

WorkSource Pierce

Resume Kit

Creating Resumes that
Work for You!

Tips



Samples



Templates



FAQs



2025 Edition

Revised and Updated Annually



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Foreword

Why a Resume Kit?

As any employment counselor will tell you, the key to receiving an invitation to interview for a job starts with the resume. However, creating a resume that results in an interview is not always easy. Jobseekers, unsure of what employers wanted to see in a professional resume, would ask employment counselors for guidance. Often, that guidance would vary from person to person. Frustrated, jobseekers would have little idea how to write a resume that would get them an interview.

The WorkSource Pierce Business Services Team members regularly approach local employers for their perspectives on what a resume needs to get a jobseeker noticed by employers. The results are incorporated into the contents of this Resume Kit. The information presented provides current research on job search skills and strategies as well as input and suggestions from numerous companies throughout the Puget Sound region and has resulted in significant job search success on the part of many job seekers in our County. We sincerely hope you will find it effective in your job search as well.

****Updated November 2024***

WorkSource Pierce Business Services

Table of Contents

Resume Basics and Headings	3
What do Employers Want?.....	4
Chronological Resume Format	5
Chronological Resume Template	7
Functional Resume Format.....	8
Functional Resume Template.....	9
Combination Resume Format	10
Combination Resume Templates.....	12
Cover Letter Sample 1	14
Cover Letter Sample 2.....	15
Frequently Asked Questions	16

** Online copies of this document and **editable** Resume and Cover Letter templates can be found online at <https://worksource-pierce.org/jobseekers> under **Resources for Your Job Search**.



Resume Basics and Headings

A resume highlights your skills, work experience and education as they relate to the specific job you are seeking. Resumes come in all shapes and sizes, and **no one style is right for every position**. So, to be successful when looking for work, write a resume that contains relevant information and targets (or matches) the job for which you are applying. Remember that each resume should emphasize your accomplishments in order to show a potential employer what you can do for them.

Sections and Headings

Employers agree that a successful resume should include clearly delineated sections. Refer to the sample resumes and templates for examples on how these sections (or headings) can be used.

Of all sections commonly included in a resume format, the two sections employers look for most are **Relevant Skills** and **Work Experience**. Recruiters tend to deem them equally important. Other elements employers look for include education, relevant hobbies, and professional development.

Contact Information

The first thing to write on your resume is your name and contact information. **It is not necessary to list a physical address** on your resume. Use an e-mail address and working telephone number. Make sure that your e-mail address is professional, such as J.Smith@email.com. If not, make a new one using your first name (or initial) and last name. Also, if you have a LinkedIn profile, add the profile URL. Make sure the URL is customized to include your name.

Relevant Skills

Matching your skills, abilities, or qualifications to the keywords in the job listing means **targeting** your resume to what the employer wants. This section provides a brief, easy-to-read summary of why you are the right person for the specific job by highlighting a list of your skills that are relevant to the position you're applying for. When creating a bullet list, use short phrases to describe your qualifications (work related skills), soft skills (personality traits or people skills), and transferable skills (skills used in multiple occupations) *as they relate to the specific job requirements*. Example: if the job listing requires knowledge of Microsoft Excel, state that you have "Proficiency in MS Excel".

The Relevant Skills resume section is proving to be the section gaining the most popularity with employers as many recruiters are moving toward skills-based recruiting practices.

Professional Experience

This information is crucial for employers and is generally listed right under your skills and abilities. Include your last **10** years of work (No more than 15), and give the name of the employer, city and state in which you worked and dates (at least the years) that you were employed. Be sure to **include relevant details and accomplishments** for each job included, and list **all** jobs, even temporary or seasonal ones, so that there are no gaps in employment.

Education

This section covers school(s) attended and any degree(s) received. Dates are not needed, unless you have graduated within the last 10 years, you have minimal work experience, or you are attending school in-between jobs. **Certifications** and **Licenses** can be included here or placed under a separate heading.

What do Employers Want?

WorkSource Pierce frequently requests recruiters' preference from employers in the Pierce County area with reference to resumes. The following information comes from the responses we receive and tend to agree with our resume suggestions as well.

Objective or Professional Summary?

Professional Summaries are desired more by recruiters than **Objective statements**; at the same time, having a short, well-written objective can confirm to an employer what work you are seeking. One way to achieve this is to use a job title as the title of your resume; this informs recruiters in just a couple words what you are applying for. Use the title of the job for which you are applying.

Functional, Chronological or Both?

