

A Step-By-Step Process to Make Resume Writing Easier

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You have read résumé books and articles, seen the best examples in your field and are still struggling to write your résumé. Below are 12 steps to make the process of résumé writing easier.

12-Step Résumé Writing Process

The following instructions are adapted with permission from our colleague, Pat Criscito (PatCrisito.com).

Step #1: Focus on Your Target.

Write your job target at the top of a piece of paper. This can become your objective statement, should you decide to use one, or it may become the first words in your professional profile, which we strongly recommend (see Step #12). An objective isn't required on a résumé, but if you use one, makes sure it is precise. For example, "A marketing management position with an aggressive international consumer goods manufacturer" is better than "A position that utilizes my education and experience to mutual benefit."

Step #2: Outline Your Education Qualifications

List all relevant education or training, focusing on what relates to your job target (i.e., type of degree, dates, significant projects, courses, honors, recognitions, awards, scholarships, volunteer work, leadership positions, student organizations, social groups, activities, GPA, studies abroad, language training, and usage). List all relevant vocational, technical, occupational, and military training, as well as professional development and continuing education units, workshops, seminars, in-services, corporate training programs, conferences, and conventions.

Step #3: Review Job Description / Job Target

Get your hands on 3 - 5 written job descriptions of the job you are pursuing. Search iHispano.com for samples.

Step #4: Develop Keyword Strategy

In the current (electronic) job market, most résumés are searched for keywords, so it's important to build job-specific keywords into your résumé. In short, keywords are the nouns or short phrases that describe the essential knowledge, abilities, and skills required to do the job.

The job descriptions you found earlier are great sources for keywords. You can be certain that nearly every noun and some adjectives in a job posting or advertisement are keywords.

Step #5: Catalog Your Jobs

Start with your present position and work backward. List the title of every job you've held, along with the name of the company, the city and state, and the years you worked there. You can list years only (1996-present) or months and years (May 1996-present), but be consistent. It helps to put each job on a separate sheet of paper.

Step #6: Detail Your Duties

Under each position, make a list of your job responsibilities and projects. Incorporate phrases and keywords from the job target description wherever they apply. You don't have to worry about writing great sentences yet or narrowing your list at this point.

Step #7: Inventory Your Accomplishments and Contributions

Look at each job you've held and think about how you contributed in a way that was above and beyond the call of duty. Did you exceed sales quotas by 150% each month? Did you save the company more than \$100,000 by developing a new procedure? Did you improve productivity by 20%? Accomplishments show potential employers what you have done in the past, which translates into what you might be able to do for them in the future. Quantify your accomplishments whenever possible. Numbers are always impressive.

Step #8: Delete Non-relevant Data

Now that you have the words on paper, go back to each list and determine which items are most relevant to your target job. Cross out those things that don't relate, including entire jobs (like flipping hamburgers in high school if you're an electrical engineer with 10 years of experience). Remember, your résumé is just an enticer, a way to get your foot in the door. It isn't intended to be all-inclusive.

Step #9: Write in a Clear and Compelling Manner

Your writing should be clear, action-oriented, well organized, and compelling. Use the duties you listed under each job to create sentences, combining related items to avoid short, choppy phrases. Remember to structure the sentences so they're interesting to read. Never use personal pronouns (I, my, me). Instead, begin sentences with active verbs such as planned, organized, and directed. Make your sentences positive, brief, and accurate.

Step #10: Rearrange and Rewrite

You're almost done! Return to the sentences you've written and review the order they are in. Put a number 1 by the most important description of what you did for each job. Then place a number 2 by the next most important accomplishment, and so on until you've numbered each sentence. Keep related items together so the reader doesn't jump from one concept to another. Rewrite as needed to make the words flow smoothly.

Step #11: Focus on Relevant Qualifications

Give some thought to anything else that might qualify you for your job target. This could include licenses, certifications, affiliations, related activities and personal interests (only if they are relevant to the position). For example, if you are applying for a job in sports marketing, mentioning the fact that you are a triathlete would benefit your candidacy.

Step #12: Include a Profile

Add a qualifications profile or summary at the top of your résumé -- four or more sentences that provide an overview of your qualifications. This is a great place to include job related personal traits or special skills that might have been difficult to get across elsewhere in the résumé. This profile section should focus on skills and attributes that qualify you for the job.

¡BUENA SUERTE!