

# Writing a Great Resume & Cover Letter

## RESUME WRITING

A **resume** is a concisely written marketing tool that promotes your accomplishments and qualifications for a particular type of work. A good resume may elicit a phone call or interview from an employer. Below are dos and don'ts for resume writing.



- DOS.**
- ◆ **Place your job target or objective clearly at the top.** Then write a resume that supports this goal.
  - ◆ **Choose a resume format that suits your situation** – either chronological or combination.
  - ◆ **Ask yourself and others if your resume makes an immediate impact-** It should be easy-to-read and visually attractive. Use section headings, plenty of white space, and an easy-to-read font size (11-13 point). Keep it to one or two pages at the most.
  - ◆ **Write a summary of your qualifications at the top** so employers can quickly grasp your strongest qualifications first. Employers spend about 8 seconds reading a resume, so get their attention early.
  - ◆ **Know the qualifications** employers in this field look for (look at Internet listings or job ads) then list the qualifications you have that match these.
  - ◆ **Use action and industry key words** (find them in employer ads) to describe your

accomplishments, skills, and qualifications. Employers will feel comfortable with the information on your resume because it sounds so familiar.

- ◆ **Describe a task you tackled**, the action you took and results. Convert college class assignments, projects, and tasks into experience statements that employers recognize. For Example, “Using QuickBooks, set up and maintained financial records for small glass business. Achieved accuracy level of 98%.”
- ◆ Show how you worked on or expanded a project, especially a team project.
- ◆ **Employers remember numbers.** Use them to: quantify your experiences – “1.5 years of experience and education in ...,” show increases in sales, speed, members – “increased membership by 30%,” show time or money saved or how quickly you solved a problem – “new database increased billing turnaround by 50%.”
- ◆ **Use spell check** and have someone proof read it too.



- DON'TS:**
- ◆ **Don't include personal information** about your age, religious affiliation, ethnic origin, marital status, children, financial status, disability, etc.
  - ◆ **Don't use personal pronouns** – I, me, my.
  - ◆ **Don't go back more than 10 – 15 years** or include graduation dates.
  - ◆ **Don't lie** or include negative information about yourself or others.
  - ◆ **Don't include salary history** or reason for leaving job.
  - ◆ **Don't include references.**
  - ◆ **Don't go beyond two pages.**

## RESUME FORMATS:

- ◆ There are **three distinct styles** for formatting your resume – chronological, functional, and targeted combination.
- ◆ Here we'll focus on the **targeted – combination style**: **This style is best suited for job seekers who are** entering a new field, changing careers, or are recent graduates.
- ◆ **This style allows you to emphasize your skills and accomplishments** while providing employers with the work history they seek.
- ◆ Skills and accomplishments are listed first; your work history follows.
- ◆ **Numbers and short “stories”** make your accomplishments come to life.
- ◆ **Please review the targeted-combination resume sample below.**

### BRUNO C. BUSINESS

123 Broadway Lane

San Mateo, CA 94402

[bruno@work.com](mailto:bruno@work.com)

(650) 375-5555

**OBJECTIVE:** Position as a Junior Accountant, Accounting Assistant or related position.

#### HIGHLIGHTS OF QUALIFICATIONS

- 1.5 years of experience and education in accounting related work.
- Competent and experienced in using QuickBooks and Peachtree software.
- Skilled at journalizing transactions, categorizing accurately.
- Certificate, Accounting Assistant II program, expected completion – December 2008.
- 5 years of customer service experience.
- Strong aptitude for numbers. Achieved 98% accuracy rating in calculations.
- Hard working, honest and very reliable.

10 Key By-Touch

MS Excel

Peachtree

QuickBooks

Accounting

#### SUMMARY OF EXPERIENCE

##### Accounting Skills

- Used QuickBooks to set up initial books – including general ledger, accounts payable, accounts receivable, payroll, trial balances, financial statements and closings -- for three small businesses (fictitious).
- Used MS Access to create database for CSM Social Science Department experiment. Generated forms and reports and visually displayed data.
- At Longs, balanced daily transactions and logged data into custom software program.
- Used MS Excel to design spreadsheets which tracked daily and monthly department sales and expenses. Analyzed data and made cost-cutting recommendations resulting in a savings of 10%.
- Produced monthly financial statements and bank reconciliations.
- Made daily bank deposits.
- Skilled at calculating interest rates, discount, financial statements and ratios.
- Excellent 10-key by-touch – 212 key strokes per minute.