Recruiters tend to have diverse opinions on the use of different resume formats: some don't like functional, or skills-based resumes, as those lack the depth of work experience that shows where you got your skills. Some recruiters look for skills first. In short, the decision on whether to use a functional, chronological or a combination depends entirely upon your individual work history and skills.

Length

One page or two? The predominant opinion according to our survey is that one page is sufficient for entry-level positions; two pages is acceptable if you have sufficient relevant work history, skills, education/training, etc. to warrant it. I

Keywords and Computer Scanners

About 68% of recruiter respondents report that while they look for keywords, they look more for content. Do you show how you meet the qualifications for the position? Do you use the verbiage the employers use in the job announcement? Those are the two most important questions in targeting your resume.

Many companies use Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) to help recruiters post jobs and track applicants. Some recruiters use ATS to screen applicants, making keywords highly beneficial. Experience has found, however, that most ATS software is not sophisticated enough to properly vet candidates. For this reason, most employers we found use ATS to post jobs and rely on human eyes to screen resumes. However, those keywords are still important in helping recruiters determine suitability. We simply tell job seekers to 'speak the employer's language,' using the terms they use in job listings.

What about AI-generated resumes?

As Artificial Intelligence (AI) becomes more prevalent in our daily lives, you might be wondering if you can leverage AI to take some of the drudgery out of the resume creation process. The short answer is yes – sort of.

While it might be tempting to draft an entirely AI-generated resume, doing so isn't as risk-free as you might expect. If a hiring manager discovers that you used AI to generate your resume, not only will your application likely be rejected, but you could also damage your professional reputation. As such, it's generally best to have AI serve as an extra set of eyes on your **human-made** resume rather than having it generate one for you entirely from scratch.

Before you dive in and start prompting, though, it's important to note that security experts suggest you should "never share personal or sensitive information in any of your prompts. By doing so, you increase the risk of sharing confidential data with cybercriminals."

Chronological Resume Format

Jordan S. Common

(206) 555-6789

Jordan.Common@email.com

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/jordanscommon

Executive Sales Professional

"Developing effective sales team / Increasing clientele / Raising revenue"

Career Summary

Top-ranked sales manager with a 12-year history of sales success. Recognized for contributions to record-setting sales figures, territory startup and new account development. Successful track record of leading sales teams to achieve multimillion-dollar revenue gains.

Professional Experience

Area Sales Manager

A-Gen Company

Seattle, WA

Apr 2021 - Current

Managing daily sales operations of automotive parts department generating \$12.5 million annually. Providing floor sales leadership and supervised eight associates. Rapidly promoted from initial sales associate position.

Achievements:

- Increased sales from \$4 million to \$8.2 million within two years, exceeding quota by 8% in 2021 and 15% in 2022 (Western territory including: WA, OR, MT, ID & AK).
- Cultivated and trained an enthusiastic sales management team to develop optimal sales performance.
- Improved sales policies and practices. Defined the sales cycle, created accurate job descriptions, and developed standards for customer relationship management throughout the entire region.
- Ranked as #1 Sales Team (out of 12) in 2022 & 2023.

Sales Manager / Account Executive

XYZ Paint International

Tacoma, WA

Sep 2018 - Apr 2021

Built a full-scale sales operation from the ground up, including establishing database systems, recruiting senior regional sales managers, and developing sales and marketing strategies. Served as project manager, leading a team of 20 staff members in developing and implementing strategic goals for marketing campaigns.

Achievements:

- Surpassed sales goals by 19% in 2021 and more than 10% in 2022.
- Increased sales of company-owned paint sealants by 24%, selling \$245K in sealant products in 2019.
- Demonstrated an unwavering commitment to customer service, adding over 200 new customers annually, while maintaining premium service levels with existing clientele.
- Recognized for superior performance as a two-time district "Executive of the Month" honoree by exploiting virtual means of increasing sales during the COVID-19 lockdown.

Jordan S. Common

(Cont'd)

(206) 555-6789

Jordan.Common@email.com

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/jordanscommon

Assistant Account Manager

Majestic Inc

Tacoma, WA

Dec 2016 - Sep 2018

Maintained constant contact with key clients to develop service offerings and answer customer needs. Prepared marketing presentations and met with clients to offer services.

Achievements:

- Awarded "Manager of the Quarter" (Q4 2017 and Q1 2018) for sales, service, and relationship-building excellence.
- Consistently exceeded 300 cold and follow-up calls weekly, earning recognition as one of the top 10 reps (out of 125) based on call volume.
- Provided support for sales and marketing strategy meetings by utilizing input from over 1000 customer feedback responses.

