

A Guide to Professional Resume Development

Your Professional Resume

Your resume is a key element of your personal marketing plan. It will be the document that will open the most doors for you during your job search. This handout reviews fundamental aspects of writing your resume, as well as tips for converting and using your text resume for online posting and job application. As you start writing the resume, think about yourself as a “product” -- advertise your strengths and accomplishments in ways that clearly show the *benefits* you offer potential employers. Consider products you buy – you select them for the benefits they will provide.

Basic Resume Formats

There are two dominant resume types or formats – Chronological and Functional, with combinations or permutations thereof being called Hybrids. The traditional resume is the Chronological, and most HR managers, recruiters, and hiring managers expect to receive resumes in that format, and thus tend to prefer that type. Likewise, Resume Management Systems used to screen through resumes (described later) are often programmed to extract data from resumes that are formatted chronologically. So, unless you have a specific reason for choosing the Functional format, you are safest in crafting and circulating a basic Chronological resume.

Chronological Resumes

Chronological resumes list work experience in reverse chronological order. The most recent job is highlighted first under the Professional Experience heading, with most emphasis given to that job, especially if you have worked in that position for a significant number of years. Dates, titles, and location are given for that job and each prior job, as well as other individual titles you may have held with that same employer. Thus, your work experience and accomplishments are clearly linked with the title(s) you held, the company for which you worked, and the associated years of employment. This type of resume works especially well if you are seeking a job in the same industry and/or same functional area as your most recent position.

Functional Resumes

In certain situations, displaying your background in reverse chronological is not optimal. These circumstances would include situations where:

1. What you did most recently is not what you hope to do looking forward.
2. You have suffered some sort of setback in your career progression that might raise a red flag to recruiters or hiring managers (e.g., you were controller for an organization in your prior job and now you are accountant or senior accountant).
3. The industry in which you have worked in your most recent job and possibly in prior years is viewed as totally different from the industry of interest to you now.

4. You are focusing your job search on the type of work you did two or three jobs ago or a number of years in the past. In this case, your relevant experience won't appear until the second page of your resume, where a quick review might not uncover it.
5. Your industry may have fallen into disrepute somehow, and you want to disassociate yourself from it somewhat (remember gas trading about three years ago? S&Ls before that?). Using the functional format places your company name on the second page, in most cases.

The ultimate choice as to which resume style or format to use is difficult. You should discuss your rationale for selection with your CMC Counselor as well as colleagues in your industry or type of work.

Look to the Future

Like many Jones School students, you may have chosen to make the commitment to pursue an MBA Program to broaden your experience and knowledge base so that you have more latitude in targeting positions within your company. You should keep your ultimate targeted position(s) clearly in focus as you choose your coursework/projects.

When writing your resume, you should look to the future. What areas interest you? What skills and abilities are needed in your *targeted* position? As you write about your current and previous employment, **emphasize the skills you know your next employer will want**. For example, if you want to go into marketing, but your previous employment has been as a controller, focus on the customer service, presentation, and persuasive aspects of your work. If you want to go into a job that requires attention to detail and analytical abilities, be sure to include any elements of your coursework/previous employment that demonstrate your analytical and problem solving abilities.

Accomplishment Statements

As you write your resume, remember who your audience is. The employer is typically interested in "what's in it" for himself/herself or the company. Because the buyer is interested in your contributions, it is important that **you sell vs. tell**, wherever possible, in your resume.

Emphasize Benefits

As you describe each previous job or experience, keep in mind the benefits of your work; your resume should not only explain *what* you did, but also *why* you did it and how it *benefited* the company.

Perhaps you created a new system for managing accounts receivable. You could say what you did:

- *Designed a new system to manage accounts receivable.*

OR you could say how it helped the company:

- *Streamlined accounts receivable system to speed collections; new system reduced collection times by 30%.*

Be Specific

People want specific evidence of your value and accomplishments, so don't say you have superb communication skills -- find a way to show evidence of that! If you have only platitudes to convey, your resume will probably not have much selling power.

