## *Organizing Your Résumé*

A number of different organizational patterns can be used effectively. The following categories are typical—which you choose should depend on your experience and goals, the employer's needs, and any standard practices in your profession.

Heading (name and contact information)
Job objective (also called Profile) (optional)
Qualifications summary
Education
Employment experience
Related skills and abilities
Honors and activities
References
Portfolio (optional)

Whether you place education or employment experience first depends on the job you are seeking and which credentials would strengthen your résumé more. If you are a recent graduate without much work experience, you would list

education first. If you have years of job experience, including jobs directly related to the kind of position you are seeking, you would list employment experience first. In your education and employment sections, list the most recent experience first, the next most recent experience second, and so on. This is known as reverse chronological order.

### The Heading

At the top of your résumé, include your name, address, telephone number (home or cell), and e-mail address. Make sure that your name stands out on the page. A centered heading usually works best (Figure 16–3). If you have both a school address and a permanent home address, place your school address on the left side of the page and your permanent home address on the right side of the page. Place both underneath your name, as shown in Figure 16–4.

**PROFESSIONALISM NOTE: E-mail Addresses for Employment Correspondence**

Do not use an unprofessional e-mail address in employment correspondence (beerlover@xxx.com). E-mail addresses based on your last name work best.

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Figure 16–3 Centered Résumé Heading

## Job Objective vs. Job Title and Tagline

Job objectives versus job titles and taglines introduce the material in a résumé and help the reader quickly understand your goal. The differences between these two are slight but should be considered when organizing your résumé. A tagline is a brief quotation that summarizes your vision in seeking a particular employment opportunity. Although your personal objective may not provoke interest in the reviewer or meet the needs of a potential employer, a job title, tagline, or combination of both will immediately reveal your goal. Weigh the benefits of using a job title and tagline versus stating your objective. The following examples illustrate the difference between stating an objective and the use of a job-title and tagline combination.

*Sample Objective Statements*

- A full-time computer-science position aimed at solving engineering problems and contributing to a management team.
- A position involving meeting the concerns of women, such as family planning, career counseling, or crisis management.
- A summer research or programming position providing opportunities to use software-development and software-debugging skills.

*Sample Job-Title and Tagline Combinations*

- FINANCIAL SERVICES / BANKING PROFESSIONAL
  "Ensuring the Financial Success of Customers, Clients, and Communities"
- MECHANICAL ENGINEER
  "Developing Innovative, Efficient, Environmentally Friendly Energy Solutions"
- FIREFIGHTER / EMT
  "Prevention, Mitigation, Response" or "Protecting Life, Property, and the Environment"

Keep in mind that the objective or tagline section is optional. Although some potential employers prefer to see a clear employment objective in résumés, many employment specialists counsel against them because they can have the unintended consequence of limiting your options. If you are responding to a specific advertisement or job posting, stating the objective or creating a tagline can be useful in showing employers that your skills and experiences can meet their needs; however, if you are sending out a résumé blindly, consider leaving this feature off.

## PROFESSIONALISM NOTE: Appropriate Use of Taglines

Although taglines might more readily address the needs of the employer over a personal job objective, they are difficult to construct. Not everyone can create effective taglines; use them wisely and only when you are confident that one is warranted and well-written.

## Qualifications Summary

Sometimes called a *professional profile, summary statement,* or *career summary,* a qualifications summary can include skills, achievements, experience, or personal qualities that make you especially well suited to a position. You can simply call this section "Qualifications." To capture a prospective employer's attention, you may use a headline, such as "Award-Winning Senior Financial Analyst," as shown in Figure 16–14 on page 592.

## Education

List the college(s) you have attended, the degrees you received and the dates you received them, your major field(s) of study, and any academic honors you have earned (Figure 16–5). Include your grade point average only if it is 3.0 or higher—or include your average in your major if that is more impressive. List courses or independent work only if they are relevant to the job you seek. Mention your high school only if you want to call attention to special high school achievements, awards, projects, programs, internships, or study abroad.