Lead Sales Associate

Retail LLC

Silverdale, WA

Mar 2014 - Nov 2016

Developed positive customer relationships in retail sales of large-scale hobby shop. Utilized a customer-focused approach to merchandising and customer service.

Achievements:

- Improved sales by 18% after corporate and company downsizing post economic downturn.
- Recognized as a member of The Shining Star Club for routinely exceeding quotas
- Received promotion to Sales Associate Lead after 4 months.

Education

University of San Diego

San Diego, CA

BA in Business Management – Sales & Marketing

Chronological Resume Template

Your Name

(000) 000-0000

your.email@email.com

(Customized LinkedIn URL Optional)

Title of Job for which you are Applying

Strong, brief opening summary using keywords to provide the employer with the reason why you are the ideal candidate for the position (# of years' experience, major accomplishment, knowledge, skills, abilities, etc.)

Professional Experience

(Work History: FT/PT/Temp/Intern/Volunteer, if relevant - not to go beyond 10-15 years)

Job Title

Company Name

City, State

Dates (Month/Year – Month/Year)

Describe the major tasks you performed while at this job. Begin each sentence with a past tense **action** word and be as specific as possible. (NOTE: Past tense pertains to jobs done in the past; current jobs are listed in present tense.)

Accomplishments *(if applicable)*

- Describe accomplishments you achieved while at this job, i.e., why what you did at this job mattered.
- Use bullets for each of these accomplishments.

Job Title

Company Name

City, State

Dates (Month/Year – Month/Year)

Describe the major tasks you performed while at this job. Begin each sentence with a past tense **action** word and be as specific as possible. (NOTE: Past tense pertains to jobs done in the past; current jobs are listed in present tense.)

Accomplishments *(if applicable)*

- Describe accomplishments you achieved while at this job, i.e. why what you did at this job mattered.
- Use bullets for each of these accomplishments.

Education

Name of Institution

City, State

Year *(If within the last 10 years)*

Degree or Certificate w/ Relevant Courses

Functional Resume Format

Paul Malone

PMalone253@email.com

(253) 555-0000

LinkedIn.com/in/PJMalone

Administrative Assistant

Administrative Support professional with over 10 years of experience working in fast-paced environments demanding strong organizational, technical, and interpersonal skills. Trustworthy, ethical, and discreet, committed to superior customer service. Proficient in MS Office Suite (Word, Excel, Power Point, and Outlook). Experienced in managing multiple projects simultaneously with a high attention to detail. **Areas of expertise** include:

- Front Office Operations
- Executive Office Support
- Telephone Reception
- Team Collaboration
- Customer Service & Relations
- Word Processing & Typing
- Technical Support
- Proactive Problem Solving
- Organization & Prioritization

Administrative Support

- Provided discreet secretarial and reception services for busy medical centers. Scheduled appointments and maintained accurate, up-to-date confidential files.
- Answered telephones and promptly and courteously assisted clients and employees throughout the organization.
- Excelled in role requiring the ability to handle a variety of customer service and administrative tasks and resolve customer issues with expediency
- Demonstrated proficiencies in telephone and front-desk reception within a high-volume environment. Calmed upset/angry customers, researched and rapidly solved problems and rebuilt client trust to prevent the loss of customers
- Consistently praised by management for the quality and timeliness of reports, attention to detail, exemplary customer service delivery and team-player attitude

Customer Service & Reception

- Registered incoming patients in medical centers. Demonstrated ability to maintain composure and work efficiently in a fast-paced environment while preserving strict confidentiality.
- Conducted patient interviews to elicit necessary information for registration, accurate prioritization, and to assist medical professionals in the triage process.
- Provided a high level of customer service and client relations based on outstanding communication and interpersonal skills
- Performed the tasks of handling cash payment or credit card as well as check credit card to ensure the reliability of purchasing

Relevant Administrative Experience

Patient Services Representative – MultiCare; Tacoma, WA

10/2019 – 12/2024

Medical Receptionist – CHI Franciscan; Tacoma, WA

07/2017– 09/2019

File Clerk – City of Puyallup; Puyallup, WA

06/2015 – 06/2017

Education & Training

Health Unit Coordinator Certification

Miller-Motte Business College; Wilmington, NC

High School Diploma

Lakes High School; Lakewood, WA

Functional Resume Template

First Name Last Name

Phone Number

E-mail address

Customized LinkedIn profile URL (optional)

Position Title

Professional Summary / Professional Profile

A short statement that tells the employer why you and your skills make you the best candidate for the position you are applying for, based on the information the job listing contains. The information you include should increase your chances of receiving an invitation to an interview.