As another example, if your current job involves developing spreadsheets and you want to emphasize analytical skills, you might write:

- *Developed Excel spreadsheets to track and analyze data.*

However, to downplay the analysis and play up communications, you could write:

- *Assessed information needs of various department managers, developed a spreadsheet to facilitate data analysis, recommended new model to senior management, and trained personnel in use of new model. (If, of course, you did all this!)*

A Word on Summaries and Objectives

Many MBA for Executives students have very long resumes that begin with a summary of skills or an objective. Our first advice is to make your resume shorter – think of what you want to do in the future, rather than telling the reader all about the past in grueling detail.

As to the summary, make sure that each line of this limited “real estate” is used to the best advantage and don't repeat skills or abilities. Good choices for inclusion in the summary include those competencies and personal attributes that: you really want to use on a regular basis; you are highly skilled or experienced in doing or being; and/or are really “hot” or selling well in the current employment market.

The CMC generally recommends that the *Career Objective* be removed from the resume and worked into an appropriate cover letter or used as a lead-in word or phrase in your *Career Summary* for a specific position. This can be customized for each position for which you are applying.

One might argue that if you are posting your resume on the internet and don't know where it will go, the objective might help a new reader decide if you are a good match. This may be true, but we would advocate always starting with a networked contact or a specified posting, in which case the audience or reader knows what you want to do based on your cover letter or initial phone call. Also, even in posting your resume for a non-networked job on the internet, you should tailor your resume to the position to increase the likelihood of keyword hits. (See subsequent pages for details on keywords and Resume Management Systems.)

Differentiate

As you continue to write, check each item to determine if it is adding something new – this is called differentiating. For example, if you developed spreadsheets in three different jobs, maybe you need to mention it only once, leaving room in other job descriptions to elaborate on another aspect unique to those positions.

Resume Format Guidelines

There is no one, standard format for resume design and layout or information inclusion. Resumes are as personal as our choices in how we dress and where we choose to live. Resume styles and inclusions vary according to experience levels, functional area, and industry. What is presented below constitutes a set of general guidelines for executive resumes in most basic business disciplines. Your CMC counselor can assist you in variations that might be appropriate for your unique background and aspirations.

Microsoft Word Format Hints

Set Word Options and Margins

- Under Tools, Options, Spelling and Grammar, be sure *ignore words in uppercase* is **unchecked**
- Under File, Page Setup, Margins, set the left and right margins to 1.0"
- The top and bottom margins should initially be set at 1.0"
- Format Tabs. Be sure to clear all tabs before setting any new tabs
- Under Format, Font, select Times New Roman and 11 point or Arial and 10 point

Layout

- 10- or 11-point font throughout entire document, except possibly your name.
- Times New Roman or Arial preferred typefaces
- Top margin between 0.7 and 1.0"; bottom margin between 0.75 inches and 1 inch
- Left and right margins set at 1.0 inches

Order of Information

1. Contact Information
2. Career Summary
3. Professional Experience (for Functional Resumes, this part may be separated into two distinct areas – Selected Accomplishments and Professional Employment. See sample resumes on page 28.)
4. Education, Certification and Professional Development (as appropriate)
5. Professional Affiliations
6. Community Involvement (As appropriate--see counselor for inclusions/exclusions)

Tips on Writing a Successful Resume

Formatting

- ❑ **Page Length** - A two-page resume is the standard length for an executive MBA candidate. Remember that employers value a succinct document!
- ❑ **Degrees** - Spell out degrees - Master of Business Administration--and abbreviate - MBA, as well. Note: *cum laude* and similar designations are always lower case, italicized letters.
- ❑ **Spell check** your final copy and have another person read it for errors that Spellchecker software does not catch - we had a recent student who graduated in 1899. Spell check usually does not catch errors in words with initial capitalization.