## Employment Experience

The two most common ways to organize employment experience are in reverse chronological order and by category of professional experience, although both approaches may be combined if the job history warrants it. Using reverse chronological order, begin with your most-recent job and work backward under a single

*College, degree, and field of study*

*Related courses pertinent to job*

*Activities and honors to highlight accomplishments*

**EDUCATION**

Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, GA
Bachelor of Science in Engineering (expected June 2012)
Cumulative Grade Point Average: 3.46 out of possible 4.0

> *Related Courses*
> Methods of Digital Computations
> Differential Equations
> Graphic Display
> Software Design
>
> *Activities and Honors*
> Phi Chi Epsilon—Honor Society for Women in Business and Engineering
> Society of Women Engineers—Secretary-Treasurer (2010–2012)
> American Institute of Industrial Engineers—Secretary (2010–2011)
> Engineering Science Club
> Doris Harlow Scholarship recipient (2009, 2010)
> Dean's List six of eight semesters

Figure 16–5   Education Section of a Résumé

**EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE**

*Computer Systems International, Atlanta, Georgia*
ASSISTANT TRAINING DIRECTOR
September 2010 to Present
    Prepared professional training program for the Design, Data Entry, and
    Engineering departments.

*Vacationland Amusement Park, Toccoa, Georgia*
CHIEF LIFEGUARD
April 2007 to August 2009
    Supervised three other lifeguards and trained them in emergency first-aid
    techniques.

*Reverse chronological listing of job experience*

**Figure 16–6    Employment Experience Organized in Reverse Chronological Order**

major heading called "Experience," "Employment," "Professional Experience," or the like (Figure 16–6). You could, alternatively, organize your experience functionally by clustering similar types of jobs or experience into one or several sections with specific headings such as "Management Experience," "Major Accomplishments," or "Summary of Qualifications" (Figure 16–7).

One type of arrangement might be more persuasive than the other, depending on the situation. For example, if you are applying for an accounting job but have no specific background in accounting, you would probably do best to list past and present jobs in chronological order, from most to least recent. If you are applying for a supervisory position and have had three supervisory jobs in addition to two nonsupervisory positions, you might choose to create a single section called "Supervisory Experience" and list only your three supervisory jobs. Or, you could create two sections—"Supervisory Experience" and "Other Experience"—and include the three supervisory jobs in the first section and your nonsupervisory jobs in the second section.

The functional résumé groups work experience by types of workplace activities or skills rather than by jobs in chronological order. Organization by function is useful for applicants who want to stress certain skills important to the prospective employer or industry or who have been employed at only one job and want to demonstrate the diversity of their experience in that position. Functional arrangement is also useful if you are changing careers and want to highlight transferable skills. However, many employers are suspicious of functional résumés because they can be used to hide a poor work history, such as excessive job hopping or extended gaps in employment. Functional elements can be combined with a chronological arrangement by using a qualifications summary or skills category, as shown in Figure 16–7.

## SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

**SPANISH-LANGUAGE SKILLS**
- Fluent speaking, reading, and writing in Spanish (native language is English)
- Judged highly proficient in medical vocabulary and interpreting by Harvard Pilgrim Health Care
- Write and report in Spanish for *Siglo 21*, a newspaper based in Lawrence, Massachusetts
- Translate newspaper articles from English to Spanish

**INTERPERSONAL SKILLS**
- Conduct culturally appropriate bilingual interviews under stressful conditions
- Trained to remain calm and focused when talking to people at the scene of fires, crimes, and in the wake of family tragedies
- Bicultural as well as bilingual

**COMMUNICATION SKILLS**
- Relay speakers' words and ideas to others with accuracy and speed
- Write press releases for the largest immigrant advocacy group in Massachusetts

### EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

| | |
|---|---|
| Freelance reporter and copy editor, Boston, Massachusetts | 2009–present |
| Reporter, *News & Record*, Greensboro, North Carolina | 2007–2009 |
| Reporter, *Gaston Gazette*, Gastonia, North Carolina | 2005–2007 |
| Reporter, *Press & Standard*, Walterboro, South Carolina | 2003–2005 |

### VOLUNTEER WORK

| | |
|---|---|
| Writer, Mass. Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition, Boston, Massachusetts | 2009–present |
| Interpreter, blood drives and United Way campaigns, Greensboro, North Carolina | 2007–2009 |
| Intake worker, El Vínculo Hispano, Siler City, North Carolina | 2005–2007 |
| English as a Second Language teacher, Walterboro, South Carolina | 2003–2005 |

Figure 16–7  Employment Experience Organized Functionally

## ETHICS NOTE

Be truthful. The consequences of giving false information in your résumé could be serious and could result in your employment being terminated long after you were hired. The truthfulness of your résumé reflects not only your personal ethics but also the integrity with which you would represent an employer. Keep in mind that many parts of your résumé can easily be checked for accuracy by your potential employer.