Qualifications Profile

Skill title required for the position you are applying for

- Give an example of how you have achieved this skill that is relevant for the position
- Give an example of how you have achieved this skill that is relevant for the position
- Give an example of how you have achieved this skill that is relevant for the position

Ability title required for the position you are applying for

- Give an example demonstrating this ability that is relevant for the position
- Give an example demonstrating this ability that is relevant for the position
- Give an example demonstrating this ability that is relevant for the position

Knowledge title required for the position you are applying for

- Give an example using your knowledge that is relevant for the position
- Give an example using your knowledge that is relevant for the position
- Give an example using your knowledge that is relevant for the position

Accomplishment title required for the position you are applying for

- Give an example of the accomplishment that is relevant to the position
- Give an example of the accomplishment that is relevant to the position
- Give an example of the accomplishment that is relevant to the position

Professional Experience

(Work History: FT/PT/Temp/Intern/Volunteer; not to go beyond 10-15 years)

Position Title	Company Name, City, State	Dates (MM/YYYY – MM/YYYY)
Position Title	Company Name, City, State	Dates (MM/YYYY – MM/YYYY)

Education

Degree or Certificate	Name of Institution, City, State	Year (if within the last 10 years)
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Major / Minor and/or listing of relevant courses (optional if you did not receive an actual degree or certification)

Combination Resume Format

Jonathan Jobseeker

(253) 555-0000

J.Jobseeker@email.com

www.linkedin.com/in/jonathanjobseeker

Accountant

Accountant with over 10 years of experience at major accounting firms, with seven years of audit experience for private and publicly held banking and manufacturing companies. BBA in Accounting and work experience demonstrating consistent achievement of organizational and fiscal objectives and goals.

Areas of Expertise

- Public and private accounting
- Project Management
- Cost Benefit Analysis (CBAs)
- Foreign tax reporting
- Audits and Financial Statements
- Financial Reconciliations
- General Ledger Accounting
- Record/Systems Automation
- Strategic & Financial Analysis
- Proficiency in MS Excel & Access

Professional Experience

Senior Accountant

02/2020 – Present

Education Pro Inc.

Tacoma, WA

Maintaining full charge of all accounting functions for company's second largest plant including Cost Accounting, Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable, General Ledger, Financial Reporting, Fixed Assets, Inventory Control and Payroll. Managing staff of 5 staff accountants and controlling \$1.5M capital project.

Key Accomplishments:

- Selected for position as reviewer in company's Audit Quality Review Process (AQRP) from 2020 through 2021. Assess quality of audits completed by other partners and report findings to national office.
- Helped businesses accelerate month-end close and payroll processing by up to 25% while reducing errors and increasing accuracy to new bests.

Staff Accountant

01/2014 – 01/2020

Finance Masters

Vancouver, WA

Thoroughly reviewed financial statements and tax audits to correct any discrepancies. Tracked all spending against approved requests. Analyzed costs and revenues to project future needs. Supplied detailed tax documentation needed to submit accurate corporate returns.

Key Accomplishment:

- Decreased errors by 50% and reduced entry input time by 25%.

Education

University of Washington

Seattle, WA

Bachelor of Science, Accounting, Minor in Business

Wally Wilson

203.123.4567 ♦ wwilson@email.com

Warehouse Associate Lead

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

A career-minded team member with 8 years of experience in all warehouse areas. Proficient in heavy equipment operation, schedule and inventory maintenance, and loss prevention. Problem solver eager to enable smooth flow of shipment operations.

RELEVANT SKILLS

- 5+ years: Reach, cherry picker, sit-down forklift and electric pallet jacks
- Count 1000+ stock items per hour
- 99% quality control for data entry
- Current valid WA driver's license
- Basic computer, data entry skills, and RF scanner
- Organized, punctual, and friendly
- Safely lift 50+ lbs. continuously
- Follows direction, good communicator
- Able to pass pre-employment checks and drug screen
- **Certifications:** Forklift, Hazmat, CPR / First Aid

EXPERIENCE

Warehouse Associate, Costco, Seattle, WA 11/2021 – Present

- Memorized common stock codes and warehouse location for faster retrieval.
- Ensured faster service by properly recording shipping and receiving records for hazardous materials, weights, and damaged goods into computer database.
- Cleaned and maintained supplies, tools, equipment, and storage areas in compliance with company safety standards.
- Loaded and unloaded freight containers with a variety of items including furniture, food, and home electronics equipment using pallet jacks and forklifts.