Wording

- ❑ **Bullets/Lines** - Begin every descriptive bullet/line with an action verb: managed, controlled, monitored, supervised, created, directed, researched, negotiated, developed, etc. There is no need to begin a bullet with "Responsible for" or "Part of a team that" (See the list of action verbs on page 22).
- ❑ **Articles** - Minimize use of articles such as "the" and "a" - resumes are advertisements and, just like advertisements, are more effective when only key words/phrases are used. Resumes are not necessarily composed of complete sentences.

- ❑ **First Person** - Never use “I,” “me,” “my,” “our,” “ours.” This is a third-person document.
- ❑ **Abbreviations** - Do not abbreviate words; you may use postal abbreviations for states, but be consistent. Use them exclusively or not at all.

Content

- ❑ **Tailor** - Tie everything as much as possible to the field you are seeking. For example, if you are going into marketing, play down your two years of banking/lending experience, but emphasize the customer service and persuasive aspects of lending. Minor to significant customization should be done when applying for all highly appealing openings. Your resume content should align with the job requirements as closely as possible.
- ❑ **Titles** - Clearly note job titles and companies. Some titles may be eliminated if you had multiple titles with the same employer. See a CMC counselor for advice in this regard.
- ❑ **Quantify** - Whenever possible, quantify to show your scope of responsibility and results: reduced turnover 30%, managed \$5 million department, supervised staff of four, managed five large accounts, etc.
 - ❑ **GPA/GMAT** - You may want to mention above average (generally 680 or higher) GMAT scores and strong class rank or GPA. If your grades for your various degrees were all average, you may want to exclude them.
 - ❑ **Other Information** - Use “Other Information” sections to cover any unique skills, experience, languages, publications, licenses, etc. Your background might include an area of common interest with the interviewer.
 - ❑ **Language** - Designate your level of expertise with languages utilizing the following guidelines:
 - **Fluent** means you can read, write, and argue in this language – you would be completely comfortable working in a total immersion environment.
 - **Conversant/Literate** (choose as appropriate). Conversant means you are relatively comfortable speaking this language, but might not read and write perfectly. Literate means you read and write well, but might have a difficult time carrying on a fluent conversation. You should choose one of these categories if it would take you some time to adapt to an immersion work environment.
 - **Basic** means you may speak or write some of the language; perhaps you know present and past tense, but are not familiar with more complex grammatical structures. You could “get by” as a visitor, but would need time to refresh your knowledge before being immersed in a workplace that uses only this language.
- ❑ **Proof-read** - Read your resume and look for evidence supporting your career goals. You should re-read your resume before job application, auditing it to see if it comprehensively covers the job requirements. Obviously, you should study your

resume carefully prior to any interview, whether by phone or in person. You want to have your key selling points at “top of mind” should you be queried about your background and competencies. Check to see that you have used concrete examples and shown accomplishments/results, in addition to responsibilities. You might have been responsible for something that failed – what did you learn or accomplish?

- ❑ **Falsifications/Exaggerations** - Never falsify or exaggerate information – if you are not sure how to word something without a strong possibility of misinterpretation, ask the Career Planning Center for help.

Action Verbs

“Good words are worth much, and cost little.” - George Herbert, 1651

Remember to use action verbs (such as those listed below), and to bring your resume to the Career Planning Center for reviews.

