  - Position titles are more important than company names
- 2. Describe what you accomplished (outcomes) along with the job (outputs)**  
Recruiters want to know what impact you have had, not just your job duties. Understand the difference? Tell me you built something as part of a four-person team, what problem it solved (or purpose it fulfilled), and if appropriate, who used it. Highlight the critical skills you developed to do the job well.  
  
Extra Credit: Be specific about who was impacted by your accomplishment (e.g., 10,000 app downloads or used by 16 graduate students in the lab past 16 months). This specificity and actual users says a lot about your job's depth.
- 3. Show your GPA (if it's 3.0 or above)**  
Employers assume it is lower than 3.0 if you do NOT show it. However, if you have been working two or more years, you do not need to show it.
- 4. List Experience and Skills before classes and clubs**  
Do NOT list out classes, but do include your knowledge of technical packages such as MATLAB and the programming languages you know. Also highlight managing skills such as hiring, supervising, etc.
- 5. Customize the resume to the position and industry**  
Today, many companies use automated scanning tools and use weighting factors that rely on the words in your résumé for scoring. Read the job description and judiciously use the terminology in the job description. In your cover letter, specifically address the requirements and desired elements.
- 6. Instead of an Objective, write a pithy Career Summary**  
Example: *Senior biology major with programming skills and lab experience looking to work in science and business to help bring a product to market.*

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<sup>1</sup> Format bullets borrowed from: *6 Tips for Writing an Effective Resume*, by Marilyn Borysek, ASME Career Center, March 2011