Recent Accomplishments

- Named "Safety Employee of the Year" for 2022.
- Led 4-person team to create a new cost-saving process for 90% faster inventory verification.

Stock Clerk, Staffing Temps, Seattle, WA 07/2019 – 09/2021

- Labeled and sorted freight items during peak delivery periods while meeting deadlines.

Warehouse Clerk, Food Lifeline (Volunteer), Des Moines, WA 09/2018 – 12/2018

- Worked in all weather and temperature conditions to unpack, mark, and store perishable and non-perishable foods in warehouse and walk-in coolers shelves.

Sorter, Services for the Blind (Volunteer), Kent, WA 09/2017 – 06/2018

- Safely moved, sorted, and organized 200+ pieces of donated goods per shift.

EDUCATION

High School Diploma, Mount Rainier High School, Des Moines, WA

2019

Combination Resume Templates

NAME

Telephone Number with Area Code

E-Mail Address

LinkedIn profile URL (optional)

Professional Qualifications

- Number of years of relevant work experience as requested in the preferred requirements.
- Specific accomplishments that demonstrate/prove your professional value to the company.
- Education, training or certifications relevant to the specific job.

Relevant Work Experience

(Work History: FT/PT/Temp/Intern/Volunteer; not to go beyond 10-15 years)

Job Title, *Company Name, City, State*

Dates (Month/Year – Month/Year)

Describe the major tasks you performed while at this job. Begin each sentence with a past tense **action** word (unless currently working) and be as specific as possible.

Recent Accomplishments

- Describe accomplishments you achieved while at this job. Include stats or examples as available.
- Use bullets for each of these accomplishments.

Job Title, *Company Name, City, State*

Dates (Month/Year – Month/Year)

Describe the major tasks you performed while at this job. Begin each sentence with a past tense **action** word and be as specific as possible.

Recent Accomplishments

- Describe accomplishments you achieved while at this job. Include stats or examples as available.
- Use bullets for each of these accomplishments.

Job Title, *Company Name, City, State*

Dates (Month/Year – Month/Year)

Describe the major tasks you performed while at this job. Begin each sentence with a past tense **action** word and be as specific as possible.

Recent Accomplishments

- Describe accomplishments you achieved while at this job.
- Use bullets for each of these accomplishments.

Education & Training

Degree or Certificate, *Name of Institution, City, State*

Year (if within the last 10 years)

Name

000.000.000

E-mail Address

LinkedIn URL (optional)

Position Applying For**Relevant Skills**

- Specify skills as well as number of years of experience as requested in the job requirements (including preferred requirements).
- Specific accomplishments that demonstrate/prove your professional value to the company.
- Soft skills ('people' skills or personality traits) that will contribute to the company's success.
- Transferable skills (ability to do a certain task) that will contribute to the company's success.

Experience*(Work History: FT/PT/Temp/Intern/Volunteer, if relevant; not to go beyond 10-15 years)***Job Title**, Company name, City, State, Dates (Month/Year – Month/Year)

- Describe what you did while at this job.
- Begin each sentence with a past tense **action** word (unless currently working in this position) and be as specific as possible.
- Describe why what you did while on this job mattered.
- Bullet each of these accomplishments.

Job Title, Company name, City, State, Dates (Month/Year – Month/Year)

- Describe what you did while at this job.
- Begin each sentence with a past tense **action** word and be as specific as possible.
- Describe why what you did while on this job mattered.
- Bullet each of these accomplishments.

Job Title (Volunteer), Company name, City, State, Dates (Month/Year – Month/Year)

- Describe what you did while at this job, as well as the organization's mission.
- Begin each sentence with a past tense **action** word and be as specific as possible.
- Describe why what you did while on this job mattered.
- Bullet each of these accomplishments.

Certifications

Certifications or trainings relevant to the specific job

Education**Degree or Certificate**, Name of Institution, City, State and Year (if within the last 10 years)

Cover Letter Sample 1

Your Name

000.000.0000 ♦ your.email@email.com ♦ LinkedIn profile URL (optional)

September 3, 2024

Department of Health and Social Services (DSHS)

Attn: John Smith, HR Manager

Re: Financial Service Specialist 1

Dear [Name Here],

Your recent advertisement for the Financial Services Specialist position immediately captured my interest. I am confident that my professional experience provides me with the capabilities to successfully fulfill this position. Accordingly, I have enclosed my resume for your consideration.