Accelerated	Cut	Helped	Performed	Simplified
Accomplished	Decentralized	Headed	Pinpointed	Sold
Achieved	Decreased	Hired	Planned	Solved
Acquired	Defined	Identified	Prepared	Sponsored
Adapted	Delivered	Implemented	Presented	Staffed
Addressed	Demonstrated	Improved	Prevented	Standardized
Administered	Designated	Increased	Processed	Started
Advanced	Designed	Influenced	Produced	Stimulated
Allocated	Determined	Initiated	Programmed	Streamlined
Analyzed	Developed	Inspected	Projected	Strengthened
Anticipated	Devised	Installed	Promoted	Stretched
Applied	Directed	Instituted	Proposed	Structured
Appointed	Discovered	Instructed	Proved	Studied
Approved	Distributed	Integrated	Published	Suggested
Arranged	Documented	Interviewed	Realized	Summarized
Assigned	Doubled	Introduced	Recommended	Supervised
Attained	Earned	Invented	Reconciled	Supported
Audited	Edited	Investigated	Recruited	Surpassed
Augmented	Eliminated	Launched	Reduced	Surveyed
Brought	Employed	Liquidated	Re-established	Sustained
Broadened	Enforced	Located	Regulated	Tailored
Built	Established	Maintained	Reinforced	Taught
Calculated	Estimated	Managed	Reorganized	Terminated
Centralized	Evaluated	Marketed	Reported	Tested
Clarified	Examined	Mediated	Represented	Traded
Collaborated	Exceeded	Minimized	Researched	Trained
Combined	Exercised	Mobilized	Reshaped	Transferred
Completed	Expanded	Modernized	Resolved	Transformed
Conceived	Extended	Modified	Restored	Translated
Concluded	Financed	Monitored	Reviewed	Trimmed
Condensed	Forecasted	Motivated	Revised	Tripled
Conducted	Formed	Negotiated	Revived	Uncovered
Consolidated	Formulated	Obtained	Saved	Undertook
Constructed	Found	Operated	Scheduled	Unified
Consulted	Founded	Ordered	Secured	Used
Contracted	Fulfilled	Organized	Selected	Verified
Contributed	Generated	Originated	Served	Widened
Controlled	Guided	Overcame	Set up	Withdrew
Converted	Halved	Overhauled	Settled	
Corrected	Handled	Oversaw	Shaped	

SAMPLE MBA CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME

ROBERT D. SUMMERS

123 Executive Potential Drive
Houston, Texas 77077

281-555-2345
rdsummers@houston.rr.com

CAREER SUMMARY

Energy Executive with significant experience in the deregulated power, refining, and petrochemical industries. Outstanding leadership skills to motivate teams of professionals to meet and exceed business goals. Excellent communication and interpersonal skills that are leveraged to develop effective customer relationships and strong industry networks. Strong analytical and problem-solving skills. Expertise in:

- Strategic Planning and Forecasting
- Deal Structuring
- Financial/Pricing Modeling
- Fuel Supply and Transportation
- Project Management.
- Business Development

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

ENERGY, INC., Houston, Texas

1995 – Present

Sr. Vice President, Supply Chain and Fuels

Provided executive direction for the supply, transportation, scheduling, and storage of fuel oil and coal for Entergy's power generation assets. Optimized fuel supply for 26 dual-fuel (natural gas and fuel oil) assets. Managed risk of fuel supply and facility commitments to reliably meet plant needs at lowest cost and in compliance with corporate risk policy.

- Developed commercial strategy, goals, and metrics as member of Commercial Leadership Team, in collaboration with leaders of Gas, Power, and Risk departments.
- Led fuel supply optimization of oil and natural gas, resulting in \$25 MM in gross margin.
- Spearheaded early capture of PRB coal as a lower priced substitute fuel and led cross-functional team in expediting test burns and air permit modifications, and securing supply and transportation arrangements for \$25 MM/yr savings.
- Served as member of three-person commercial team that led successful negotiations of a \$1.5 B refinancing package for a subsidiary holding company.
- Leader of emissions compliance strategic planning team that developed strategy, resulting in \$10 MM/yr. reduction in compliance costs versus environmental controls.
- Established coal-based synfuel strategic business unit, resulting in \$30 MM cumulative reduction in fuel expenses from 2001 to 2005.