##### Customer Relations Skills

- 5 years of customer service experience. Skilled at answering customer questions, creatively resolving problems, and effectively dealing with difficult customers.
- At Comcast Cable, quickly and accurately updated customer records electronically. Noted questions or problems solved.
- Processed 30 customer queries per hour – establishing a department record for speed and efficiency.

#### EDUCATION

2006-Present Certificate, Accounting Assistant II College of San Mateo, San Mateo, CA  
(expected completion December 2008)

#### EXPERIENCE

2004-Present Lead Sales Assistant

2000-2003 Shipping & Receiving Assistant

1998-2000 Customer Service Representative

Longs Drug Store, Foster City, CA

Loew's, San Carlos, CA

Comcast Cable, San Francisco, CA

## ***SAMPLE SKILLS TO INCLUDE IN YOUR RESUME:***

- ◆ **A transferable skill** is a skill that you acquired from past work or other life experiences which can be transferred to a new job. You may have acquired these skills during a job, an internship assignment, a class project/assignment, volunteer work or by participating on a team.
  
- ◆ **Below is a sample list of skills. Put a check mark next to the skills you have that you could include on your resume.**



<p>_____ <b>Arranged</b> a social function – birthday party, anniversary party, club party, etc.</p> <p>_____ <b>Assisted</b> others with some task – on team project, on job, etc.</p> <p>_____ <b>Coordinated</b> a project – put together, organized, arranged, made happen a project for school, on the job, etc.</p> <p>_____ <b>Customer Service</b> – providing assistance to clients, customers, consumers in a timely, polite manner</p> <p>_____ <b>Computer skills</b> – using PC software including word processing, data base management and/or spreadsheet software to produce documents</p> <p>_____ <b>Designed</b> something such as a web site, flier, lesson plan, mechanical drawing, etc.</p> <p>_____ <b>Developed</b> a new approach, program, product on a job, at school, or for a club</p> <p>_____ <b>Edited</b> newspaper article, classmate’s term project, fliers, etc.</p> <p>_____ <b>Fundraised</b> money for club, non-profit organization, etc.</p> <p>_____ <b>Initiated</b> a new suggestion that was adopted – new procedure, system, process, etc.</p> <p>_____ <b>Interviewed</b> others for school newspaper, for projects, on a job, when doing research.</p> <p>_____ <b>Managed</b> money and kept books/records – as treasurer for club, your own finances, in an accounting class.</p> <p>_____ <b>Met deadlines</b> for school newspaper, school projects, family projects.</p>	<p>_____ <b>Received</b> promotion on the job, requested or voted into a position in a school club, etc.</p> <p>_____ <b>Researched</b> a topic – for school project, on a job, or other situation using the Internet and library, and interviewing people.</p> <p>_____ <b>Researched and solved</b> a complex problem – customer’s missing order, a school project.</p> <p>_____ <b>Scheduled</b> people, assignments, tasks, etc. on a job, in team sports, in a class, while volunteering.</p> <p>_____ <b>Solved problems</b> – on the job, at school, at home, for a friend.</p> <p>_____ <b>Spoke</b> in public on debate team, for class project, as team leader, club presentations.</p> <p>_____ <b>Supervised</b> – to watch over and instruct one or more persons on a job, sports team, children’s activity.</p> <p>_____ <b>Team Work/Collaboration</b> – worked with others on a project at work job, at school, in a club or in an organization.</p> <p>_____ <b>Trained or taught</b> others on a job, sports team, club activities.</p> <p>_____ <b>Translated</b> information from one language to another at home, in school, at work .</p> <p><b>Add your other skills:</b></p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
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# RESUME RUBRIC

Use this rubric to evaluate the effectiveness of your resume.