Key points that are relevant to this opportunity include:

Job Requirements	My Qualifications
Minimum 2 years of experience in Customer Service field.	10+ years of successful experience in Customer Service field.
Expertise in financial accounting, money management, and investment strategies	BS degree with major in Finance/Economics; highly experienced in money management
Proficient in MS Word, Excel and Outlook	Advance level proficiency in MS Office Suite (Word, Excel, Power Point, and Outlook)
Ability to develop a good relationship with new clients	Proven ability to attract new clients, provide a high-level customer service and build influencing relationships.

My experience along with my professional skills and personal abilities show my willingness to learn and adapt as needed. I am known in my work as a very responsible, reliable, and goal-oriented person. I am focused on getting results in a timely manner in order to meet established deadlines. I have very strong analytical, research and problem-solving skills. I'm highly productive with minimal guidance or supervision.

I am very excited about working as a Financial Service Specialist with DSHS. I am not looking just for a job; I am looking for a career with DSHS. I am confident I have all the professional skills and personal abilities to succeed in this position and provide excellent results. I would appreciate an opportunity to further discuss your needs, my qualifications and all the benefits I can bring with me to your company.

Sincerely,

[your name here]

Attachment: Resume

Cover Letter Sample 2

000.000.0000 • your.email@email.com • LinkedIn profile URL (optional)

Date

Name

Organization

Address

City, State, ZIP

Dear _____:

I am interested in the Coordinator position advertised on [where you found the job posting]. My resume is enclosed for your review. Given my related experience and excellent capabilities I would appreciate your consideration for this job opening. My skills are an ideal match for this position based on the following:

Job Requirements:

- Responsible for evening operations in Student Center and other facilities, including managing registration, solving customer problems, dealing with risk management and emergencies, enforcement of department policies.
- Assists with hiring, training, and management of staff. Coordinates statistics and inventory.
- Experience in the supervision of student staff and strong interpersonal skills are preferred.
- Valid driver's license with good driving record. Ability to travel to different sites required.
- Experience in collegiate programming and management.

My Qualifications:

- I register students for courses, design and manage program software, solve customer problems, enforce department policies, and serve as contact for students, faculty and staff.
- I have experience hiring, training, scheduling and management of staff, managing supply inventory, and ordering.
- Minnesota driver's license with NTSA defensive driving certification.
- Extensive experience in collegiate programming and management.
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills.

I appreciate your taking the time to review my credentials and experience. Again, thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

[Your Name Here]

Attachment: Resume

Frequently Asked Questions

Q1. Do I need a resume? Why?

A: Yes

The purpose of a resume is to attract the attention of a potential employer enough to *want to interview you*. A resume provides a brief overview of your skills and recent experience and should clearly demonstrate your ability to perform the job you are applying for.

Q2. How do I know what kind of resume style or format to use?

A: It depends on a variety of factors related to your work experience

Your goal is to always show as much relevant or direct information on the resume as possible. Based on your recent job titles, length of stay at each job and unique set of skills and abilities, you may need to use a specific resume style to be the most competitive applicant for a position.

Use a **chronological** or **combination** template when your most recent work experience is a fairly close match to the position requirements. Include recent and directly related work experience, education and job titles. The remainder of the resume can include qualifications to further impress the employer.

When applying for a position where you lack extensive experience, if your work history has sizeable gaps (more than 12 months) or you have held jobs in multiple industries, use a **functional** format with **dates**. Most of the resume should include qualifications from your transferrable work skills, interests, or life skills. The remainder will briefly list your actual work or volunteer history, job titles and education.

It's important to understand that there are different resume styles to choose from. Again, the goal of your resume is to highlight any skills and experience that demonstrate how you are a good match for the open job.

Q3. It takes me a lot of time to do a different resume for every job. Can I send out the same resume for every job I apply for?

A: No

It's true, targeting a resume to a specific job posting takes time, but is well worth the effort as it can increase your chances of getting an interview. Employers like to know that you've read the job description and can show on paper that you are a "fit" or "match" for the position. This will help them decide on whether to invite you in for an interview.

That said, you do not need to create new resumes for every job you apply for, but you are carefully reviewing your resume each time to ensure that you are directly addressing the needs of the particular position. Review the verbiage to ensure you are using the same terms as in the job announcement.

Ask yourself: based on the job description, what information will this employer be interested in viewing most? Write your resume in a way that answers their specific questions about your qualifications. For hints, review the requirements listed in the job announcement.

Q4. I have sent out several resumes and received no response. Is it my resume?**A: Possibly**

If you've been sending out the same resume for several months and have not received any invitations to interview, this could be a strong indication that you need to rework or target your resume. It is **crucial** to target your resume for every job you apply for. Employers want to know why you are a good fit for THEIR position. Remember, your resume must attract the attention of a potential employer enough to *want to interview you*. To do this, clearly describe your skills and experience to match the specific job announcement. Take a look at the attached resume templates or come in to your local WorkSource office to have your resume reviewed.