BRITISH PETROLEUM, Houston, Texas

1990 – 1995

Director, New Business Development (1992 – 1995)

Refining Limited Partnership (BP/Pemex), Bay City, Texas

Handled communications with BP and Pemex senior management, including monthly business review, quarterly board meetings, and presentations. Provided business management for the shared infrastructure (steam system, electrical distribution, natural gas, docks) for multiple

business owners (BP, Pemex, OxyChem) Negotiated contracts including natural gas, steam, hydrogen, air, and raw water. Identified and developed business opportunities leading to gross margin growth.

- Developed market alternatives and negotiated a 10-year agreement with British Petroleum affiliate for processing of refinery off-gases resulting in \$40 MM NPV benefit to the Partnership.
- Led development of \$325 MM crude unit and coker expansion, including financial evaluations and negotiations on risk balancing mechanisms, crude supply, and project deliverables.
- Identified, developed, and negotiated an MOU for a \$500 MM third-party build-own-operate petroleum coke gasification project.
- Developed a scenario-based 5-year strategic plan, including responses to industry, environmental, and regulatory changes.
- Established a growth culture for an organization historically focused on fixed costs and reliability.

Manager Process Engineering Projects / Environmental Integrity (1990 – 1992)

Managed \$25 MM annual capital budget and staff of 14 process engineers responsible for evaluation, design, and implementation of on-site capital projects.

- Increased the capital efficiency (NPV/capital expenditure) of the capital budget from 1.6 to 2.1 through improved screening criteria and streamlined approval process.
- Negotiated a flexible air permit that benefited the community, TNRCC, and the refinery. The permit allowed increased emissions in early years and \$45 MM in pollution controls installed over 10 years.

EDUCATION

RICE UNIVERSITY, Jesse H. Jones Graduate School of Business, Houston, Texas

Master of Business Administration (MBA), May 2000; GPA: 3.8/4.0

LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY, Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering (BS), *cum laude*, June 1990; GPA: 3.5/4.0

PROFESSIONAL / COMMUNITY AFFILIATIONS

Coal Trading Association (CTA)

Emissions Marketing Association (EMA)

American Institute of Chemical Engineers (AIChE)

Project Leader, Habitat for Humanity

Coach, Houston Area Youth Soccer

SAMPLE MBA FUNCTIONAL RESUME

ROBERT D. SUMMERS

123 Executive Potential Drive
Houston, Texas 77077

281-555-2345
rdsummers@houston.rr.com

CAREER SUMMARY

Energy Executive with significant experience in the deregulated power, refining, and petrochemical industries. Outstanding leadership skills to motivate teams of professionals to meet and exceed business goals. Excellent communication and interpersonal skills that are leveraged to develop effective customer relationships and strong industry networks. Strong analytical and problem-solving skills. Expertise in:

- Strategic Planning and Forecasting
- Deal Structuring
- Financial/Pricing Modeling
- Fuel Supply and Transportation
- Project Management.
- Business Development

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Supply Chain / Logistics

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- Led fuel supply optimization of oil and natural gas, resulting in \$25 MM in gross margin.
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Business Development

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- Identified, developed, and negotiated an MOU for a \$500 MM third-party build-own-operate petroleum coke gasification project.
- Developed a scenario-based 5-year strategic plan, including responses to industry, environmental, and regulatory changes.

Project / Engineering Management

- Increased the capital efficiency (NPV/capital expenditure) of the capital budget from 1.6 to 2.1 through improved screening criteria and streamlined approval process.
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- Negotiated a flexible air permit that benefited the community, TNRCC, and the refinery. The permit allowed increased emissions in early years and \$45 MM in pollution controls installed over 10 years.
- Handled responsibilities in major projects process design and manufacturing technical support.

PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

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Sr. Vice President, Supply Chain and Fuels

Provided executive direction for the supply, transportation, scheduling, and storage of fuel oil and coal for Entergy's power generation assets. Optimized fuel supply for 26 dual-fuel (natural gas and fuel oil) assets in coordination with Gas Supply team. Managed fuel supply risk and facility commitments to meet plant needs at lowest cost and in compliance with corporate risk policy.

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