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

	1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points
Scoring Criteria	Needs to Improve	OK	Good	Excellent
Clearly stated objective				
Strong action verbs used				
Skills, experiences & qualifications clearly relate to job objective				
Good examples of your skills (brief stories) which exemplify your qualifications				
Format showcases your experience and education				
Good use of numbers to quantify experiences and accomplishments				
White space, margins, and fonts used effectively and attractively				
Correct spelling, grammar, and word usage				
Employment and education don't exceed 10 years				
No mention of personal information				
One page in length				
<b>Total</b>				

Grand total = \_\_\_\_\_

**Scale:**

- 44 - 39                    A Excellent
- 38 - 35                    B Good
- 34 - 31                    C Satisfactory/OK
- 30 - 26                    D Needs to Improve
- 25 -- below              F Needs Much Improvement

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

# COVER LETTER BASICS

- ◆ **A cover letter** describes the skills and qualifications you have that **speak directly to the specs in the job announcement**. Employers expect job applicants to write a tailored letter. A resume is a more general description of your qualifications, while **a cover letter is tailored to the specific job**.
- ◆ To get started, underline the primary job requirements in the job announcement and then describe how your skills match these specs.
- ◆ It's **best to hand-deliver your cover letter and resume to the employer**. Alternatively, if the employer is agreeable, you may email it as an attachment or embed it into the text of the message.
- ◆ Please see the outline of a cover letter below and the sample letter on the next page to guide you in creating your own.



Your Name  
Address  
City, State, Zip Code  
Phone Number  
E-Mail Address

Date

Contact Name  
Title  
Company Name  
Address  
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Contact Name or Human Resources Representative:

**First Paragraph:** State the reason for your letter and indicate the position or type of work you seek. Explain how you learned about the position. Indicate that your experiences/qualifications/skills closely match those of the position.

**Second Paragraph:** Explain why you are interested in and qualified for this position. Before writing your cover letter, underline each skill, duty or requirement listed by the employer in the job announcement. Then describe your specific achievements, experiences, or education that directly relate to or match those of this job. Use numbers and percentages to quantify information and to show results. If you include information found on your resume, expand on it, don't repeat the exact information. Refer the employer to your enclosed resume for review.

**Third Paragraph:** Express your interest in working for the company. Thank them for considering your application, and state that you will do a good job. Let them know that you would welcome an opportunity to meet with them to discuss the position and your qualifications. Indicate that you look forward to hearing from them by including your phone number and e-mail address. (Make sure you have a business-like recording on your answering device to collect messages or the employer will skip over you for more professional sounding candidates.)

Sincerely,

(Your Signature)  
Your Name Typed

Enclosure (this tells the employer to look for your resume which is included with the letter).

## ***SAMPLE COVER LETTER***

Larry C. Lab  
123 Gene Way  
San Mateo, CA 94402

September 12, 2009

Genentech, Inc.  
1 DNA Way, MS 39A  
South San Francisco, CA 94080  
Attn: A. Ng

Dear Ms./Mr. Ng:

I am responding to your recent advertisement for a Bioprocess Technician (Job # \_\_\_\_). Genentech is an impressive leader in the bio-technology industry with a reputation for innovation and the delivery of human pharmaceuticals to improve the quality of people's lives. This position is of particular interest to me since it closely relates to my experiences and education in this field.

As you can see from my enclosed resume, I have 1.5 years of experience and education in the biological field. I have operated a variety of lab equipment and have performed various lab experiments. All procedures were performed accurately, correctly and with thorough review, titling, and initializing. In preparation for the experiments, part of my duties included cleaning and preparing autoclave glassware. At all times, I observed proper safety standards including the handling of hazardous materials. I often use a PC to record data and notes, and my lab notes and records were meticulously kept. In my previous work settings, I worked very well independently and as a member of a small team.

I appreciate your consideration of my qualifications and know that by hiring me you will gain a skilled, hard working, and dedicated worker. I look forward to hearing from you and can be reached in the evenings at (650) 375-5555 or during the day by cell phone at (650) 555-6543.

Best Regards,

Larry C. Lab

Enclosure

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### ***ADDITIONAL CSM RESOURCES***

- ◆ **CRER 127**, CSM's comprehensive job search class assists students in developing a resume and cover letter, finding job leads, and interviewing effectively.
- ◆ Skilled **career counselors** can provide students guidance and suggestions for preparing their resume and cover letter.
- ◆ **CSM JobLinks**, our online job listing program. One of the best resources for finding jobs and internships.
- ◆ There are many **books and publications in the Career Services Center** (building 1, room 213) that focus on resume and cover letter writing.
- ◆ There are also numerous **websites** that provide tips and samples of both resumes and cover letters. Inquire at the Career Services Center.