Q5. Should I include references on my resume?**A: No**

References should not be included on your resume. If an employer requests references, include them in a *separate* document. If references are not asked for during the application process, bring several copies with you when you are invited to an interview.

Q6. I just graduated from school and have never had a real job. What do I put on my resume when I have no work experience?**A: Include your skills, abilities, education and volunteer experience**

Paid work experience isn't all you need to fill up a resume. Volunteer work, participation in a community organization or college club, religious organization or college ROTC program can all highlight your dedication, work ethic and leadership ability. If you're a high school student, summers spent mowing neighbors' lawns or babysitting all demonstrate your responsibility and ability to organize tasks.

You can lead your resume with your education, especially if you are a recent grad. You may also include information about certifications and licenses you have. If you haven't graduated yet, include the date you started to present. If you have an expected date of graduation, include that as well. List information about your major or any relevant coursework to show an employer that you have knowledge in a specific area of study.

Provide a section that highlights special skills you might have such as your ability to troubleshoot computer issues or your expertise in designing websites.

You may also include any awards, qualifications, and recognitions you have received. You may also list your achievement on the honor roll, dean's list and your high GPA (3.6 or above) under your education heading.

Q7. I was laid off from my last job and haven't worked for 2 years. Should I list "unemployed" as the reason for the gap on my resume?**A: No**

Paid work experience isn't the only experience you can list in a resume. Volunteer work, participation in a skills enhancement course, community organization, club or religious organization can all highlight your dedication, work ethic and leadership ability. If you've been unemployed for a length of time, efforts to keep your skills sharp may prove to an employer that you're motivated and ready to return to work.

Q8. I have been at home caring for my family. Should I explain my gap in employment on my resume?**A: Not in a resume. A cover letter is an alternative to addressing it on your resume**

Even if a cover letter is not requested, in this instance, it might be a great way to minimize any fears an employer might have about your employment gap. In your letter you can share that you're looking to return to the workforce and then describe how your skills make you valuable.

If you have a large gap in your resume, use one to two sentences to **explain it quickly and positively**. For example, "I have five years of administrative experience working in a clinic setting. From 2015 to 2017, I was away from the workforce caring for family but am now ready to contribute my administrative and healthcare experience to your position". In this example, the gap is sandwiched between five years of related experience and a demonstrated readiness to return to the workforce, explaining the gap in a positive and straightforward way.

If you have **both** employment gaps **and** limited work experience, you can focus your resume on the transferrable skills you gained while caring for family and/or managing a household. Skills such as time management, scheduling, budgeting, conflict resolution and multi-tasking are all valuable in a work environment. You should also include skills gained outside the home in volunteer service. Think about the knowledge you gained by participating in community programs, such as coaching a sports team, leading a PTA fundraising event, or being the neighborhood liaison to the fire department.

Q9. Is a cover letter required in every application?**A. No... and Possibly**

The subject of cover letters has gotten widely mixed responses from local employers: Some employers feel that cover letters are quite important to an application, while others feel that cover letters are more important indicators of an applicant's ability to communicate articulately – and still other employers say they don't look at them at all. Short answer: if requested, be sure to include a **well-written** cover letter.

Two cover letter templates are included in this document, while other examples are available online. Look at a cover letter like any other business letter but use the same format and font that you use for your resume. Make sure you directly address the particular needs of the position for which you are applying, and use professional language and proofread for spelling, grammar and punctuation.

Q10. I've worked for a lot of different companies over the past 10 years and find employers are passing me over because of this. Is there a way to make this less obvious on my resume?**A: Yes**

If you've worked for several different employers in the same type of job but have had short periods of employment (less than 6 months), discuss your *combined* years of experience and industry expertise in your summary of qualifications. You can also downplay short periods of employment by listing **only** the year instead of both the month and year, for example: 2017 instead of 2/2017 to 3/2017 (if you choose to do so, be sure to be consistent with formats throughout the resume). You might also want to include the type of job, such as temporary, seasonal, internship, etc.

Q11. I have a felony and the job I'm applying for will require submitting to a background check. Should I even apply for the job?**A: Yes**

Most employer background checks go back about 10 years and focus on how the felony relates to the duties of the position. Many employers treat felonies on a case-by-case basis. If you are a good fit for the open position, you should apply. If your felony does not conflict with the duties of the position, your skills and qualifications may override the fact that you have a criminal background. If you're bondable, be sure to share that in your cover letter or interview.