In general, follow these conventions when working on the "Experience" section of your résumé. Use the brainstorming list you created earlier, deciding which work experiences and skills are relevant for the specific job or organization to which you are applying.

- Include jobs or internships when they relate directly to the position you are seeking. Although some applicants omit internships and temporary or part-time jobs, including them can make a résumé more accurate and impressive if they have helped you develop specific, relevant skills.

- Include volunteer experiences, such as taking on a leadership position in a college organization or directing a community-service project, if they demonstrate skills valued by potential employers. Such skills might include supervisory roles, entrepreneurial positions, or fund-raising experience.

- List military service as a job; give the dates served, the duty specialty, and the rank at discharge. Describe military duties if they relate to the job you are seeking.

- For each job or experience, list both the job title and company name. Begin consistently with either the job or the company, depending on which will likely be more impressive to potential employers.

- Under each job or experience, provide a concise description of your primary and secondary duties. If a job is not directly relevant, provide only a job title and a brief description of duties that helped you develop skills valued in the position you are seeking. For example, if you were a lifeguard now seeking an entry-level management position, focus on supervisory experience or even experience in averting disaster to highlight your management, decision-making, and crisis-control skills.

- Use action verbs (for example, "managed" rather than "as the manager") and state ideas succinctly, as shown in Figure 16–7 on page 580. Even though the résumé is about you, do not use "I" (for example, instead of "I was promoted to Section Leader," use "Promoted to Section Leader").

- Focus as much as possible on your achievements in your work history ("Increased employee retention rate by 16 percent by developing a training program"). See also Figure 16–8. Employers want to hire doers and achievers.

## Related Skills and Abilities

Employers are interested in hiring applicants with a variety of skills or the ability to learn new ones fairly quickly. Depending on the position, you might list items such as fluency in a foreign language; writing and editing abilities; specialized technical knowledge; equipment or mechanical training; or computer skills, including knowledge of specific languages, software, and hardware, as well as Web sites created. Also include relevant online social-networking activities (hobby, school club, volunteer work), such as blogs, podcasts, and Facebook or

**Vague, Lackluster Résumé**
*Student Volunteer Council*
I helped sign up new members for community volunteer projects.
*Baker Library*
I worked in the archives.

**Concise, Active Résumé**
*Vice president, Student Volunteer Council*
Organized recruitment drive for more than 30 different community-service projects; raised campuswide participation by 25%.
*Research fellow, Baker Library*
Catalogued and photographed new collection of historical documents for university archives.

Figure 16-8   Vague Job Description Revised for Clarity

LinkedIn profiles; these activities can highlight your technical and writing skills as well as your interests; just be sure they portray you in a professional light.

### Honors and Activities

List honors and unique activities near the end of your résumé. Include student or community activities, professional or club memberships, awards received, or works published. Be selective; do not duplicate information given in other categories, and include only information that supports your employment objective. Depending on which skills or activities you want to emphasize, use a heading such as "Activities," "Honors," "Professional Affiliations," or "Publications and Memberships."

### References

Avoid listing references unless that is standard practice in your profession or your résumé is sparse. Instead, use the phrase "References available upon request" to signal the end of a long résumé, or write "Available upon request" after the heading "References" as a design element to balance a page. In any case, you should have a separate list of references to give to prospective employers after interviews; your list should include the main heading "References for [your name]" and the names, affiliations, titles, and contact information for each of your references. Do not give anyone as a reference without first obtaining his or her permission.

### Portfolios

The résumé may also state that a "Portfolio is available upon request." Portfolios have traditionally been used by artists and writers to illustrate their work. However, a portfolio also may provide samples of your most impressive written work (reports, proposals, presentations), copies of letters of praise, certificates that attest to special abilities, newspaper clippings, a compact disk (CD) of a Web site you created, and other items that visually display your accomplishments and potential contributions to a prospective employer. Present your portfolio professionally and

attractively in a folder or binder; if you create a Web résumé, you can post your portfolio with it (see Electronic Résumés on pages 583–585). For an interview, it is best to bring a portfolio containing ten items or fewer.

## PROFESSIONALISM NOTE: Listing Salary Requirement in a Résumé

Avoid listing the salary you desire in your résumé. On the one hand, you may price yourself out of a job you want if the salary you list is higher than a potential employer is willing to pay. On the other hand, if you list a low salary, you may not get the best possible offer. (See Salary Negotiations on page 610.)