Employers would prefer to learn about your conviction face to face in an interview rather than reading about it later in your background report. Focus on your interviewing skills and be honest about what information they may find on your record. That means researching the company and *practicing* your responses to potentially tough questions about your history. Be prepared to **quickly and candidly explain** what you have learned from your mistake. You can also share your desire to move forward with your life and career.

Q12. I'm over 40 years old and I think my resume is being overlooked because of my age. What can I do about this?**A: Don't let your resume give the employer a chance to guess your age**

Your resume may be hindering your job search if you include graduation dates (more than 10 years from the current year) or including jobs you held more than 10-15 years ago. Removing certain dates may help you get through the resume screening process. Unfortunately, it won't help you on an application where ALL fields/boxes must be completed. Ultimately, the employer will know your general age once you meet, so pay attention to how you present yourself as this may help you to compete during an interview.

Presenting a strong interview is key. That means researching the company and *practicing* your responses to various questions. You'll need to be comfortable discussing your skills, anecdotal examples from your past jobs, accomplishments and future career goals.

Q13. I have only had 2 jobs since I began working – one for 18 years and another for 2 years. Should I leave out my longest job on my resume since it goes past the recommended 10-15 years?**A: No**

In this situation, it's OK to have more than the recommended 10-15 years so keep the job of 18 years. If you remove it, it will appear to employers that you have very little work history or experience and would create a very large gap in your work history.

Q14. I've worked at my job for 20 years before being laid off recently. I am willing to take a lower-level position to get my foot in the door, but I keep being told that I am overqualified. Is there anything I can do to my resume to fix this?**A: Yes — target your resume**

Clearly stating what you want will make your job search more successful and you'll be more convincing to employers about your goals.

Your resume should list relevant skills and accomplishments first and your extensive background second. Use your qualifications to your advantage. Focus on skills that will make you more efficient in the position. Be honest about your previous work experience but put more emphasis on your skills and responsibilities than on your previous job titles or education.

Your cover letter is a great place to minimize any fears an employer might have about your extensive qualifications. In your letter you can share that you're looking to start in a new industry, learn new skills or work for a new company. Once you've done this, provide examples of how your skills make you valuable. Maybe you'll help the company save money, bring new ideas or share specialized knowledge.

When you're offered an interview, be prepared to answer a question about your experience/qualifications. What the question really means is "Are you a good fit for us?" You need to show that you are a good fit for the company by giving examples of relevant experiences (and they don't necessarily have to be examples from paid work experience).

Q15. I'm changing careers – what resume format should I use?

A: Use a functional format with dates of employment

If you're trying to get your foot in the door of a new industry, focus your resume on your transferable skills. In this situation, it's important to create a resume that clearly indicates at the top what type of position you are seeking and list any related qualifications (see resume example). Use the job ad, study it and do your best to make a connection between the position's requirements and your experience. You might also include a keywords section to list transferable skills, so the reader can find them immediately. This is also important if the company uses a computer to scan resumes for desired qualifications.

For example, if you are applying for a customer service job in a distribution center but your last position title was a call center lead in banking, you need to show the employer how your past work directly relates to their open position because it may not be obvious. Your job titles, job duties and even the name of the company may not tell the employer how good a fit you are to the position. Then, at the bottom of your resume, list the companies, locations, job titles, and dates of your employment.

If you've recently gone back to school for a different occupation, it's a good idea to put your education before your work history. Include courses or activities that directly relate to the job you're applying for.

Q16. Where can I get help if I have more questions or concerns about my resume?

A. Contact your local WorkSource office for more information!

Helping Build Successful Careers



WorkSource is a partnership of organizations dedicated to addressing Washington State's employment needs. WorkSource offices represent a unique concept in the labor market — everything in one place!

WorkSource services for job seekers include free use of computers, copiers, telephones, and faxes, Internet access to jobs, job referrals and placement, workshops on how to get and keep a job, information on the fastest growing jobs and wages, referral to training and other community services, access to unemployment insurance, translation services and more...

The **WorkSource Pierce One-Stop Center** is open for in-person and virtual workforce services during regular office hours specified below. Appointments can be made, or walk-in services are available. Closed for observed state holidays.

WorkSource Pierce

2121 South State St., Suite 300, Tacoma, WA 98405

253.593.7300

Hours: Monday through Friday 9:00 – 5:00

URL: <https://worksource-pierce.org/>

Email: WSPierce@esd.wa.gov

Follow us on social media!



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